

# Supervision and Detention Orders the Focus of this Year's Human Rights Moot Competition

*The 2011 Castan Centre Annual Human Rights Moot Competition once again gave students the opportunity to test their advocacy and legal analysis skills on a scenario that engaged the Victoria Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006. This year's problem focused on a convicted sex offender, Bill, who breached one of the restrictive conditions of his supervision order, was consequently subjected to a detention order, and ultimately appealed to the Victorian Court of Appeal asking for both orders to be revoked. The moot problem asked whether the Supreme Court's decision to make the supervision and detention orders in the first place had violated Bill's human rights.*

Nine teams from Victorian law schools and one from the University of Sydney competed in the seventh annual Human Rights Moot, which was again generously sponsored by Clayton Utz. The preliminary rounds, which were extremely close this year, were judged by Clayton Utz lawyers and were each followed by drinks and nibbles in the firm's boardroom. This provided a valuable opportunity for participants to meet like-minded participants while nervously waiting to hear which teams would proceed to the semi-final rounds.

The semi-finals, judged by barristers Alistair Pound, Chris Young, Phoebe Knowles and Simon McGregor, saw teams from the University of Melbourne and Monash

University ultimately emerging victorious. For the first time, this year each participant was given individual written feedback on their organisation and development of arguments, ability to deal with questions from the bench, delivery and written submissions.

Nerves were running high by the time the Grand Finalists faced off in the Court of Appeal before a very distinguished bench. Presiding over the moot were The Honourable Justice Pamela Tate of the Court of Appeal, The Honourable Justice Michael Croucher of the Supreme Court and Fred Prickett of Clayton Utz. Behind the scenes, participants were heard remarking that it was a nerve-racking experience arguing the *Momcilovic* High Court decision before Justice Croucher, who had himself appeared as counsel in that case.

In the end, all three judges praised the very high quality of both teams' written and oral submissions, even encouraging all six Grand Finalists to pursue careers in the field.

Team three, from Melbourne University comprising of Doug Porteous, Nick Boyd-Caine and Shawn Rajanayagam, were



Judges (L-R) Fred Prickett of Clayton Utz, Justice Pamela Tate and Justice Michael Croucher

ultimately declared the winners of this year's competition. They took home \$3000, while team six - Nathan Van Wees, Stephen Moore and Katherine Moore of Monash - were collectively awarded \$1000 as runners up.

A survey following the moot revealed overwhelmingly positive feedback for this year's event, with participants emphasising the benefits of gaining a better understanding of the Charter and engaging with human rights law at a level not often afforded to students during their core subjects at university.

Congratulations to the winning Melbourne University team, and many thanks to Clayton Utz staff and the Court of Appeal for their help in making the event such a success again this year.

## New Video Project will Educate About Human Rights – in Three Minutes

How much do you know about human rights? For instance, is removing a Muslim woman's head covering a violation of her human rights? And do same-sex couples have a human right to adopt children? A new Castan Centre project will set out to answer controversial questions like these in under three minutes by producing engaging, interesting videos aimed at a broad public audience.

The project was first conceived after research by the Federal Government's 2009 National Human Rights Consultation, which showed that most Australians were supportive of human rights but often didn't

understand exactly what human rights are.

As a centre with internationally recognised expertise, the Centre has long sought to improve public understanding of human rights through public events, social media and opinion pieces. However, as the world increasingly turns to new technologies for its information, it makes sense to make simple, engaging videos that can easily be shared on social media to answer the kinds of questions people ask when pondering difficult social issues.

The project, which will run over the next two years, is funded by the US-based Newman's Own Foundation, the Victoria Law

Foundation and the Monash University Vice-Chancellor. The first step will involve asking Castan Centre members which questions they most want answered; once the exact questions are determined, the Centre will produce the videos with the assistance of video and branding experts acting on a pro bono basis as well as law and journalism interns.

After that, it will be up to you, our members – as well as everyone else with an interest in human rights – to do their bit for human rights education by making the videos popular. Look out for the first productions in the new year.