Welcome to the quarterly e-bulletin of the Gilbert + Tobin Centre of Public Law to 31 March 2015. It summarises what has been happening in the Centre since the last update in our January Newsletter and lets you know about some upcoming events. You can always find out more about Centre projects, activities and news in between newsletters and these bulletins by going to the Centre’s website which is regularly updated or by following us on Twitter or Facebook.

[PEOPLE, ACTIVITIES AND RESEARCH, RECENT EVENTS and UPCOMING EVENTS]

PEOPLE

The Centre is pleased to be working with new people in 2015.

Dr Melissa Crouch, previously from the National University of Singapore, joined us in December. Melissa’s research focuses on Asian Legal Studies broadly, as well as Islamic Law, Law and Society, Public Law and Comparative Law. Details on the panel discussion and book launch that she organised for 31 March are below. Melissa is teaching with Centre colleagues in Principles of Public Law.

Associate Professor Gabrielle Appleby came to UNSW Law in February 2015 from the University of Adelaide and is Co-Director of the Centre’s Judiciary Project. Her research focuses on the role, powers and accountability of the Executive government, the operation of the Australian federal system, and the independence and integrity of the judicial branch. Gabrielle was co-organiser of Public Law in the Classroom, the teaching workshop on 12 February described below.

The Centre also welcomed a new PhD student, Lynsey Blayden, whose research is on the topic of ‘The Separation of Judicial Power and the Unreasonableness Ground of Judicial Review in Australia’. Her supervisors are Centre members Greg Weeks and Andrew Lynch.
ACTIVITIES AND RESEARCH

Since the last Newsletter Centre people have been busy pursuing research and public engagement on a range of public law issues including the constitutional recognition of Indigenous Australians and new counter-terrorism legislation.

Two submissions on the Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples were made: one by Paul Kildea to the federal Joint Select Committee on Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and a second by George Williams to the Parliament of Western Australia.

Further contributions to parliamentary debate included a submission to the SA Attorney-General’s Department on the Judicial Conduct Commissioner Bill 2015 by Gabrielle Appleby (with Suzanne Le Mire); a submission to the ALRC Freedoms Inquiry by Keiran Hardy and George Williams and a submission on the Independent National Security Legislation Monitor (Improved Oversight and Resourcing) Bill 2014 by Andrew Lynch (with Jessie Blackbourn).

With the introduction of new counter-terrorism legislation to the Commonwealth Parliament, Centre members have actively engaged in media debate, including commentary about:

- The importance of ensuring legislation achieves the appropriate balance between defending national security and protecting individual rights (Appleby);
- Metadata legislation and amendments to protect journalists and sources (Williams);
- Revoking citizenship for dual citizens or suspending citizenship entitlements for national security reasons (Pillai);
- The quashing of David Hicks’ conviction (Williams).

This semester’s Social Justice Intern, Pras Ramkumar, worked with the Co-Directors of the Centre’s Judiciary Project, Andrew Lynch and Gabrielle Appleby to produce a new Resources page on judicial appointment and removal, on the Centre website. With the appointment of a new High Court Judge, the Hon Geoffrey Nettle, George Williams reflected on the process of judicial selection and compulsory retirement age.

We have also seen the release of three books by Centre authors in just the first three months of the year:

- *Everything you Need to Know About the Referendum to Recognise Indigenous Australians* by Megan Davis and George Williams;
- *Inside Australia’s Anti-Terrorism Laws and Trials* by Andrew Lynch, Nicola McGarrity & George Williams;
- *The High Court, the Constitution and Australian Politics* edited by Rosalind Dixon and George Williams, launched by High Court Chief Justice Robert French after the 2015 Constitutional Law Conference.
Recent events

2015 Constitutional Law Conference and Dinner
On 13 February the Centre held its fourteenth annual Constitutional Law Conference and Dinner. This event attracted over 230 participants to hear top-quality papers and discussion of recent High Court cases and contemporary public law issues. The conference proceedings and book launch (see below) were followed that night by dinner at NSW Parliament House where the guest speaker was the Hon Marilyn Warren AC, Chief Justice of Victoria. A selection of papers and a webcast from the conference is available at the Centre website.

Law Reform in Myanmar
On 31 March a panel discussion on Law Reform in Myanmar Beyond 2015 was hosted by the Gilbert + Tobin Centre of Public Law and the Australia-Myanmar Constitutional Democracy Project at UNSW. The panel discussion was followed by a book launch by Professor David Dixon, Dean of UNSW Law, of Law, Society and Transition in Myanmar (Hart, 2014) edited by the Centre’s Melissa Crouch together with Melbourne Law School’s Tim Lindsey.

Gleebooks Launch of Book on Anti-terrorism Laws
On 31 March Andrew Lynch, Nicola McGarrity and George Williams launched their new book, Inside Australia’s Anti-Terrorism Laws and Trials (NewSouth Books, 2015) at Gleebooks. The launch involved a panel discussion between the authors moderated by Nicholas Cowdery AM QC, followed by questions from the audience.

Upcoming events

Great Australian Dissents Workshop – 9 and 10 June 2015
This invited workshop organised by Andrew Lynch of the Centre’s Judiciary Project will be looking at the significance of dissenting opinions by Australian court judges. The aim of the workshop is for participants to select a single dissenting opinion for inclusion in the pantheon of ‘Great Australian Dissents’ – and then explain the basis for their choice. The workshop will provide an opportunity for participants to engage in amicable debate about the selections made by individuals, as well as the criteria by which a dissenting opinion is judged as ‘great’.

Look out in our mid-year newsletter for reports on a small invited workshop in June organised by Professor Rosalind Dixon on the use of history in constitutional scholarship, a seminar by visiting comparative constitutional scholar Erin Delaney and news of a Magna Carta anniversary event later in 2015.

And coming up next...
Keep the Date: 2016 Constitutional Law Conference and Dinner
Our annual conference on constitutional law looking at decisions of the High Court, Federal and State courts will again be held at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, on Friday 12 February 2016.

Associate Professor Sean Brennan
Centre Director