



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

Judicial Conference of Australia Scholarship 2016 Update



Judicial Conference of Australia Scholarship



Sydney Law School.

"The University of Sydney is a place where ideas and new thinking are ignited, and where our people create innovative solutions to some of the world's most pressing problems. Thank you for helping to make this possible."

Dr Michael Spence
Vice Chancellor and Principal
The University of Sydney

To the Judicial Conference of Australia Incorporated, thank you for establishing the *Judicial Conference of Australia Scholarship* program.

This report is a summary of all recipients since the inaugural scholarships were awarded in 2010. It is a small token of our appreciation for your continued support.

The importance of social justice

Although Australia is considered to be 'the lucky country', social injustices are widespread. Disadvantaged people experience everything from unfair allocations of community resources to inadequate access to healthcare and legal services.

When legal issues arise, the most common starting point is to investigate paying for a lawyer. However many Australians would find it difficult to hire a lawyer for anything but the most basic legal issues. For those who have no choice but to turn to government funded legal services, they find chronic funding shortages that lead to a limited range of services offered to only a small percentage of the most in-need people.

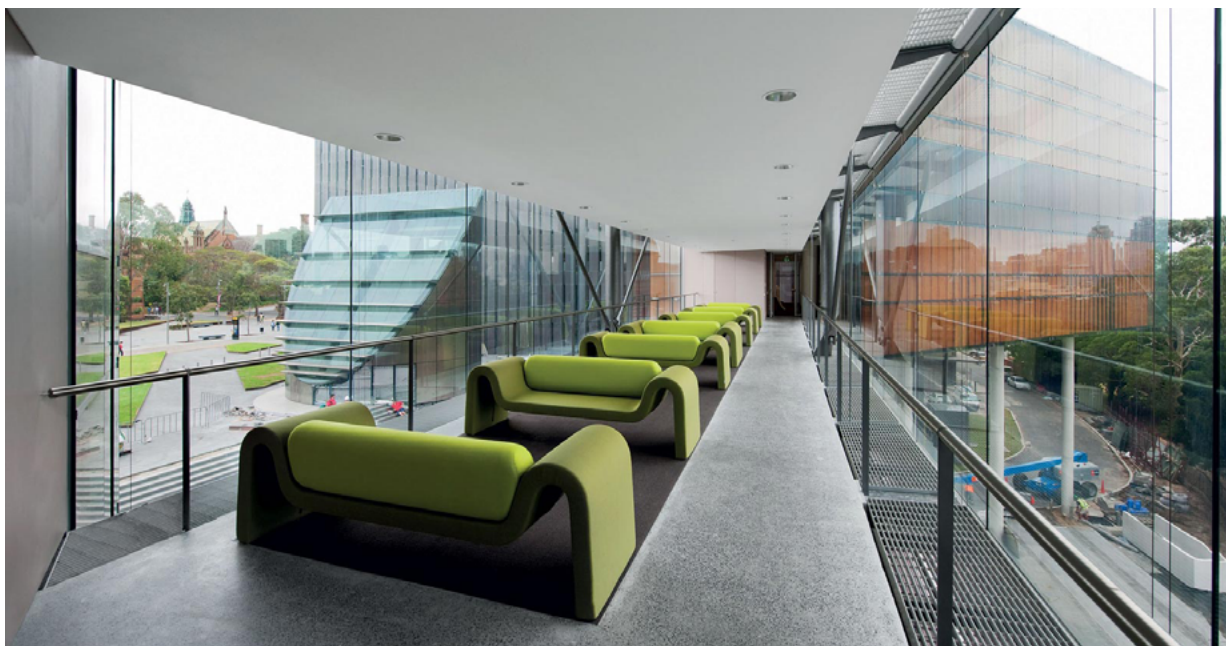
The social justice movement and its advocates strive for equality for all people. They seek to restore equal access to liberties, rights and opportunities, despite a person's age, race, religion or socioeconomic background.

