

### One of our first global interns shows the influence of human rights

One of the Castan Centre's first-ever global interns was honoured in October when she was included in a prestigious list of influential women in Australia.

Vanessa Zimmerman, who completed her degree in law at Monash in 2001, was included in the Australian Financial Review & Westpac 100 Women of Influence Awards. The Awards aim to highlight women's leadership in Australia. It is open to all women, regardless of their sector and celebrates women who are working to create a more diverse and equal society. Vanessa was included in the Global category.

Vanessa is a globally-recognised business and human rights expert, working at the policy and practical levels to help prevent and address business related human rights harm. Her work has included advising the UN Special Representative on Business and Human Rights, chairing the Global Compact Network Australia's Human Rights Leadership Group and supporting other leading global business and human rights initiatives as well as key Australian stakeholders including Australian business. For the past five years, Vanessa has been Group Human Rights Advisor at Rio Tinto, managing implementation of its human rights strategy.

Vanessa began her human rights career here at the Castan Centre as one of our first Global Interns. In 2002, she took up a role at the Geneva-based UN Human Rights Commission, which has since been replaced by the Human Rights Council. As it is for all our Global Interns, this experience was life changing. "Put simply the access the Castan Centre gave me to working in both government and the UN helped to give me the knowledge, networks and confidence to pursue a career in human rights", Vanessa told the Castan Centre recently. "I am honoured to have been one of the Castan Centre's first global interns. It was invaluable to have the opportunity to see the international human rights system working in practice and to better understand what skills and experience I would need to start a human rights career."

Vanessa's experience demonstrates how a program like ours can help future human rights leaders to get their start. Since her internship, the Centre has sent more than 70 interns to some of the leading global human rights organisations, increasing funding and including cross-cultural training to help the students prepare for their experience.

Now back in Melbourne, Vanessa's path crossed with the Centre's again when

she joined our advisory board this year. She says this role is providing her with a chance to contribute to the Castan Centre, particularly on the issue of business and human rights. "The Castan Centre's work with other key organizations including the UN Global Compact and Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights... has been important for all stakeholders including business, government and civil society" said Vanessa, referring to Human Rights Translated, a plain-English handbook for corporations jointly authored by the three organisations.

The handbook was a worldwide hit when launched in 2008 and its second edition will be launched in the new year. "It is vital that we have legitimate tools for all stakeholders to better unpack what international human rights law and standards mean for business practice", said Vanessa.

We congratulate Vanessa on this much deserved recognition of her dedication to furthering human rights, especially in the field of business.

**Students who are interested in being a Global Intern or participating in one of our other student programs should go to our [website](#) for more information**

### Moot 2016

This year was the 10th anniversary of the Castan Centre Human Rights Moot. This impressive milestone was marked by a top quality competition made up of 14 teams competing from six states and territories.

The Moot asks students to engage with the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act. As one of only two such charters in Australia (the other is the ACT Human Rights Act (2004)), the Moot is a great opportunity for students to interact with human rights law in Australia. Past judges have remarked on the fact that the moot prompts students to make arguments that have not even been heard in the courts yet.

This year's problem asked competitors to consider the rights that are potentially infringed when two young Swedish students are expelled for speaking in their mother tongue while in school. The two young girls learned to speak English when they were young but their preferred language is Swedish. After being told not to speak Swedish in school, the girls conducted a sit-in protest during which the school principal

ripped one of their jumpers trying to remove the badges they were also wearing in protest. In response to all this the girls were expelled. Students had to argue whether or not the Principal's actions breached the Charter and thus the rights of the girls.

This year the Grand Final was an interstate affair with University of NSW defeating University of Queensland. Held in the Red Court of the Court of Appeal, the judging bench consisted of His Honour Justice Croucher, Her Honour Justice Dixon and Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commissioner Kristen Hilton judges. This eminent bench was very impressed with the standard of the competitors and did not hold back from testing their knowledge.

Our sincere thanks to all who took part, including our judges; we were lucky enough to have experienced barristers and lawyers judge the first rounds of the moot. They proved to be tough but fair and challenged the competitors with their questions. Further, we would like to thank the Court of Appeal staff and the Monash Faculty of Law. Finally,

thank you to those who competed who's skill in advocacy made this year's moot such a challenging and thought provoking success.

The results were as follows:

#### Final

- University of NSW (team 5) **defeated** University of Queensland (team 7)

#### Semi Finals

- University of Queensland (team 7) **defeated** University of Melbourne (team 12)
- University of NSW (team 5) **defeated** La Trobe (team 8)

#### Quarter Finals

- University of Melbourne (team 12) **defeated** University of Tasmania (team 14)
- La Trobe University (team 8) **defeated** Monash University (team 2)
- University of NSW (team 5) **defeated** University of Melbourne (team 11)
- University of Queensland (team 7) **defeated** Monash University (team 1)