

THE CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL AND PUBLIC LAW (CIPL)
ANU COLLEGE OF LAW PRESENTS:



PUBLIC SEMINAR

OCEAN ACIDIFICATION: An Acid Test for International Law

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Friday, 3 April 2009, 1-2pm (light lunch provided)
Phillipa Weeks Staff Library
ANU College of Law (Bldg 5), Fellows Rd, ANU
The Australian National University

Please RSVP (by cob Tuesday 31 March) to E: rsvp@law.anu.edu.au

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This event is free and open to the public.

The world's oceans are a major carbon sink, absorbing increasing amounts of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere which dissolves forming carbonic acid that disrupts processes of calcification utilised by many marine organisms, most notably corals. Despite the seriousness of this problem it is poorly addressed by existing international regimes. Although falling within not only the climate change regime but also marine environmental protection regimes it is not clearly and effectively embraced by either. This is of particular concern for Australia which has one of the most significant stakes in addressing the problem of ocean acidification (as seen most obviously in the threat the process poses to the Great Barrier Reef). By reference to the negotiating history for the relevant instruments and subsequent state practice, this paper seeks to understand how one of the most significant global environmental problems has so far avoided international regulation. Drawing on scholarship that has examined the challenges associated with regulating other cross-cutting global environmental problems where there exists a 'regime complex' of partially-overlapping and non-hierarchical regimes, it also offers some preliminary thoughts in terms of strengthening and harmonising the climate and pollution regimes to address the ocean acidification phenomenon.

Dr Tim Stephens is a Senior Lecturer at the Faculty of Law, University of Sydney and Associate of the Sydney Centre for International Law.

The views expressed in this seminar are those of the presenter and do not necessarily represent the views of The Australian National University.

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