

Monash students flock to human rights careers events

Aspiring human rights law students were given invaluable insight into potential career paths in the international and domestic human rights sphere, at the Castan Centre's Human Rights Careers information sessions in August. The overriding message from speakers was that following your own personal passion and being willing to volunteer actively in the community is an invaluable foundation for a future career in the sector.

The first international speaker was Jonathon O'Donohue who is currently the Legal Advisor on International Justice at Amnesty International. Mr O'Donohue recounted his early years volunteering at Amnesty and told the audience that his willingness to put up his hand for any task had landed him working on a key project for the International Criminal Court. Mr O'Donohue's advice to upcoming human rights advocates was to actively volunteer, to willingly take on responsibility and to develop your skills in a niche area.

Similar to Mr O'Donohue, Kate Orange from the Attorney General's Department spoke of her extensive experience volunteering both domestically and internationally, with Save the Children and Amnesty and of her internship with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Ms Orange had also been an Australian Youth Ambassador for Development in Manila where she worked in the area of children's rights. Ms Orange commenced working at the Attorney General's Department as a graduate recruit, and works in the International Human Rights and Anti-discrimination branch engaging with the United Nations through treaty implementation and reporting processes. She is currently working on a project to advise the government on how to increase scrutiny of Australian law and their compatibility with international human rights obligations.

The final two international speakers were Amalia Fawcett and Rohan Kent, from Plan International, who gave students an insight into human rights related aid and development work. Mr Kent works in disaster management, direct food aid and Plan International's humanitarian



Belinda Lo talks about being a community lawyer.

program. He felt that individuals with a passion for human rights combined with a legal background could bring valuable expertise to the International NGO aid and development sector. Ms Fawcett is a Senior Child's Rights Specialist working in advocacy and fundraising for Plan International. She emphasised that a passion for children's rights, gaining field experience in Tanzania and volunteering for the Norwegian refugee council in Geneva had been invaluable experiences and were instrumental to her reaching her current position. Ms Fawcett encouraged students to make the most of the numerous opportunities for student internships in different NGOs, including at Plan International, Australia.

At the domestic human rights forum, Michael Power, a lawyer in Law Reform at the Environmental Defender's Office, reflected on his career as a lawyer as an invaluable experience. Mr Power has decided his primary passion is in advocacy and plans to devote the next step in his career to advocating for human rights and the environment by being a campaigner at Environment Victoria. However he explained

that the skills he learnt as a community lawyer were sure to prepare him well for his future career. The second speaker was Belinda Lo, Principal Lawyer at the Eastern Community Legal Centre, who spoke of the immense satisfaction she gained from working directly with clients and advocating for social justice. Finally, Gudrun Dewey, Senior Legal Advisor, Victorian Equal Opportunities and Human Rights Commission, discussed the crucial role the Commission plays in protecting and promoting human rights in Victoria.

In both seminars, students fired off questions about different human rights career paths, showing once again that there is keen interest in this growing field. And if that interest and passion is anything to go by, the future of human rights in Australia will be in safe hands.

Centre Deputy Directors Receive Promotions

Castan Centre Deputy Directors Julie Debeljak and Adam McBeth have both been promoted to Associate Professors in Monash University's Law Faculty. The promotions are a tangible recognition of academic staff achievement and peer regard across research, teaching and service. They join another Castan Centre Paula Gerber who was made an Associate Professor in 2012. Congratulations to both Julie and Adam for their achievement.