



Welcome to the quarterly e-bulletin of the Gilbert + Tobin Centre of Public Law to 30 September 2014. It summarises what has been happening in the Centre since the last update in our mid-year [Newsletter](#). 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

Barristers [Joanna Davidson](#), [David Hume](#) and [Brendan Lim](#) have joined us as [Centre Fellows](#). Their professional skills and perspective extend our academic community and we welcome their pursuit of scholarly interests through involvement with the Centre. As he nears completion of his PhD candidature, [Keiran Hardy](#) has commenced as a full-time research associate on George Williams' [ARC Laureate Fellowship Project](#). He will be leading the work in response to bills currently in Parliament, and about to be introduced, detailing the government's new anti-terrorism measures. Christabel Richards-Neville, our semester II [social justice intern](#), has been working with several Centre members on recent High Court decisions, judicial appointments and human rights remedies amongst other assignments.

Activities and Research

The Australian government has introduced detailed new counter-terrorism legislation and signalled that more is on the way. The depth of scholarship associated with George Williams' ARC Laureate Fellowship has enabled the Centre to make a significant contribution to parliamentary and public debate. Some samples include:

- A detailed parliamentary inquiry [submission](#) with 19 recommendations on the Foreign Fighters Bill
- [Radio](#) and [online](#) media commentary as details emerged of the government's plans
- Discussion of the [threats](#) to media freedom imposed by the National Security Bill
- Critical [analysis](#) of the oversight mechanisms regarding new powers for ASIO.

Putting these and historical counter-terrorism developments together in a human rights context, George Williams [delivered](#) the 26th Annual McDonald Lecture at the Centre for Constitutional Studies, University of Alberta.

[Jason Varuhas](#) was co-convenor for the successful [Public Law Conference](#) held at Cambridge University in September. There was strong Centre representation at the event including papers from Jason, Greg Weeks, Paul Kildea and George Williams. Centre Advisory Committee member [Justice Melissa Perry](#) presented a paper on the legal implications of automated decision-making in the digital era.

Other public commentary on public law issues has included:

- The need for stronger legal protection for [freedom of speech](#)
- The [controversy](#) over the appointment of Tim Carmody QC as Chief Justice of Queensland
- A [referendum](#) about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the Australian Constitution.

Particular Centre highlights over recent months included:

- *Human Rights under the Australian Constitution* by George Williams and David Hume [won](#) the Tertiary (Wholly Australian): Scholarly Resource section of the Australian Educational Publishing Awards 2014
- [Greg Weeks](#) was awarded the UNSW Law School Research Fellowship for 2015, investigating the liability of public authorities
- [The High Court on Constitutional Law: The 2013 Statistics](#) by Andrew Lynch and George Williams was published in Volume 37 of the *UNSW Law Journal*
- George Williams, Sean Brennan and Andrew Lynch released a [supplement](#) to [Blackshield and Williams Australian Constitutional Law and Theory: Commentary and Materials](#) on *Williams v Commonwealth* (No 2).

Recent Events

Seminar

On 23 July, the [Indigenous Law Centre](#) (ILC) and the Gilbert + Tobin Centre convened a lunchtime seminar by [Professor Dwight Newman](#) from the University of Saskatchewan on the recent decision of the Canadian Supreme Court in *Tsilhqot'in Nation v British Columbia*. This decision includes the first actual declaration of Aboriginal title made by the Court. There is a short Centre [podcast](#) interviewing Professor Newman about the case and a full audio [recording](#) of the lunchtime seminar is available on Youtube.

The Politics of Legality in a Neoliberal Age

[Daniel McLoughlin](#) and [Ben Golder](#) organised a symposium in the Law School on 1-2 August 2014, under the umbrella of the 'Public Law and Legal Theory Project'. The symposium called [The Politics of Legality in a Neoliberal Age](#) featured UNSW, local, national and international speakers and attracted a great deal of interest from academics and the general community.

A selection of papers and webcast from earlier events are available at the Centre [website](#).

Upcoming Events

Included amongst our upcoming events are the following:

Comparative Constitutional Law - Final Courts Roundup – 9 December 2014

A joint event with the Australian Association of Constitutional Law, this will provide an outline of recent constitutional developments in three jurisdictions of key interest to Australian constitutional lawyers. Organised and chaired by Rosalind Dixon, the round-up this year will include Professor Mark Tushnet of Harvard Law School.

2015 Teaching Workshop: Public Law in the Classroom – 12 February 2015

A [workshop](#) on public law teaching, co-organised with the [Public Law and Policy Research Unit](#), University of Adelaide. It will be held at UNSW Law the day prior to the Centre's flagship Constitutional Law Conference and Dinner. Abstracts for a posters session close Monday 20 October.

2015 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 13 February 2015. The Conference Dinner that evening will be held at NSW Parliament House.

Associate Professor Sean Brennan
Director