The Social Justice Program

Launched in 2009, the Social Justice Program at Sydney Law School offers students an important opportunity to gain practical legal experience and provide vital services to disadvantaged members of our community.

Bachelor of Laws (LLB) and Juris Doctor (JD) students enrolled in the Social Justice Program undertake up to two units of study and gain experience in social justice initiatives. This is achieved by working at one of a number of well-established community legal centres, law firms and other organisations offering legal advice and representation to special interest groups.

In 2016, the Social Justice Program expanded to include an even broader range of experiences for students to participate in, including the opportunity to work on an innocence project with students from the School of Psychology, assessing cases of possible wrongful convictions.



The interior of the Sydney Law School building.

Judicial Conference of Australia Scholarship

The *Judicial Conference of Australia Scholarship* was established to support LLB and JD students entering their final or penultimate year and enrolled in the Social Justice Program at Sydney Law School.

Initially, the Judicial Conference of Australia Incorporated provided \$5,000 per annum to award up to five scholarships, however it was increased to a maximum of six scholarships in 2013. The scholarships are valued at \$1,000 each.

Selection is based on academic merit and demonstrated prior commitment to, and participation in, community service and social justice activities.

Honour Roll

The Honour Roll for the *Judicial Conference of Australia Scholarship* is:

Year	Students
2016*	Gabrielle Doyle, Justin Pen, Lorraine Walsh, Nasreen Jahan
2015	Phoebe Brosnan, Rebecca Campbell, James Clifford, Anonymous recipient, Oscar Monaghan
2014	Shanthakumar Bannirchelvam, Soo Young Choi, Tyler Drayton, Hannah Ryan, Adam Zwi
2013	Luke Carr, Lara Emery, Sophie Kelly, Sibella Matthews, Christopher Frommer
2012	Justin Penafiel, Myles Pulsford, Sarah Schwartz, Katherine Tu, Daniel Zwi
2011	Glenn Kembrey, Giselle Kenny, Stephanie McNamee, Mina Nada, Ming Shue Pang
2010	Sadhie Abeyesekara, Rose Khalilizadeh, Lucy King, May Samali, Mack Wan

*These are the recipients for Semester 1 2016. A further two recipients will be selected during Semester 2 2016.

Judicial Conference of Australia Scholarship



"I am very thankful to have been awarded the *Judicial Conference of Australia Scholarship*. It has not only provided recognition of my social justice involvement, but has also assisted me financially, allowing me to dedicate more of my time to community service and social justice causes."

Gabrielle Doyle
2016 recipient

Student responses

On the following pages recipients of the scholarship in 2016, 2015 and 2014 have provided messages of gratitude for your ongoing support.

2016 recipients

Gabrielle Doyle

"I am in my final year of a Bachelor of Economics and LLB at the University of Sydney. My interest in studying law was sparked by personal experiences of domestic violence which directly exposed me to the barriers many people face when accessing legal services. This generated my desire to contribute to the provision of legal services to vulnerable groups.

Throughout my studies, my interest has expanded into other fields including international law and commercial law. I love challenging myself to find innovative solutions to problems and I am attracted to the collaborative nature of legal work.

Since leaving home at 17, I have worked hard to balance my studies: working to support myself, extracurricular activities, leadership experiences and an ongoing dedication to social justice causes.

My interest in the interaction between social justice and the legal system has definitely grown since starting university. The Sydney University Law Society (SULS) facilitated my internship at Women's Legal Services NSW in 2013 and my mentoring experience in the SULS Juvenile Justice Mentoring Scheme from 2013 to 2014.

Other positions I have held include assistant at Oxfam, activist for UNICEF, assistant at Marrickville Legal Centre, convenor of the Amnesty International NSW Legal Network and representative of Amnesty International at NSW Young Lawyers Assemblies.

