

About Leo Cussen Centre for Law

About us

Since its establishment in 1972, Leo Cussen Centre for Law has been and continues to be recognised as a centre of excellence for practical legal training and continuing professional development for entry-level lawyers through to senior legal practitioners.

Our purpose is to provide high quality education, training and professional development to strengthen and support the administration of justice and the legal system.

Our vision is transforming the legal profession through education and connection.

Leo Cussen provides Practical Legal Training (PLT) and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for lawyers, as well as traineeship programs for entry-level lawyers employed by law firms; training for overseas lawyers seeking admission to the Australian legal profession; and for lawyers needing to requalify, as well as courses for legal support staff.

Our History

Leo Cussen Centre for Law is named after one of the leading figures in Australian legal history: Sir Leo Cussen.

Leo Cussen Institute was established by an Act of Victorian Parliament and was, for over 40 years, a not-for-profit statutory body supporting the legal system by providing quality legal education, training and professional development.

We are proud of our longstanding commitment to excellence in legal education which enhances protection for legal consumers and supports and strengthens the administration of justice.

In 2010 the Leo Cussen Institute commenced trading under the business name of Leo Cussen Centre for Law and in 2012 became a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity, continuing its work as a not-for-profit centre of excellence for practical legal training, ongoing professional development for lawyers, and legal education for all professionals.

Membership of the Board

As at July 2022, the members of the Board of the Leo Cussen Institute (the corporate entity) are:

Mr Tom Poulton (Chair)

Ms Karin Clark

Ms Georgina Frost

Mr Rob Giles

Ms Barbara van Erst

Ms Diane Pardo

Ms Shirley Southgate (Executive Director)

Staff

A list of the staff of the Leo Cussen Centre for Law is on the Leo Cussen website at: [Our Team](#)

The Honourable Sir Leo Finn Bernard Cussen

Sir Leo Cussen

Leo Finn Bernard Cussen was born in Portland, Victoria, in 1859. After graduating from the University of Melbourne, he was called to the Victorian Bar in 1886, and in 1906 was appointed to the bench of the Supreme Court of Victoria, where he displayed a combination of legal expertise, great humanity and practicality that were to mark him, in the words of Sir Robert Menzies, as 'one of the great judges of the English-speaking world'.



In addition to his duties as a judge, Leo Cussen accepted responsibility for the consolidations of the Victorian Acts of Parliament, which took place in 1915 and again in 1928. In 1922, after four years of labour over centuries of English legislation, he presented to the Victorian Parliament the Bill for the Imperial Acts Application Act. The Act was passed without amendment. In that same year Leo Cussen received his knighthood for 'invaluable service to his country'.

Sir Leo maintained a great interest in sport, as participant and administrator. From 1907 until his death in 1933, he was the President of the Melbourne Cricket Club.

After his death, The Honourable Sir Leo Cussen received the highest praise from Victorian judge Sir Arthur Dean, who wrote: 'by many standards he was our greatest', a statement echoed more recently by Michael Kirby, retired judge of the High Court of Australia, who said Sir Leo was 'one of the greatest of Australia's judges'.