

# Michael Coper

Michael Coper was Dean of the Faculty of Law at ANU from 1998 to 2012. He served as Chair of the Council of Australian Law Deans (CALD) from 2005 to 2007. He was a gracious, enthusiastic and effective Chair, introducing a system of starring of items for discussion which allowed the meetings to focus on important issues. During his time as Chair, Professor Coper's broad interests in all aspects of legal education ensured the CALD agenda properly canvassed emerging issues including the admission of a number of new law schools to the CALD community, internationalisation of the law curriculum, the increasing regulatory oversight of law schools and courses, and importantly, the response of legal academia to the Research Quality Framework (RQF) exercise introduced from September 2005. Michael Coper contributed considerable personal effort to the task of chairing CALD, writing papers and submissions in response to requests from external bodies for CALD's response to a range of regulatory and other requirements. Due to his membership of local and international organisations, Professor Coper ensured close links between CALD and the International Legal Services Advisory Council (ILSAC), the International Association of Law Schools, and the American Law Institute, among others. He was influential in the formation of, and became a Foundation Fellow of the Australian Academy of Law. Perhaps the most enduring memory of Michael Coper's chairing of CALD is the introduction of the CALD T-shirt, supplied to deans at the various meetings and always with an inspiring message; the best example of this was 'Serving the Discipline of Law, whenever we are CALD'.

One of Michael Coper's initiatives as Chair of CALD was the development with colleagues of the CALD Standards for Australian Law Schools and the Australian Law Schools Standards Committee (ALSSC) that CALD established to accredit law schools that demonstrated achievement of the standards. Michael was an invaluable member, indeed, the driving force of the ALSSC and a key advocate with its Chair, the Honourable Michael Black, AC QC, of the standards as a powerful statement of the aspirations of legal education as well as of its quotidian needs. Meeting a few days before his death, but sadly without him, members of the ALSSC were deeply impressed by his grace, elegance and courage. Members resolved unanimously to record thanks for Professor Coper's contribution to the ALSSC from its conception. They noted particularly the ongoing impact on the Committee's form and function of his deeply held conviction that law schools should be instruments of public service. The following message was drafted and conveyed to Professor Coper by the ALSSC Chair:

*The ALSSC, noting the profound contribution of Professor Michael Coper to the Committee from its conception through to today, acknowledges with gratitude the present force of the ideas expressed in Professor Coper's Standards, and in their continued application and development. His extraordinary service is a gift to Australian legal education. The Committee wish to pass on their gratitude and deep appreciation for Professor Coper's contribution to Australian legal education, and for his continuing contribution to the Australian community, to Australian legal professional standards, and to the rule of law in Australia.*