My role at Amnesty International is recognised by Sydney Law School as the placement component of the Social Justice Program. While extremely rewarding, these roles have also been time-consuming and significant in depleting my personal finances.

I am very thankful to have been awarded the *Judicial Conference of Australia Scholarship*. It has not only provided recognition of my social justice involvement, but has also assisted me financially, allowing me to dedicate more time to community service and social justice causes.

Looking to the future, I am delighted to have secured a place in the 2017 graduate program at one of the world's top pro-bono law firms, which has a great community engagement program.

The value the firm places on pro-bono work and social justice aligns with my belief that engagement with these areas is not something that needs to be, nor should be, sacrificed in order to be a successful commercial lawyer.

I am so grateful to the Judicial Conference of Australia Incorporated for honouring me with this wonderful scholarship. It means a great deal to have my efforts recognised and to have the funds to continue expanding my social justice involvement."



"I have always held a strong interest in social justice and community legal work. It is through law reform I want to combat structural oppression and disadvantage, and it is through casework I want to improve the everyday lives of the vulnerable and marginalised."

Justin Pen
2016 recipient

Justin Pen

"I write to thank the Judicial Conference of Australia Incorporated for their substantial contribution to my final-year studies through the *Judicial Conference of Australia Scholarship*.

I first enrolled in a combined Bachelor of Arts and LLB in 2012, after completing one year of an arts degree. Where my history and political economy subjects afforded me new ways of examining the world, I pursued law to learn more about its processes and practicalities. Four years on, I count this as one of the greatest decisions of my life.

Over the course of my degree, I have volunteered, interned and worked at the Redfern Legal Centre, Aboriginal Legal Service and Australian Law Reform Commission.

I have always held a strong interest in social justice and community legal work. It is through law reform I want to combat structural oppression and disadvantage, and it is through casework I want to improve the everyday lives of the vulnerable and marginalised.

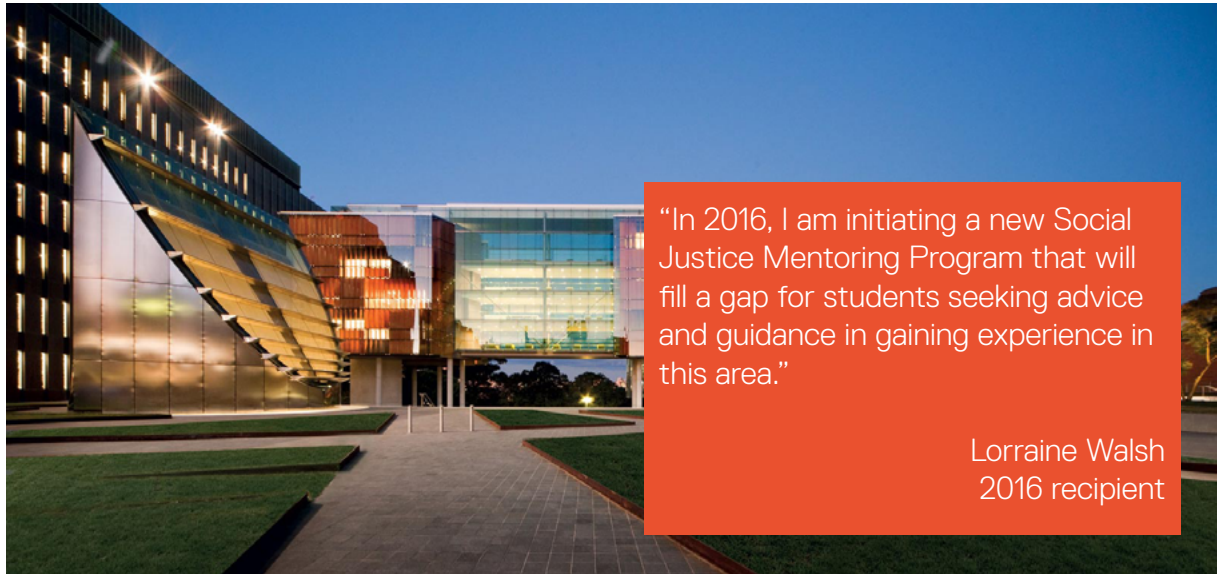
My interests lay in criminal justice and procedure, employment law and industrial relations, and administrative and migration law. After university I plan to work in either policy development or legal practice. I look forward to applying the legal skills I have developed over the last six years in real-work situations and have a positive impact on people's lives.

