

Castan Centre for Human Rights Law



NEWSLETTER

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The Castan Centre was established by the Monash University Law School in 2000 as an independent, non-profit organisation committed to the protection and promotion of human rights.

Through research and public education, the Centre generates innovative theoretical and practical approaches to understanding and implementing international and domestic human rights law.

Human Rights Challenges in the Pacific

Annual Lecture addresses Australia's role in the Pacific

Just as the recent controversies in the Solomon Islands were unfolding, Dr Shaista Shameem visited Melbourne to deliver the Castan Centre Annual Lecture on current human rights issues in the South Pacific.

Dr Shameem, the ground breaking Director of the Fiji Human Rights Commission, delivered a topical, thought provoking and challenging speech to a large crowd at the Mel-

bourne Town Hall in early October. She referred to the recent problems in East Timor, but saved her most prescient comments for the state of the relationship between Australia and the Pacific nations, arguing that there needs to be a rethink of the symbols of domination that Australia often uses in the region.

Shameem was appointed United Nations Special Rapporteur on the use of mercenaries as a means of impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination.

Dr Shameem was also appointed to the UN Commission of Experts, which reviewed the judicial processes for cases related to the violations of human rights in Timor-Leste in 1999.



Dr Shameem (centre) with Professor Sarah Joseph, Director of the Castan Centre (left) and Ros Grady from Mallesons (right).

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In addition to her role with the Human Rights Commission, in 2004 Dr

Shameem holds a Ph.D. in Sociology and Social Anthropology, a Masters of Law from the University of Waikato and an LLB from the University of Auckland. To date this has included her work as a journalist, a lawyer and a sociology lecturer at the University of Waikato.

Dr Shameem's lecture was sponsored by Mallesons Stephens Jacques. A full report is at page 6.