

Future leaders head overseas



The 2016 Global Interns (L-R): Sarah Sacher, Estelle Petrie, Sam Dipnall and Geerthana Narendren

Four outstanding Monash Law students are on their way to some of the world's leading human rights institutions as part of the prestigious 2016 Castan Centre Global Internship Program.

Now in its tenth year, the program identifies the human rights leaders of tomorrow and sends them to be mentored by globally renowned experts while working on some of the world's most pressing human rights issues. Prior to departure, the interns receive cross-cultural training and a stipend that aims to make their trip cost-neutral, thereby ensuring that most students can apply regardless of their financial situation.

Sarah Sacher will be heading to New York to work with the Centre for Constitutional Rights (CCR). The Centre is known for its use of litigation as a tool to fight against injustices, with its main focus being rights guaranteed by the United States Constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Centre's work focuses on using the law as a tool for positive social change while helping those who face disadvantage and lack access to legal resources. CCR has advocated for people who have been illegally detained, pursued the Catholic Church over child abuse allegations and fought employment discrimination and racial profiling, to name a few. Sarah will gain considerable practical experience during her time in New York, as another of the Centre's aims is to foster and train the next generation of constitutional and human rights attorneys.

Estelle Petrie will be working for the International Women's Rights Action Watch – Asia Pacific (IWRRAW) in Kuala Lumpur. IWRRAW promotes women's rights regionally, nationally and internationally. Estelle will be lucky enough to travel with IWRRAW

to Geneva for its Global to Local training program which will coincide with a meeting of the Committee on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). This is a unique opportunity that Estelle is excited to be a part of as the IWRRAW plays an integral role in realising women's rights that are embodied in human rights treaties, but are not always respected at a domestic level.

Human Rights First (HRF) is based in New York and, since its inception in 1978, has been advocating for human rights issues, especially the rights of refugees and asylum seekers. Geerthana Narendren will spend three months in New York working with HRF employing both the practical experience she has gained through her work as part of the Campaigns Team at the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre and the strong concern for human rights that she has fostered from a young age. At HRF she will be working on a new initiative that aims to increase US compliance with international human rights norms. This project is very much in line with the organisation's aim of ensuring that human rights standards are enforced at both a domestic and international level.

Sam Dipnall has worked as an in-house intern with the Castan Centre in 2015 and will travel this summer to Geneva to spend six months interning with the International Service for Human Rights (ISHR). The independent organisation supports human rights defenders, creates networks and coalitions, and strengthens international and regional human rights systems. Sam will engage with the inner workings of the human rights system while being able to learn about how a large human rights NGO operates. A particularly interesting point will

be the ISHR's focus on accountability through strengthening international and regional human rights systems, as accountability in the international arena is often hard to achieve. Sam will be able to see how NGO's such as the ISHR combat this issue through policy development and lobbying.

The Global Internship Program provides a unique experience and will give interns the invaluable opportunity to contribute to the important work of these organisations.

In an important development, the Bennelong Foundation has recently announced a three-year commitment to supporting an Indigenous Monash University student to attend the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva. The new commitment is an extension of a one-year program that sent young Indigenous student Laura Wilson to Geneva in 2014/15. The Centre is arranging a selection process at the moment, and the first intern will head off in May 2016.

You can follow the interns on their journeys and work with these unique organisations on the Global Interns Blog. Look out for their updates over the next six months as our interns update the blog with their stories and photos. If you would like to apply for the global intern program in the future and are interested in the application process have a look at our website.

The 2016 Castan Centre Global Interns are provided with financial assistance by Daniel and Danielle Besen, Sylvia & Michael Kantor, the Nordia Foundation, the Bennelong Foundation, the Monash Law Faculty's Student Mobility Fund, and MyriaD Consultants, which conducts the cross-cultural training.