I am currently undertaking a full-time study load and interning part-time at the Australian Human Rights Commission. Working and studying five days a week has, unfortunately, left me unable to take on any paid part-time or casual work.

Receiving the *Judicial Conference of Australia Scholarship* has given me a lifeline and insurance against any unexpected event or calamity. It has provided peace of mind to continue studying and interning until the end of this semester, when I can re-engage in paid work.

Once again, thank you for your generous contribution."

Judicial Conference of Australia Scholarship



Sydney Law School.

"In 2016, I am initiating a new Social Justice Mentoring Program that will fill a gap for students seeking advice and guidance in gaining experience in this area."

Lorraine Walsh
2016 recipient

Lorraine Walsh

"As a final year JD student undertaking the Social Justice Program at Sydney Law School. I am extremely grateful to have been awarded a *Judicial Council of Australia Scholarship*.

With a professional background in the NGO sector and broad experience in volunteer advocacy, I first undertook the JD to pursue a practical career in law.

Currently I am working as a paralegal in the Class Actions department of Maurice Blackburn Lawyers and equipping myself to pursue legal avenues where I believe social justice outcomes can be truly realised.

The *Judicial Conference of Australia Scholarship* will greatly assist me with many of the costs associated with studying and volunteering. While I work part-time, I also undertake a large amount of unpaid work, especially in my role as Vice-President (Social Justice) of SULS.

The projects I am responsible for include the Juvenile Justice Mentoring Scheme, Refugee Language Program, Public Interest Careers Fair and lunchtime seminars, the Social Justice Conference, high school engagement days and the Dissent editorial board. I also sit as the student representative on the Faculty Social Justice Advisory Committee.

In 2016, I am initiating a new Social Justice Mentoring Program that will fill a gap for students seeking advice and guidance in gaining experience in this area.

I have been a team leader in my role as Co-Convenor of the Amnesty International NSW Refugee Network for the last three years, and I am a volunteer paralegal at the Refugee Advice and Casework Service since July 2014.

Some of the most valuable legal work I have contributed to was drafting submissions to the Minister. This led to a particularly vulnerable client being removed from offshore detention, to community detention. This role was my first practical legal experience, and cemented my commitment to forging a career in social justice law.

I wish to thank the generosity of those who have made this scholarship possible. Your support will allow me to continue pursuing my volunteer commitments in my final year of law school."



“Receiving this scholarship has only furthered my desire to spend my time, effort and now personal funds towards the causes I am passionate about. I am convinced that using the weight of the law is the most effective means by which to fight for widespread recognition for rights of the marginalised.”

Nasreen Jahan
2016 recipient

Nasreen Jahan

“I am writing to express my immense gratitude to the Judicial Conference of Australia Incorporated for establishing the *Judicial Conference of Australia Scholarship*.

I will use this generous sum of money in a manner that will serve to advance the valuable social justice objectives that the Judicial Conferences actively support.

My academic strengths lie in scrutinising others’ viewpoints and expressing innovative arguments of my own. With this knowledge, I chose to study law. However, I was not expecting my law degree to drive my desire to seriously pursue a career that is primarily public-interest oriented.

The studies I have undertaken so far have forced me to question the causes of inequalities in the societies we live in, and consider potential means by which to overcome these.

Receiving this scholarship has furthered my desire to spend my time, effort and personal funds towards the causes I am passionate about. I am convinced that using the weight of the law is the most effective means by which to fight for widespread recognition for rights of the marginalised.

