

Castan Centre Directors win Prestigious Grants

Castan Centre Deputy Directors Dr Paula Gerber and Professor Susan Kneebone have both been awarded prestigious research grants recently.

Dr Gerber received a grant from the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights as part of its program honouring the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Dr Gerber will write a 30,000 word paper on human rights education as a means of preventing human rights abuses, and will attend the launch of the program in Geneva in December.

In her application, Dr Gerber stated that “medical science has long recog-

nised that ‘prevention is better than cure’...The human rights movement would do well to adopt a similar approach”. Dr Gerber will research all human rights education initiatives undertaken by states, and by institutions such as the United Nations, and then frame recommendations for future education initiatives designed to better promote compliance with Article 26 of the UDHR (regarding human rights education) and other similar international law mandates.

Professor Kneebone was awarded a three-year Australian Research Council grant for her project entitled “Law, Governance and Regulation of Intra-regional Labour Migration in South

East Asia: An Agenda for Protection and Development”.

The project will consider the lack of a clear international framework for labour migration in the region by proposing strategies for regional governance and regulation, and steering regional dialogue to a human rights and development focus.

Professor Kneebone will work closely with both the International Labour Organisation and the International Organisation for Migration.

International Conference Highlights Refugee Dilemmas

Almost 100 academics and other refugee experts from around the world converged recently on the Monash Centre in Prato, Italy, for a vibrant conference on refugee status determination. The conference, *Best Practices for Refugee Status Determination: Principles and Standards for State Responsibility*, was organized by Castan Centre Deputy Director Susan Kneebone and Professor France Houle from the University of Montreal’s Faculty of Law. It drew participants from countries such as Brazil, Israel and the Ukraine, which are developing processes for status determination, as well as countries with well-established systems such as Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and other European countries.

The purpose of this conference was to bring together practitioners, academics, decision-makers and policy makers from common law and civil law jurisdictions, including the EU, to consider the question of ‘best practices’ for refugee status determination in the current global ‘crisis’ of asylum. As is well known, the trend in developed countries is to introduce increasingly restrictive measures on access to asylum procedures. Meanwhile in many less-developed countries there are many long-term refugee situations which seemingly lack a solution. The

first part of the conference therefore focused on re-establishing basic principles and standards for refugee protection, while the second part discussed practices in developed countries.

In addition to the plenary sessions, which involved 15 speakers, there were parallel break-out sessions with 38 individual papers presented over the two days of the conference. A number of the latter presenters were junior academics from developing countries or from countries with

emerging jurisdictions in refugee status determination. The final session of the conference comprised a panel of international experts on refugee law practice during which there was extensive participation from delegates.

A major immediate outcome of the conference was a deeper understanding of the context in which refugee claims arise. There were calls for a follow up conference.

The papers from the conference will be published in the *International Journal of Refugee Law*, and in *Refuge*, Canada’s periodical on refugees.

The conference was supported by the following people and organisations:

- Monash University Faculty of Law
- Professor François Crépeau, Chair in International Migration, University of Montreal.
- Professor Elspeth Guild, Kingsley Napley, UK and University of Nijmegen, Netherlands.
- Clothier and Anderson, Solicitors, Melbourne, Australia.
- The Castan Centre .



Susan Kneebone, 2nd from right, with Professor Francois Crepeau, Professor France Houle, and Dr Ingrid Boccardi.

Conference presentations are available at <http://www.law.monash.edu.au/castancentre/events/2008/prato-conf.html>