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Opening Remarks

Emeritus Professor Colin Reid

I was honoured to be invited to introduce this latest issue of the *Dundee Student Law Review*. The continuing health of this enterprise is something that all involved can be proud of. Congratulations are due to everyone concerned, whatever their role, from the earliest stages of planning and encouraging contributions, through the writing, reviewing and editing to the final stages of production.

The emergence of the *Dundee Student Law Review* was one of the many developments during the more than 30 years I spent on the staff at Dundee Law School and is sign of the continuous efforts by everyone there, staff and students, to ensure that Dundee offers a stimulating and productive experience that equips students for their future lives. Items in this issue, with their international dimension and environmental focus, also reflect two further big changes over that period.

Firstly, the academic legal world in Scotland has taken on a much more international flavour, in its students, staff and its level of engagement with ideas, issues and scholars beyond our own shores. Legal writing from Scotland is definitely not just confined to ideas from and impacts in Scotland.

Secondly, environmental law has grown to be recognised as a significant field of study, multi-faceted and with a key role in tackling the most pressing problems faced by the world. It is hard to remember the days when I had space on my bookshelf (and capacity in my budget!) to gather all of the books on environmental law in the UK.

Such evolution in how and what we study must continue and it is a pleasure to see in this issue the work of a new generation at the early stage of their contributions to our future.

Prof Colin T Reid,
Emeritus Professor of Environmental Law,
University of Dundee

Comment from Former Head of Law

Professor Sarah Hendry

It is always lovely to see the work coming through in the Dundee Student Law Review, and especially for me to see an issue focusing on climate and related topics. I very much look forward to reading the articles and many thanks to the editorial team and all the contributors.

A Litigator's Appeal

Daisy Johnston[1]

The impact on the legal profession on the climate can no longer be ignored. With the routine adoption of computer usage for everyday tasks and the ever-increasing use of artificial intelligence, we as a profession contribute increasingly to carbon emissions in turn causing potentially irreversible damage to the planet. Business travel also remains a substantial contributor to our carbon footprint, with solicitors, clients, counsel, and witnesses travelling sometimes hundreds of miles for meetings and hearings.

In January 2026 the Law Society of Scotland provided practical guidance to the profession in terms of the net zero target.[2] This warned against 'dabbling' in environmental law but encouraged the provision of appropriate environmental advice to clients and sustainable drafting. But in practical terms, what can and should legal professionals do to mitigate their own impact on the climate?

As a litigator myself, the primary adjustment I have observed is the introduction of virtual meetings, hearings, and mediations. First popularised during the COVID-19 pandemic, virtual appointments have reduced the need for both national and international travel on a large scale. In the longer term the lack of a requirement to attend in person has led to an increase in home working, reducing not only travel but also the need for larger office spaces and therefore energy used. Another unintended consequence of the COVID-19

[1] Solicitor at Thorntons LLP; LLB & DPLP at University of Dundee.
[2] https://www.lawscot.org.uk/members/journal-hub/articles/net-zero-and-the-next-steps-for-the-legal-profession-practical-guidance/

pandemic is the increased use of electronic filing and bundling, which has significantly reduced the substantial volume of paper required under the previous system. The wider adoption of electronic signatures, in particular Qualified Electronic Signatures, which are now accepted by the Books of Council and Session, allows for a significant reduction in both paper and postage of wet ink signed pages.

At a more strategic level we may see climate factors becoming part of competent professional practice and risk management, perhaps forming part of ethical considerations when accepting new clients or instruction. As with any successful change commitment from senior practitioners and thought leaders will be essential. Whilst the Scottish legal profession has made positive changes, it is clear to see that we are not out of the woods yet, and it is important to commit to real action. The profession must continue to make sustainable choices, whether that is using ethical suppliers and sustainable procurement, digital notebooks rather than paper or simply bringing coffee in a flask from home rather than picking up a takeaway cup!

If you are interested in climate activism and would like to learn more, 2050 Climate Group is proud to host the award-winning, completely free Climate Action Leadership Programme (CALP),[3] which is a unique opportunity for young people (18 - 35 years old) to connect with others in the climate community. The programme is designed to be accessible for different levels of climate knowledge; no formal qualifications are required. The programme is designed to be as flexible and accommodating as possible in relation to participants' schedules. While participants are encouraged to attend in-person event days, it is understood that this isn't always possible, so all core content is recorded. In addition, as part of their commitment to removing barriers 2050 Climate Group can cover travel costs through their Participation Fund. The Climate Action Leadership Programme also includes optional online modules and field trips, such as trips to the Scottish Parliament and sessions focusing on career development. One main element of the module is that over the 6-month period participants are supported in creating and delivering a climate action based on their interests. If you would like more information about the programme, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

[3] https://www.2050.scot/calp