

Literacy & Economic Empowerment: Global Perspective
The Hon John Dowd, Chancellor, Southern Cross University, Australia

The Hon John Dowd AO QC

After graduating from the Faculty of Law at Sydney University, John Dowd was admitted as a solicitor, becoming partner of a Sydney firm before being called to the Bar in 1967, practising then in New South Wales, the ACT, and Papua New Guinea. In 1991, he was also admitted to the Bar of Ireland and became a member of the Kings Inns in Dublin. He was appointed Queens Counsel in NSW and the ACT.

In 1975 John Dowd was elected member of the Lane Cove in the NSW Parliament, rising to Leader of the Opposition in 1981, and eventually, on the Liberal National Party being elected to Government, was appointed Attorney-General and Leader of the House, positions which he held until his parliamentary retirement in 1991.

As Attorney-General, he was involved in reforms of the Supreme, District and Local Courts aimed at enhancing the courts' efficiency and had an important involvement in the reforms of the criminal, tort and motor accident laws. He was also one of those instrumental in the establishment of Australia's first Independent Commission Against Corruption in 1988. John was appointed to the Common Law Division of the Supreme Court of NSW in 1994, retiring in 2004. His judicial service included sitting on the Court of Criminal Appeal.

In 1974, John Dowd became a member of the Australian Section of the international Commission of Jurists (ICJ), and eventually became President of the Australian Section. In 1999, he was appointed an international Commissioner of the ICJ, and elected a member, and then Chairperson of the ICJ Executive Committee in Geneva in 2002. He has been involved in missions including to Hong Kong in 1991, East Timor in 2000 and Nepal in 2003. He also has been involved in trial observations and participated in numerous conferences whilst as member and Commissioner.

In 1997, John Dowd led the Australian Government delegation in Palestine to monitor the Palestinian Legislative Council Elections, and assisted in establishing the procedures for the Legislative Council. For the periods of 1992-1994, John Dowd was appointed Consul-General for the Cook Islands to Australia.

In 1992, John Dowd was elected as a Director of the Spastic Centre and became Deputy President, retiring from that Office in 1999. He was then appointed inaugural Goodwill Ambassador for the Spastic Centre, a position he continues to hold. In 2005, he was appointed on the Board of Governors, Cerebral Palsy Foundation.

John Dowd is currently Director of the Alola Foundation Timor L'Este, an organisation working to address the needs of East Timorese women in areas of advocacy, economic empowerment, education and literacy, maternal and child health and humanitarian assistance.

In 2002, John Dowd was elected Chancellor of Southern Cross University, a regional University in New South Wales with campuses in Lismore, Coffs Harbour, Sydney Melbourne and Tweed Heads. Around one third of the university students learn through distance education, primarily from Asia.

In 2005, John Dowd was appointed Protection Ambassador for Austcare.