I have honed a particular passion for criminal justice reform during my years at law school and I am determined to research better prison rehabilitation programs than those which are currently in place.

Currently, I am applying for the 2016 South East Asia Field School - a program where students travel to Malaysia and Indonesia to learn about local legal systems, political environments and cultural practices. I have long been interested in the Indonesian criminal justice system, the endemic corruption and its more systemic impacts on offenders there - both local and foreign.

Direct exposure to the world renowned rehabilitation programs that Indonesian prisons have in place will serve as inspiration for my ambitions. However, I will not use the entirety of the scholarship to fund this trip. I intend to put the majority of the sum towards supporting myself while volunteering for existing social justice initiatives.

I cannot express my appreciation for this scholarship strongly enough, thank you.”

Judicial Conference of Australia Scholarship



Herbet Smith Freehills Law Library at the University of Sydney.

2015 recipients

Phoebe Brosnan

“My experience in the Social Justice Program at Sydney Law School exposed me to the plight of thousands of Australians who are homeless, or on the brink of homelessness, and the difficulties they experience in receiving legal advice and support.

The *Judicial Conference of Australia Scholarship* financially helped me when volunteering for the Homeless Persons’ Legal Service - a branch of the Public Interest Advocacy Centre. Volunteering at the Homeless Persons’ Legal Service had a profound impact on my law degree and enabled me to appreciate the contribution that lawyers can make to the community.

The opportunities I was able to undertake as a result of the scholarship opened my eyes to the huge gaps in resources for social justice law initiatives. It made me realise that supporting community legal services and centres is fundamentally important, especially in light of recent government cuts to these areas.

In the future, I hope to practice law and continue to be involved in pro-bono initiatives. I have recently become involved in the Migrant Outreach Service Advice, Information and Community (MOSAIC) program, run by Justice Connect. MOSAIC provides legal advice and support to migrants in Australia.

I am so grateful for the *Judicial Conference of Australia Scholarship*, which allows law students to experience the social justice aspects of law which are so often overlooked. I hope the scholarship continues so more students can have the same experiences I learnt so much from.”



“My experience of the Social Justice Program reinforced my passion to continue work on improving our country for those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged. I am excited to remain working in this area throughout my career.”

Rebecca Campbell
2015 recipient

Rebecca Campbell

“My first exposure to law was in my undergraduate degree when I studied the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international law initiatives that had an impact on global development.

After completing a Bachelor of Economic and Social Sciences with honours in 2010, I began studying law to gain concrete skills that would allow me to have a positive impact on the lives of others.

So far, I have used these skills as an emerging legal professional to support refugees, injured workers, the Australian Human Rights Commission and various Amnesty International campaigns.

Receiving the *Judicial Conference of Australia Scholarship* was instrumental in allowing me to take time out of paid work to complete a legal internship with the Australian Human Rights Commission in Semester 2, 2015.

I learned about how the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has been transformed and incorporated into Australian law, and was exposed to exciting discussions on how Australian law could be extended to offer even greater protection for human rights.

My experience of the Social Justice Program reinforced my passion to continue work on improving our country for those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged. I am excited to remain working in this area throughout my career.

In terms of my future goals, I am on track to be admitted to the Supreme Court of NSW in June. I am also preparing to undertake an internship later in the year with the United Nations Assistance to the Khmer Rouge Tribunal in Cambodia, in the Office of the Prosecutor.

I would like to thank the Judicial Conference of Australia Incorporated for supporting my efforts to use my legal education and qualifications to create a better Australia for those who are vulnerable or disadvantaged, and to share my skills with others.

The *Judicial Conference of Australia Scholarship* provided a welcome reminder that the legal community values social justice, and those fighting for it. Achieving success as a lawyer is often defined as achieving success as a corporate lawyer, so it was very heartening to have my achievements and commitment to social justice recognised in this way.

