



## **Gilbert + Tobin Centre of Public Law 2010 Postgraduate Conference in Public Law**

**Faculty of Law, University of New South Wales  
12-13 July 2010\***

### **Call for Abstracts**

The [Gilbert + Tobin Centre of Public Law](#) in the Faculty of Law, University of New South Wales plays a prominent, independent role in public debate on issues vital to Australia's future including Charters of Rights, federal reform, reconciliation and native title, refugees and migration law and the challenges of responding to terrorism. The Centre is a focal point for research and discussion of these and other questions of public law for the academic, professional and wider community.

The Centre takes great pleasure in inviting abstracts for its *2010 Postgraduate Conference in Public Law* which will be held at the Faculty of Law, University of New South Wales on 12-13 July. The conference is an opportunity for research students studying in the field of public law to gain experience in presenting their work to their peers and the wider academic public law community in a critically constructive yet supportive environment. While there are several generalist conferences held each year which postgraduate students can attend, the *2010 Postgraduate Conference in Public Law* is focused on public law issues and as such is an opportunity for students to network with others working in the area.

We invite abstracts from currently enrolled postgraduate research students (Masters, PhD and SJD students) studying full-time or part-time in the field of public law. We construe the concept of 'public law' in a deliberately expansive sense, so we welcome papers not only on constitutional and administrative law but on human rights protection, on native title and indigenous land rights, on terrorism, federalism, refugees and migration law, electoral law, and any field of law with a public dimension. Students enrolled with political studies departments and who are working in these areas are also welcome to attend this event.

Every delegate must submit an abstract on any aspect of public law for refereeing. Upon acceptance they will be allocated an opportunity to present a paper of 20 minutes duration at the conference. The conference presentations will be organised into parallel thematic streams which will comprise the bulk of the final program.

The collected abstracts from the conference will be published online at the Gilbert + Tobin Centre website, enabling further contact between those attending the conference and others interested in their research.

### **Special Keynote Speaker**

We are delighted to announce that the Conference will be opened by a keynote address from [Dr Thomas Poole](#), one of the United Kingdom's leading public law academics. Dr Poole teaches courses in public law, administrative law, constitutional theory and comparative constitutional law at the London School of Economics. He writes widely in these areas and his current research projects include a comparative and conceptual examination of the changing nature of administrative law in this 'age of rights'; an inquiry into the constitutional politics of the 'emergency constitution'; and an empirical investigation into the impact of the UK's Human Rights Act.

### **Methodology Roundtable**

Additionally the conference will feature a Roundtable Discussion on 'methodology'. We are interested in discussing what it means to you as a postgraduate researcher to be working in the field of public law and *how* we go about our work as researchers in the field of public law. What types of disciplinary perspectives are useful in studying public law (social sciences, economics, politics, philosophy)? What different questions and avenues do these perspectives open up? What types of methodological approaches to public law do you use in your work (for example, archival and historical work, interviews, fieldwork, doctrinal and textual analysis, philosophical reading)? What kinds of texts do you work with to make your arguments (for example, case law and legislation, parliamentary reports and Hansard, security analyses, declassified parliamentary documents)? What are the benefits and what are the drawbacks to these different methodologies and texts? What problems have you encountered in your own research and how have you overcome these challenges? Who do you think is doing interesting and methodologically challenging work in the field and how can we learn from them? The aim of the Roundtable is to get us to think critically about our work as researchers in public law and to help solve some of the problems we may be encountering in the course of our work.

In addition to submitting an abstract for their 20 minute conference paper, students are also encouraged to nominate themselves for the panel for the Roundtable Discussion. The panel's function is to generate discussion of these issues before it is opened up to the floor of the conference. The panel will be comprised of a selection of those who nominate themselves for this role and experienced public law researchers who will be offering their own perspective on these issues.

Students who wish to nominate for the panel are asked to give an indication of the methodological approach they use in their research and also some of the interesting questions and problems that they have come across in their work. A small number of students will be selected to speak briefly (about 5-10 minutes) about their methodological approach at the beginning of the Roundtable Discussion before the discussion is opened up to all the delegates. Students will be chosen not on a competitive basis but with the intention of discussing as many different methodological perspectives as possible.

### **Registration**

This event is **FREE** to all delegates who are simply asked to cover the costs of their accommodation and travel to Sydney.

Some limited funds are available for travel assistance to those delegates who can make a case based on special need. But we request that support is sought in the first instance from a delegates' home institution.

To register for the Conference, please send the following to the Centre's Administration Team at [gtcentre@unsw.edu.au](mailto:gtcentre@unsw.edu.au), being sure to put 'Postgraduate Conference' in the subject line:

- Your name, institutional affiliation and contact details;
- a brief abstract of your paper (max. 300 words); and
- (if applicable) your interest in talking about your research at the start of the Methodology Roundtable and a) what your own methodological approach is to your research; and b) what are some of the interesting questions and problems you have encountered in your research.

**Registrations with abstracts must be submitted no later than 30 April.**

**A draft program for the event will be distributed to all those who submit an abstract shortly thereafter.**

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\* Please note these confirmed dates replace those given in early publicity for this event.