

## Six Questions for....

Adam McBeth, Lecturer, Monash University

### Where were you working prior to coming to Monash University?

I was lecturing at Deakin University.

### And before that you were a research fellow here at the Castan Centre. It seems you've been interested in human rights for a long time.

Yes, I worked on the Castan Centre's project on multinational corporations and human rights. Before that I practised as a solicitor. After a while, I decided to leave it to others to help insurance companies squabble over each other's money. The rule of law has the potential to achieve much bigger things.

### Which area of human rights law are you most passionate about and why?

There is a tendency in some quarters to cordon off human rights; to say "this is not a human rights issue", for example in relation to trade or commerce and economic issues in general. It might seem a bit of a boring or esoteric subject to be passionate about, but I think the major challenge for human rights is to flex its legal muscle and to emphasise that human rights obligations apply in all areas of activity, and states are obliged

under international law to do everything within their power to protect human rights, even in areas that are regulated by other fields of law.

### What do you see as the biggest human rights issues for Australia at this time?

There seems to be an increasing willingness, from both the government and the opposition, as well as some parts of the media, to subsume human rights protections to a supposed greater goal. The obvious example is the "war on terror", but I think the more troubling development is the trend towards that approach in more and more areas, including workplace relations and immigration (not just physical treatment of people, but also the way applications and appeals are processed).



Adam McBeth

### Why do you think we call this segment 'six questions' when you've only been asked three (four including this one) plus a statement?

I assume it has something to do with postmodernism. Either that or declining numeracy standards at the Castan Centre.

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