I am now not only passionate about social justice, but also extremely proud of the work I am able to do.”

Judicial Conference of Australia Scholarship

“The *Judicial Conference of Australia Scholarship* impacted on my educational career by allowing me to take time off paid, non-social justice related work to attend the three-week intensive student placement at PIAC, which was part of my Social Justice Program at Sydney Law School.”

James Clifford
2015 recipient



James Clifford

“My goal in studying law was to develop a skill-set I could use to further social justice goals and offer to communities needing the support. Seeing the excellent work community legal centres do in attempting to make the law more accessible, accountable and just, I decided to commit my working life to these organisations.

The *Judicial Conference of Australia Scholarship* impacted on my educational career by allowing me to take time off paid work to attend an intensive placement at the Public Interest Advocacy Centre.

While at the Public Interest Advocacy Centre, I had the opportunity to work with brilliant lawyers. This included work on the intentional torts as they applied to police conduct, including false imprisonment and malicious prosecution, and research into the potential of public good litigation funding models in New South Wales.

My exposure to the Public Interest Advocacy Centre’s work galvanised the goals I set early in my law degree regarding where and how I would like to use my developing legal skills.

Without the scholarship, I would not have been able to take time off paid work and have this experience, while still being able to afford my rent, living and study expenses.

The scholarship also enabled me to be Editor-in-Chief of *Dissent*, the Sydney University Law Society Social Justice Journal. Being involved in extra-curricular activities like this is one of the benefits of attending Sydney Law School. However they can be difficult to access for students who are balancing study and paid work. The *Judicial Conference of Australia Scholarship* helped ease that balance and enable me to write and produce a journal that contained students thinking critically about the law and its nexus with social justice.

Now that I have completed my LLB, I hope to continue working in an organisation like the Public Interest Advocacy Centre or the Aboriginal Legal Service, where I’ve previously volunteered.

I want to stay true to my goal of using the law to mitigate the injustices inflicted on marginalised groups, and offer my skills to these communities to fulfil their legal and social justice goals.

I am very grateful to the Judicial Conference of Australia Incorporated for establishing the scholarship and allowing me to draw as much as possible from my university experience.

The show of support was invigorating and further confirmed my goals of using my law degree to work for social justice.”

"I have always been deeply interested in intellectual and academic pursuits, but I found something richly rewarding about helping individuals on a practical level."

Anonymous
2015 recipient



The exterior of the Sydney Law School building.

Anonymous recipient

"Throughout high school, I volunteered for a number of local community organisations, from respite and care organisations to mentoring young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

I have always been deeply interested in intellectual and academic pursuits, but I found something richly rewarding about helping individuals on a practical level. Law seemed to offer the best of both worlds - a means to dovetail my interest in thinking deeply with a hope to see the fruits of my labour manifested in the lives of individuals.

The *Judicial Conference of Australia Scholarship* allowed me to renew my commitment to social justice by volunteering for a range of organisations.

Through the Aurora legal internship program, I volunteered with Cape York Land Council, a Native Title Representative Body based in Cairns. In this position, I worked on Australia's largest native title claim, interviewing traditional owners and organising consultations with local communities.

I also completed my placement with the Public Interest Advocacy Centre, where I worked across a host of social justice issues, such as assisting clients at the Homeless Persons' Legal Service and working in policy development concerning the abuse of police powers.

The scholarship gave me the financial security to focus on my academic interests. For much of my law degree, my subjects were constrained by compulsory units and part-time paralegal work.

For my final year of study, I've chosen electives which maintain my interest in the practical side of the law, but which have expanded my conception of what is possible as part of a career in social justice. This has led to my applying to do a PhD at Harvard University.

Starting in September this year, I will study international legal history and the history of human rights. I feel incredibly privileged to have the opportunity to study at such a noted institution, and with some of the best professors in the world.

