

PUBLIC LAW IN THE CLASSROOM 2026

A Workshop for Teachers of Australian Public Law

Hosted by the Gilbert + Tobin Centre of Public Law, UNSW; the Public Law and Policy Research Unit, Adelaide University; the Castan Centre for Human Rights Law, Monash University; and the School of Law, Western Sydney University

Thursday 5 February 2026

UNSW Teaching Commons, Dalton Building, UNSW Kensington Campus

10:45 am Registration

11:00 am Welcome, Acknowledgement of Country, and Introduction

11:05 am Session 1: The Law Was Always Here: Teaching with Indigenous Legal Traditions

To kick off the workshop, this session will explore how we as public law teachers can incorporate Indigenous perspectives, knowledge and laws into our teaching of core public law units.

Chair: Dr Elisabeth Perham, UNSW

Panellists:

- Associate Professor Narelle Bedford, Bond University
- Dr Ria Holmes, Te Herenga Waka | Victoria University of Wellington

12:20 pm Lunch

1:00 pm Session 2: Drafting Problem Questions

Drafting authentic, engaging, appropriately difficult and sufficiently unique problem questions to assess our student's performance against learning outcomes in public law units is a difficult task. It is even more challenging when problem questions are based on statutory extracts (real or invented), such as in administrative law and public law units with a statutory interpretation component. In this session, we will explore problem question drafting practices across administrative law, constitutional law, and public law/statutory interpretation units.

Chair: Associate Professor Julie Debeljak, Monash University

Panellists:

- Associate Professor Sean Brennan, UNSW
- Janet Hope, University of Canberra
- Dr Anna Olijnyk, Adelaide University

2:15 pm

Stretching Break

2:30 pm

Session 3: AI and Public Law

Artificial intelligence is reshaping all aspects of higher education - from how students learn to how we assess and engage with them. This panel explores the opportunities and challenges that AI presents for teaching public law. How might AI tools support student learning in complex constitutional and administrative law topics? What are the implications for academic integrity, assessment design, and the development of skills and values central to public law - such as justice, equality, inclusion, and compassion? And how can we, as public law teachers, model critical engagement with AI technologies within our classrooms?

Drawing on practical examples and shared experiences, panellists will discuss opportunities and challenges in integrating AI tools into teaching, assessment, and student engagement in public law courses, and invite participants to share their own experiences and reflections.

Chair: Associate Professor Svetlana Tyulkina, UNSW

Panellists:

- Dr Karin Frodé, Monash University
- Dr Kaitlyn Poole and Dr Shreeya Smith, Western Sydney University
- Thivanka Ratnayake, Adelaide University

3:45pm

Snack and Stretching Break

4:00 pm

Session 4: Public Law Practice and Teaching

If you surveyed law students, you'd likely hear that public law subjects have no relevance to their careers—that public law isn't important to getting a job, and isn't relevant to what they will do in their jobs. This panel seeks to dispel the myth that sits behind this sentiment. It also seeks to open a discussion about how we can, through our teaching, help our students to prepare for the intersection of their future practice with public law – whether as incidental or central to their practice, and whether as lawyers, policy advisers, decision makers or otherwise. We will hear from panellists at the bar, in private practice, and who have worked in government about how their day-to-day work intersects with public law issues, and how what they learnt at law school (or wish they had learnt at law school) supports their public law practice.

Chair: Dr Shreeya Smith, Western Sydney University

Panellists:

- Dr Bruce Chen, Deakin University
- Helen Sims, Lander and Rogers
- Celia Winnett, NSW Bar

5:15 pm

Conclusions and Feedback

5:30pm

Book Launch: Harry Hobbs and Jeremy Patrick (eds), *Beyond Doctrine: Alternative and Critical Approaches to Law* (The Federation Press, 2025)

Discussant: Professor Ben Golder, UNSW

Light refreshments will be served

6:30pm

Self-funded Dinner at The Doncaster Hotel