Writing your conclusion

Your conclusion is your last word on your question/issue/debate/problem, and potentially has great impact (second only to your introduction in importance) in the way it:

- states your position/argument, in your own words (preferably in one paragraph)
- draws together all the key issues addressed in your essay in an ordered way
- links your findings on these issues as components of your argument
- draws out the implications of your finding(s)—for the topic of interest. Do not add anything new to your argument. Instead, use your argument to say something (maybe tentatively) about the consequences of your findings for the issues/debate/problem central to your question. In some disciplines, it may be appropriate to comment on problems/issues in method.

You may find it useful, although not necessarily in this order, to think of a conclusion as being constructed according to “three moves”:

**Move 1: Restate your argument**
In general terms, what is your position on the question, debate or issue at the heart of the essay question?

**Move 2: Review your line of argument**
Draw together each component of your argument in a logical and meaningful way.

**Move 3: Draw out implications/consequences**
What are the implications or consequences of your conclusion to the field/discipline? How should your reader now be thinking differently about the topic?

In this way your essay conveys to your reader: “You gave me an issue/problem/question to consider - here is my response to that issue/problem/question and my response is significant, etc, because…” — although you wouldn’t word it this way!

When you have written your conclusion, go back and read the question or assignment task. Have you addressed the task? Does your conclusion agree with your introduction?

Example (first year Law assignment):

**Is there a place for programs such as the Koori Court in the Australian legal system? Should there be courts for other groups in our society? (1500 words)**

**State your argument:**

The consideration of Indigenous people of Australia as deserving a unique position is widely accepted across social, cultural, legal and political spheres. Specialist courts have long been accepted and have worked well, and the Koori Court in Victoria has been very successful and its practices provide a model for the wider court system.

**Draw together your line of argument:**

The debate about courts for all minorities is misleading and based upon a misunderstanding of the philosophy underpinning the Koori Court. It has created real benefits for Aboriginal people without the
necessity for special pleading of all minorities or undermining any legal principles. On the contrary, it has created a greater level of justice.

Implications for the debate:

It is now time for the debate to move away from "special pleading" argument towards the key issue: implementing changes to the legal system to improve justice outcomes for all people. [140 word conclusion]