

FOREWORD

*Sian Elias*¹

It is with great pleasure that I welcome the publication of the first issue of the *Public Interest Law Journal of New Zealand*. It is a significant occasion, both for law students and the wider profession. This is only the third of New Zealand's law journals to be devoted to student work and is the first of those to be dedicated to a special area of law.

The introduction of another avenue for the publication of student work is excellent news for students. In contrast to many of their overseas peers, particularly those in the United States, law students in New Zealand have few opportunities to have their work published. Student law journals offer contributors the thrill of seeing their work made available to a large audience for the first time. As well, preparing work for publication, and submitting it to a team of editors, fosters legal writing skills that will serve students well throughout their careers.

The wider profession, too, will greet this journal with enthusiasm. There is no doubt that there is first-rate legal scholarship being produced by students in New Zealand's universities. Indeed, several articles authored by students have been cited in decisions of New Zealand courts in recent years. The availability of more high quality student work on important legal issues will, I am sure, be met with enthusiasm by judges, practitioners and academics. The decision to publish the journal online means that all those who wish to access it will be able to do so.

I am confident that the journal's focus on legal issues relevant to the general public and to underprivileged groups will also be welcomed. There is increased interest in the role of the law in dealing with social and environmental challenges. As well, there is a growing concern with how the law affects the most vulnerable members of society. This, the first issue, contains articles dealing with a very broad range of topical and interesting legal issues – from maternal imprisonment and childrens' rights to the reception of United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People in Australia and New Zealand. The journal's founders have certainly achieved their goal of assembling articles which address real world problems, rather than merely theoretical issues.

Involvement with the journal, both by those who have their work published in it and those taking part in the editing process, will prove immensely rewarding. I wish those involved all the best and I am sure that this journal will prove a valuable addition to the ranks of New Zealand's law reviews.

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