

# 2007 Interns Head to Three Continents

## *The Castan Centre Global Internship Program*

By Madhavi Ligam

The Castan Centre Global Internship Program has again attracted four outstanding Monash Law students, who are currently on assignment in Europe, Asia and North America. The program, which has been running since 2005, aims to send exceptional students to some of the world's leading human rights institutions.

In November 2006, Rachael Hopkins became the first Castan Centre intern to travel to Malaysia to work with International Women's Right Action Watch, Asia Pacific. IWRAW focuses on using human rights law to fight discrimination against women. One of its primary goals is to encourage countries (including Australia) to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which allows women to make individual complaints to the UN. Throughout her university studies, Rachael has been a passionate advocate of women's rights. In 2004, she completed her Honours dissertation on women's rights and sexuality with the private and public sphere. She also volunteered at the Women's Legal Service Victoria and at Monash-Oakleigh Legal Service.

Laura Tang, a final year Psychology/Law student, also left Australia in November 2006 to begin a three month internship at Human Rights First in New York. Established in 1978, Human Rights First strives to advance justice and respect for the rule of law. Its strong focus on the plight of refugees particularly encouraged Laura, who has worked closely with community organisations in Australia and overseas, to apply for this internship. She was Secretary of the Monash Charity Group, and volunteered at Sacred Heart Mission and the Monash-Oakleigh Legal Service. In 2004-05, Laura spent two months teaching English and Art to underprivileged children at the Parikrma Humanity Foundation in Bangalore, India, before heading to London where she volunteered for Save the Children UK.



(L-R) Bridi Rice, Megan Barnett, Laura Tang and Rachael Hopkins

On the other side of the globe in Europe, Megan Barnett began her three month internship in November at the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in the Hague. Established in 1993, the Tribunal was created by the United Nations to bring to justice persons who committed human rights violations in the territory of the former Yugoslavia. Like Laura, Megan's penchant for human rights and international law has encouraged her to do a variety of volunteer work in Australia and overseas. In 2004, she worked in HIV/AIDS affected parts of South Africa where she lived in a foster home with 92 Zulu children. Through the Red Cross, Megan worked with a remote aboriginal community on the Tiwi Islands. She has also volunteered with the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service and other advocacy organisations.

Finally, Bridi Rice will begin her internship with the Australian Delegation to the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva in March, 2007. This forum allows member states of the UN to negotiate on human rights issues. Bridi has a passion for international humanitarian law and international criminal law which can be seen from her extensive experience with various international organisations. She worked for a Ugandan NGO, Beroya, as a human rights case researcher, development consultant and legal educator.

While in Africa, Bridi was a guest speaker for the East African World Bank retreat delegation, an experience which she used to complete an internship with the Red Cross in which she examined the conflict in Northern Uganda. Bridi has spent the first three months of this year working in Cambodia where she has been an intern at the nascent Khmer Rouge Tribunal, which is a hybrid international/domestic court.

The Castan Centre hopes to offer five internship positions in 2008 and is currently negotiating with a number of possible host institutions. The internships are open to eligible Monash Law students, who receive funding from the Law School's Student Travel Fund.

*Laura and Rachael's reports are on pages 10 and 11.*