

Professor The Hon. Michael Lavarch



Michael Lavarch is Professor of Law and Executive Dean of the Faculty of Law at the Queensland University of Technology, a position he has held since March 2004. A QUT graduate, Michael commenced his legal career in Brisbane as a Solicitor. His time in practice was short, however, as in 1987, aged 26, Michael was elected to Australian Federal Parliament for an electorate in Queensland. He served three terms in the Parliament until 1996. Prior to his service in Parliament, Michael served from 1982 to 1987 as a Councillor on the Pine Rivers Shire Council.

In 1993 Michael was appointed as Attorney-General in the Australian national government. As such he had policy responsibility for major areas of substantive Law including the Australian Company Law, Family Law and Bankruptcy Law and for the major institutions of justice including the Australian Federal Police and the Commonwealth Courts, including the High Court.

Following the 1996 national election, Michael resumed his legal career working as Special Counsel to the legal firms of Dunhill Madden Butler and Deacons, where he specialised in land access issues for major infrastructure projects, particularly in the areas of native title and cultural heritage clearances.

From 2001 to 2004, Michael was the Secretary-General of the Law Council of Australia, the peak industry body for the Australian legal profession. His term as Secretary-General saw considerable progress on a comprehensive recasting of the regulation of the legal profession towards the facilitation of national legal practice and the adoption of national practice standards for all lawyers.

Michael holds a number of directorships on national companies and organisations:

- Chair, Banking and Financial Services Ombudsman Limited (BFSO), a dispute resolution service which deals with consumer complaints about banks and other financial institutions;
- Director, National Electricity Marketing Management Company Limited (NEMMCO), the company established by Australian governments to operate the national electricity market;
- Director, Australian Stock Exchange Supervisory Review (ASXSR), a special purpose subsidiary of the Australian Stock Exchange. The ASXSR operates as an independent body within the ASX Group to review the performance of regulatory functions by the ASX;

- Director, Audit Quality Review Board (AQRB), which monitors processes by which audit firms seek to ensure their compliance with professional standards and legal obligations regarding independence and audit quality with respect to financial audits of publicly-listed companies.

Michael has carried out extensive work in the field of constitutional law, including being an elected delegate from Queensland to the 1998 National Constitutional Convention which debated and proposed amendments to the Constitution to establish an Australian Republic. He also was an appointed delegate to the Queensland Constitutional Convention in 1998 and in 2003 he was appointed by Prime Minister Howard to an expert panel to review and report on proposals to change the way in which conflicts between the House of Representatives and the Senate are resolved.

Michael has undertaken a number of significant community service and education roles including:

- Director, PLAN International Australia, the Australian arm of one of the world's largest NGOs providing education and health programs in 40 developing nations;
- Director, Forde Foundation, which provides financial assistance to former residents of state and church orphanages;
- Member of the Senate of the University of Queensland;
- Member of the Advisory Committee to the Institute for Ethics, Governance and Law at Griffith University;
- Member of the Advisory Committee reviewing legal education and training in Victoria;
- Founding member of the Law Opportunity Foundation Limited. The objectives of the Foundation are essentially aimed at the relief of poverty through the provision of educational assistance to young people in Queensland wishing to undertake a degree leading to the practice of law.