I am also keenly aware this would not have been attainable without the strong academic grounding and crucial financial support I received from Sydney Law School and its donors.

I would like to offer my heartfelt thanks to the Judicial Conference of Australia Incorporated for financially supporting my legal education, and in particular for encouraging my interest in social justice. In an industry that often privileges corporate work, it is heartening to see an organisation express such a clear commitment to social justice."

Judicial Conference of Australia Scholarship

“Receiving the *Judicial Conference of Australia Scholarship* enabled me to participate in a program that I would have otherwise been unable to afford. This allowed me to gain practical experience in an organisation which strives to achieve outcomes that I did, and still do, feel passionate about – the rights of refugees and their families in Australia.”

Tyler Drayton
2014 recipient



2014 recipients

Tyler Drayton

“I chose to pursue a career in the law for two reasons: I was interested in the intellectual challenge that analysing complex legal questions presented, and secondly, in ways the law could be used as a mechanism to achieve social outcomes.

Because of the financial pressures associated with full-time study, I often found I was not able to actively engage with the second of these two motives.

When studying at university, I worked part-time at a law firm in order to support myself. While this work was edifying, it served as a distraction from my primary goal of committing to my studies and engaging in part-time work with a refugee community legal service (which, due to its nature, was often unpaid).

Because of the generosity of the *Judicial Conference of Australia Scholarship*, I was able to step back from work at the law firm to undertake an internship with the Refugee Advice and Legal Centre (RACS).

This incredible opportunity allowed me to pursue my interest in refugee law and policy at the same time, which simply would not have been financially feasible had I not received the scholarship.

Following my graduation in 2014, I commenced work as a solicitor at Allens Linklaters where I have been involved in both the corporate and litigation groups. My involvement with the latter has exposed me to interesting pro-bono refugee legal work, including the preparation of a successful ministerial intervention request for two prospective refugees. This work was greatly supported by the skills I learnt and my experience at RACS during university.

Receiving the *Judicial Conference of Australia Scholarship* enabled me to participate in a program that I would have otherwise been unable to afford. This allowed me to gain practical experience in an organisation which strives to achieve outcomes that I did, and still do, feel passionate about – the rights of refugees and their families in Australia.

I am forever grateful to the Judicial Conference of Australia Incorporated for the opportunities that have been provided to me.

Thank you.”

"I wish to express my heartfelt thanks to the Judicial Conference of Australia Incorporated for enabling me to undertake what was a profoundly rewarding and educational experience."

Adam Zwi
2014 recipient



Adam Zwi

"The *Judicial Conference of Australia Scholarship* enabled me to fully commit myself to the Social Justice Program at Sydney Law School. I have no hesitation in saying that this course has proved to be the single most useful course I undertook during my studies.

Outside of my day-to-day employment, I have been fortunate enough to engage in advocacy through my involvement with the NSW Council for Civil Liberties, where I constantly draw on my experience of the Social Justice Program. In particular, I utilise the submission writing, media planning, public consultation and advocacy strategy skills that I was exposed to during my time at the Public Interest Advocacy Centre. The course also strengthened my understanding of human rights and anti-discrimination law.

I wish to express my heartfelt thanks to the Judicial Conference of Australia Incorporated for enabling me to undertake what was a profoundly rewarding and educational experience.

In pursuit of social justice, I am continually utilising the skills I acquired during my placement at the Public Interest Advocacy Centre."

Thank you

The Social Justice Program at Sydney Law School is an important and valuable way for students to undertake practical legal work and provide vital services to disadvantaged members of our community.

Support from the Judicial Conference of Australia Incorporated not only gives financial aid to students undertaking the Social Justice Program, but indirectly aids the wider community by encouraging students to participate in activities which help some of Australia's most marginalised groups.

On behalf of the University of Sydney, thank you for your generosity. Your support and foresight has allowed over 30 talented law students to participate in the Social Justice Program and gain skills they will carry for the rest of their careers.

For more information

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