

Hawaii Conference Calls for Change

In early January of this year a group of leaders, academics and activists gathered together to create and discuss strategies for advancing the rights of Indigenous people both now and in the future. This ground breaking conference, co-hosted by the Castan Centre and the Center for Excellence in Native Hawaiian Law at the William S. Richardson School of Law, took place over two days at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

The conference entitled "Federalism and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: Comparative Principles and Strategies" invited panellists to engage in a critical review of federalism, distribution of legislative powers and to share ideas relating to self determination. The panellists came from all over the world, including Canada, New Zealand, Hawaii, , the United States and Australia providing the unique opportunity for an exchange of experiences and perspectives from all across the globe.

Panellists from Monash University included Professor Lynette Russell, Chair of the Centre for Australian Indigenous Studies at Monash & Director Monash Aboriginal Programs. Other eminent panel members included the Deans of Hawaii, Colorado, and UC Hastings law schools, as well as Professors Lindsay Robertson and Rebecca Tsoie from the USA, Professors Brad Morse and Kent McNeil from Canada and UH Manoa School of Law Professor Jon Van Dyke.

Sessions addressed issues such as; Successes and Challenges in Structuring Indigenous/Government Relationships, Models of Sovereignty and Intergovernmental Relationships and issues relating to resources such as Land, Waters, Wildlife, Taxation and Revenue, and Governance.

Deputy Director of the Castan Centre Ms Melissa Castan, as well as Associate

of the Centre Mr David Yarrow, were instrumental in organising the conference and were thrilled with the collaborations and exchanges which unfolded over the two days. The success of the conference is well captured by Melissa. "This is the first time these experts have been able to meet together: the focus and energy which the panellists brought to the conference generated some very original and practical approaches to the topics under discussion and provided a fertile ground for future collaborations and approaches to these issues. It was certainly an inspiring event to be a part of and I look forward to the next one!" The Castan Centre is grateful for the support received from the Monash North American Steering Committee, and the School of Law, at the University of Hawaii, particularly Professor Melody MacKenzie, and Susan Serrano, without whom the conference could not have taken place.

Mooting Takes a Human Rights Focus

The Castan Centre recently announced the launch of a Charter of Human Rights Mooting Competition.

This annual event is being sponsored by law firm Clayton Utz and involves students preparing and arguing cases using different sections of the new Victorian *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act (2006)*.

The competition, to be held from 22 to 31 August 2007, will be the first moot of its kind and is open to teams from each of the five Victorian law schools. The winners and runners-up

will be provided with generous cash prizes of \$3000 and \$1000 each.

Castan Centre Deputy Director Paula Gerber, who developed the idea for the moot and will oversee its implementation, said "as part of our mandate to promote human rights education, the Castan Centre considered it vital to initiate a skills based competition focussing exclusively on human rights. In the coming years, the Charter will become an integral part of all Victorian lawyers' practices, and it is essential that students are given opportunities to develop their skills in

this area."

The moot will be open to all senior Victorian law students. Each law school will be allowed to enter two teams in the competition, comprising of Senior and Junior Counsel, and instructing solicitor. There will be two preliminary rounds, followed by semi finals and finals, which will be judged by pre-eminent members of Victoria's legal fraternity.

For more information, see the Castan Centre website.

Database to Feature all Human Rights Subjects Taught at Monash

By Anthony Capone

The construction of an online database outlining all human rights subjects offered at Monash University is underway. The database will list human rights units offered at all Monash University campuses, both at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The catalogue of subjects will be linked to the Castan

Centre for Human Rights Law webpage.

Human rights is a relatively large discipline at Monash, cutting across many faculties including Medicine, Arts and Law. For example, the Faculty of Medicine offers the postgraduate subject *Health, Ethics and Human Rights* and the Faculty of Arts offers the undergradu-

ate unit *Welfare Law, Rights and Ethics*.

The database will be an essential resource for students wishing to study or specialise in human rights. In addition, the exercise may lead to the formation of a network of Monash University academics specialising in human rights, and to cooperative interdisciplinary research projects.