

The Future of Australian Legal Research Looks Bright

Australian higher degree research (HDR) candidates conducting comparative research, interdisciplinary research, and research on emerging areas of law that relate to contemporary policy challenges gathered at the ANU College of Law on 8–9 July for the 2010 National Graduate Law Conference.

Thirty HDR students, representing twelve Australian universities (Flinders, UTas, Macq, ANU (CoL, Medical School Fenner School), La Trobe, UQ, SCU, UNE, UNSW, USyd, Bond and Wollongong) presented papers and participated in lively discussions based on the theme of the conference, *The Other Side of the Law: Beyond Legal Research*. Their work covered a diverse range of legal fields including criminal law, constitutional law, international law, environmental law, law reform, copyright, migration and refugee law, security, bioprospecting and legal practice. Non-law disciplines as varied as synthetic biology, psychiatry, philosophy, climate science, systems theory and Marxism were discussed in interdisciplinary work. The audience also heard about students' comparative legal research on jurisdictions including Vietnam, Thailand, Europe, Indonesia, United States and Rwanda.

Delighted with the success of the conference, Dr Mark Nolan, Director of Higher Degree Research thanked the ANU College of Law, the Office of the ANU Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research), and the Office of the Registrar for funding the conference, which enabled it to be offered free of charge to attendees, some of whom won travel bursaries, and who competed for a best speaker prize.

The Best Speaker prize-winner as voted by the organising committee and the participants was Pornsakol Panikabutara Coorey who is an SJD student at UNSW Faculty of Law. Pornsakol's paper was titled, *The red shirts: The intersection between law and politics in Thailand*.

Gusman Siswandi, a [current HDR student](#) representing the ANU College of Law, opened the conference, while Professors [Kim Rubenstein](#), Director of the Centre for International and Public Law and [Margaret Thornton](#), ARC Australian Professorial Fellow were guest speakers. Presentations were also given by ANU PhD alumni Annemarie Devereux (Office of International Law, Australian Government Attorney-General's Department) and Nova Inkpen (ACT Restorative Justice Unit).

As a variation from the conference theme, some sessions related to the graduate research experience, including the international student experience, comparative and interdisciplinary research skills, and careers and research opportunities beyond the PhD. Participants particularly enjoyed the innovative careers session led by David Rockawin from the ANU Student Employment and Career Development Centre.

For more details please see the [Conference program](#).