

Australian Centre for Environmental Law

Environmental Law Conference: Intersections between legal disciplines and the environment

The Australian Centre for Environmental Law (ACEL Sydney) and the NSW Environmental Defender's Office (EDO) co-hosted an innovative conference on 16-17 February 2007. Entitled *Beyond Environmental Law: Intersections between legal disciplines and the environment*, the Conference brought together experts across a broad range of legal disciplines to reflect on the shifting dynamics between environmental issues and the law. The presenters, most of whom were not primarily environmental lawyers, explored diverse ways in which their areas of expertise are interrelated with, and affect, environmental law and policy. The conference was attended by over 140 academics, legal practitioners, NGOs and government agencies.

The conference was opened by the Honourable Brian Preston, Chief Judge of the Land and Environment Court and part-time lecturer in the Faculty's Master of Environmental Law program. The keynote speaker was the eminent Professor Kevin Gray, Trinity College, University of Cambridge, who considered the question "Can environmental regulation amount to a taking of common law property rights?" The Faculty was well-represented among the speakers. Associate Professor Elisabeth Peden (Pro-Dean of the Faculty for Teaching) examined conservation agreements provided for in environmental legislation, testing them against conventional contract law criteria. Professor Margaret Allars considered the reasons for regulatory failure under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) with respect to the import of Asian elephants from Thailand.

Other speakers included Emeritus Professor Tony Blackshield (UNSW) (constitutional law); Ms Karen Hussey (ANU) (social-equity in contemporary water policy); Magistrate David Heilpern (criminal law); barrister Tony McAvoy (indigenous law); Associate Professor Hope Ashiabor (Macquarie University) (taxation law); Karen Bubna-Litic (UTS) (corporate law); Dr Peter Cashman (Victorian Law Reform Commission) (tort law); Gordon Renouf (Australian Consumers' Association) (consumer law); Jessie Connell (University of Sydney) (transnational environmental disputes); Professor Jan McDonald (Griffith University), (international trade law).

The Conference received seed funding from the Faculty of Law and sponsorship from the Australian Department of Environment and Water Resources, the NSW Department of Environment and Conversation, Mallesons Stephen Jaques, and the City of Sydney.