

# **GOVERNING DEPRESSION IN AUSTRALIAN LEGAL EDUCATION: POWER, PSYCHOLOGY AND ADVANCED LIBERAL GOVERNMENT**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Legal educators in Australia have increasingly become concerned with the mental health of law students. The apparent risk posed by legal education to a student's mental health has led to the deployment of a variety of measures to address these problems. By exploring these measures as productive power relations attempting to shape law students, this paper outlines how this government of depression is achieved, and the potential costs of these power relations. It examines one central Australian text offering advice about how students and law student societies can address depression, and argues that doing so not only involves students adopting particular practices of self-government to shape their legal personae, but also relies on an extension of the power relations of legal education. In addition, this paper will link this advice – which privatises the issue of depression, responsabilises individuals and communities, privileges psychological expertise, and seeks to govern 'at a distance' – to broader forms of social administration that presently characterise many Western societies. Doing so allows legal educators to reflect on the effects of their attempts to govern depression, and to consider new ways of altering the power relations of legal education.