

## Annual Conference a Huge Success

It is the aim of the Castan Centre's annual *Human Rights: Year in Review* conference to highlight the hot topics of the past 12 months and the December 2005 event certainly did that. The conference took place on a sombre day for human rights as Castan Centre Director, Sarah Joseph, commenced proceedings with a moment's silence for Australian citizen Nguyen Tuong Van, who was hanged that morning. Later in the day, Colin Fenwick from the University of Melbourne spoke about the human rights implications of the new workplace relations legislation as it was being passed by the Senate.

*Human Rights 2005: The Year in Review* was once again a great success, with well over 100 human rights lawyers, academics, activists and students from around Australia attending the gathering at the Malthouse theatre at Southbank. The day was opened with a presentation on the hot topics of the year by celebrated academic, His Ex-

cellency Judge C.G. Weeramantry, former Vice President of the International Court of Justice.

International issues addressed during the day included human rights in the aftermath of the Asian tsunami and

Hurricane Katrina (Kirsty Nowlan of World Vision), the proposed reforms of the United Nations (Professor Andrew Byrnes, UNSW), poverty and development (Professor Joseph) and Bills of Rights in Canada and Australia (Dr David Wiseman, University of Windsor, Canada).

The topical local issues discussed included the rights of the mentally ill in the wake of Cornelia Rau and Vivian Solon (Professor Bernadette McSherry), the Howard Government's "practical reconciliation" (Martin Flynn, UWA) and the ACT Human Rights Act (Dr Helen Watchirs, Human Rights and Discrimination Commissioner, ACT).

Feedback from the day was excellent and planning has already started in earnest for *Human Rights 2006: The Year in Review*, which will once again be held in December.



Castan Centre Administrator Kay Magnani at the Conference.

## British Terrorism Expert to Speak

Professor Conor Gearty, the Raising Director of the Centre for the Study of Human Rights at the London School of Economics, will speak at the Castan Centre on 11 May. Professor Gearty's speech will focus on bills of rights and terrorism

Professor Gearty was born in Ireland and graduated in law from University College Dublin before moving to Wolfson College, Cambridge in 1980 to study for a Master's Degree and then for a PhD. He became a fellow of Emmanuel College Cambridge in 1983 and in 1990 he moved to the School of Law at King's College London where he was first a senior lecturer, then a reader and finally (from 1995) a professor. On 1 October 2002, he took up a new appointment as Raising Director of the Centre for the Study of Human Rights and professor of human rights law at LSE.

Conor Gearty has published widely on terrorism, civil liberties and human

rights. His books include *Terror* (Faber, 1990) and two books with K D Ewing, *Freedom under Thatcher* (1989) and *The Struggle for Civil Liberties* (2000). Conor is also a barrister and was a founding member of Matrix Chambers from where he con-

tinues to practice. He has been a frequent adviser to judges, practitioners and public authorities on the implications of the UK Human Rights Act, and has frequently lectured at home and abroad on the topic of human rights. He has appeared in human rights cases in the House of Lords, the Court of Appeal and the High Court.

His latest book, entitled *Principles of Human Rights Adjudication*, is a study of the place of the Human Rights Act in Britain's constitutional order. It locates the measure in its political and historical context and analyses the case law from the perspective not only of principle but also of practical experience.

*Professor Gearty will speak at the Monash University Law Chambers, 472 Bourke Street, Melbourne at 6pm, Thursday 11 May 2006 on the topic of bills of rights and terrorism.*

