

# 'kϑη grεs 2009 Celebration Dinner

## Presentation speech

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Prepared by LEADR Chair, Margaret Halsmith, presented on her behalf by Fiona Hollier, LEADR CEO and adapted for inclusion in this *Update*.

Thank you Nicole Cullen, Chair of the Victorian Chapter and to the Victorian Chapter Executive for your role in tonight's dinner in this uniquely Victorian setting.

This dinner is a celebration of 21 years of LEADR. LEADR as you know is a not-for-profit membership organisation guided by altruism, excellence and member benefits.

I want to add a human dimension to the short history in your [programs](#) (pg 14). It all started at a breakfast in 1988 with some serious networking, a tradition maintained since.

In 2009, LEADR is what it is due to many people. In my experience, LEADR brings out the best in people.

I have been a member of LEADR for 10 of its 21 years. Professionally speaking, I was homeless in 1999. I was ready to mediate without the protection of an employer. I was looking for a professional organization that would provide catalysts for my learning, a mechanism for my professional accountability and enable me to participate in the big picture of ADR.

Although I did not fit the demographic, my initial experience of LEADR was one of welcome and openness and eagerness to listen.

### LEADR is its members

Tonight is a rare opportunity to reflect on the history of LEADR. We have a number of people who have been part of the LEADR community for 21 years.

First, the patron of LEADR, Sir Laurence Street. Sir Laurence, your name is synonymous with ADR in Australia!

You have brought and continue to bring initiative, gravitas, commitment and skill to the profession. Along the way I'm sure you have met and overcome many challenges.

Thank you for paving the way and continuing to participate in the LEADR community.



There is a group of people who I describe as the LEADR luminaries. They are people who have this in common:

All altruistic

All made voluntary contributions

All made significant contributions

All sustained their contribution over a long period of time

All leading in their legal roles and highly regarded in their field; and

All have remained contemporary and ahead of the ADR game in Australasia.

The LEADR luminaries are:

- Gerald Raftesath: the founding chair who attracted and retained excellent staff including Therese Skinner, Sue Duncombe, Jennifer David and Judith Heap.
- Michael Klug: first vice chair who developed the acronym LEADR and who recently made provision for a prize to be awarded annually by the Board.
- Oscar Shub: chair in the challenging 1990s.
- Alan Limbury: second chair who opened membership to ADR practitioners other than lawyers; and
- Michael Mills: who steered LEADR through a period of substantial change.



**Gerald Raftesath**



**Michael Klug**

Tonight, Gerald Raftesath and Michael Klug have joined us for dinner.

Alan Limbury, Oscar Shub and Michael Mills each send their apologies and wish us well.

[To listen to Gerald Raftesath and Michael Klug's speeches, [click here >>](#)]

As I said, LEADR brings out the best in people. Continuing to mine the archives, there is a group of people who, in their paid roles, acquitted themselves not just beyond their duty statement as many have done, but *well* above and beyond their duties:

- Ms Sue Duncombe: CEO and trainer;
- Ms Joanna Kalowski: chair and Fellow (or Sheila as she preferred to be called);
- Ms Jennifer David: first CEO;
- Ms Judith Heap: joint CEO when premises in Macquarie Street.

These people are all known for their energy, commitment and contagious enthusiasm.

If there is one person who epitomises commitment above and beyond her duty statement, who had a foot in the 'early days' camp and another in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is Ms Therese Skinner. With more than 15 years in the administrative role, Therese has been dedicated to LEADR and is a vital part of our corporate memory.



We have other honored guests including two of our three LEADR Fellows who have each given freely of their

time to represent LEADR. Ms Joanna Kalowski and the current Fellow, Mr Geoff Sharp are with us. We would have been pleased if The Hon Tony Fitzgerald had been able to join us.

LEADR's image is essential in conveying our message and in encouraging new and retaining existing members. Who would have thought 21 years ago that LEADR's image would be presented to the world with a website, let alone a website as welcoming and dynamic as ours. My warm thanks to those names that appear as a footnote on each *Update* you receive.

For the 21 years of LEADR, LEADR has been fortunate to have many ambassadors, starting of course with past and present CEOs who have steered LEADR to where it is today; trainers who make a wonderful first impression on people many of whom are new to LEADR; likewise our many enthusiastic coaches; and assessors whose time preparing individualised feedback is much valued by LEADR.

LEADR is who it is because of the work of the Chapter executives and members throughout Australasia who welcome members old and new, the life blood and the *raison d'être* of LEADR.

Finally I would like to acknowledge the support of family and friends of all those who support LEADR. I thank you for your contribution to enabling LEADR to remain the vibrant organisation that it is.

I propose a toast to all, including absent friends.

Enjoy the evening in this beautiful and unique setting and thank you!