

## **Symposium—Concluding comments from the Chair**

### **Professor Rosalind Croucher**

Thank you all for your excellent contributions this afternoon. The fact that we have so many more questions to ask is a confirmation as to the importance of our topic both to us individually and collectively through the Academy.

What we have seen today is an affirmation—an affirmation, a credo even, that our discipline is important.

It is far more than a ‘bolt on’ to the other learned Academies in Australia. It is a collective commitment to the idea that the discipline of law is different—and important.

Central to that difference is the notion of a profession—and one in which a commitment to ethics, its moral core, was critical to its preservation, its very identity. We also heard of the key role of education in the development of that professional identity. Given the lifelong commitment of the Governor, her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce, to education it seems entirely fitting that we are speaking of such things as her guests for the launch of the Academy.

We have heard various metaphors today around the theme of building—building bridges—laying foundations.

But in speaking of ‘founding’ we must be careful that we do not produce ‘foundlings’, left crying and abandoned.

Our excellent team of speakers this afternoon has provided us much to think upon—and a program of possibilities for action—to pick up the baton of the relay commenced today. As Bob Nicholson remarked, to take the Academy into the next stage of operation we will now need a ‘wise board’. Given the absolutely pivotal role that Professor David Weisbrot has played in bringing the Academy to its launch today, there is a nice symmetry—from a ‘weisbrot’ to a ‘wise board’...

This afternoon we have added some very solid bricks to the foundations. We are also left with challenges. Indeed the very title of the Symposium reinforces that idea of challenge, reflected in something as simple as punctuation. ‘Fragmentation or consolidation? Fostering a coherent professional identity for lawyers’—does it end with a question mark, a full-stop, or an exclamation mark?

The responsibility is now a collective one. To pick up the batons, to take up the trowel and lay on the mortar with more bricks.

And now, Professor David Weisbrot has some particular ‘thank yous’ to make...