

Launch of SCIGL Research Programme in Public International Economic Law and Discussion Paper Series

“How and Why the GATT Works – Or Doesn’t”

Speaker: **Dr Brett G Williams**
Programme Director, Public International Economic Law, and Director, Sydney Centre for International and Global Law

Commentator: **Mr Stephen Deady**
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Date: **Friday, 23 March 2007**

Time: 3.30pm (Discussion from 4.30pm and Refreshments at 5:00pm)

Where: Minter Ellison Room
Level 13, Sydney Law School
University of Sydney, 173-175 Phillip Street, Sydney

About Discussion Paper No 1 “How and Why the GATT Works – Or Doesn’t”

The first paper in the series is a theoretical paper with many practical applications. The aim of the paper is to collect together theories of economics and public choice relating to the multilateral trading system into a single framework for analyzing that system and analyzing problems in the operation of that system. The paper contrasts the recommendations of economists with the predictions of public choice theory on politician's decisions and draws on the prisoner dilemma model to explain how the GATT changes the payoffs for politicians. The paper proposes that there are three essential conditions for the success of the system: reciprocity, a strict prohibition on quantitative restrictions and a strict non-discrimination rule. The paper explains how deviations from these three rules threaten the operation of the system. The paper uses the framework to consider such issues as multi-functionality, special and differential treatment and preferential trading arrangements.

About the Author:

Dr Brett G Williams is a Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Law at the University of Sydney, where he teaches courses on Law of the World Trade Organization and also teaches Competition Law and Public International Law. His publications include the co-authored book, “China and the World Trading System”, a book chapter on “Non-Violation Complaints in the WTO System”, and “The Influence and Lack of Influence of Principles in the Negotiation for China's Accession to the World Trade Organization” (in GWILR). In 2006, he coached the moot team which won the ELSA moot court competition in WTO law.

About the Discussion Paper Series:

It is intended that the SCIGL Discussion Paper Series will comprise republications of works of Centre Associates or publications of working versions of research which may later form part of a journal publication. The Discussion Paper Series for the Programme in Public International Economic Law will comprise both theoretical and practical legal analyses of issues in international economic law, including the law of the World Trade Organization.

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