

Foreword

The energy, scholarship and working knowledge evident in the presentations and exchange of ideas at the international Modernising Charity Law conference held in Brisbane in April 2009 has been maintained in the production of this collection of papers that originated at the conference. The conference was held at a critical time for reflection on significant reforms affecting charities and charity law in some jurisdictions and consideration of the possibility of greater reform in other jurisdictions, against the impact of the global financial crisis. As with any good conference, general themes emerged during the presentation of the papers and panel discussions that did not necessarily reflect the anticipated structure of the conference. This has been accommodated by the ordering of the chapters in this volume to cover these themes in a methodical way (rather than the order in which papers were presented), as is explained in the introduction to the volume.

The work of charities was important to English society when the Statute of Elizabeth was enacted in 1601. Charities remain important to the functioning of society in each jurisdiction, but their role and the regulation and nature of charities have changed significantly since 1601 and will continue to change to meet the challenges of a dynamic society that demands transparency and accountability where any use of public funds or benefit arising from charitable status is involved.

This volume is an excellent resource for those who wish to make a comparative study of recent developments in charity law in a number of jurisdictions, or wish to gain a better understanding of the current issues in the area of charity law and the regulation of charities, or simply wish to ponder on the possibilities for future reforms. I congratulate the Australian Centre for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Studies at the Queensland University of Technology for its foresight in organising the Modernising Charity Law conference and the authors of this volume, not only for their scholarship, but for cooperating to produce this cohesive work to enable the benefits of the engagement at that conference to be available to a much wider audience.

Justice Debra Mullins
Supreme Court of Queensland, Brisbane