

Seventh Austin Asche Oration in Law and Governance

Making detention safe and humane: can we grasp a once-in-a generation opportunity?

Tuesday 19 September 2017 5 – 7 pm

Nitmiluk Lounge Level 4, Parliament House, Darwin



Edward Santow Human Rights Commissioner

In February 2017, the federal Government made what could be the single most positive step in a generation towards protecting the human rights of detainees.

In announcing that it will ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture (OPCAT) by December, the Government has committed to establish a regime of independent inspections for all places of detention in Australia, including prisons, youth detention centres, mental health facilities and immigration detention centres.

Places of detention are often hidden from view. Evidence before the Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory confirms, if further confirmation was needed, that terrible things can happen in such places. OPCAT presents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to shine a light in these dark places; to cease detention practices we know to be harmful; and to learn from best practice in Australia and around the world. Can we grasp this opportunity?

Edward Santow commenced his five-year term as Human Rights Commissioner at the Australian Human Rights Commission in August 2016.

Prior to joining the Commission, Ed was chief executive of the Public Interest Advocacy Centre, a leading non-profit organisation that promotes human rights through strategic litigation, policy development and education.

Ed was previously a Senior Lecturer at UNSW Law School and a research director at the Gilbert + Tobin Centre of Public Law. His areas of expertise include human rights, administrative and constitutional law, discrimination and freedom of information.

As Human Rights Commissioner, Ed leads the Commission's work on marriage equality and other human rights issues affecting LGBTI Australians. Ed also leads the Commission's work on the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture (OPCAT) and he has primary responsibility for the Commission's work on freedom of expression, freedom of association and freedom of religion.

Ed is a Senior Visiting Fellow at the University of New South Wales (UNSW), and serves on a number of boards and committees, including the Australia Pro Bono Centre. In 2009, Ed was presented with an Australian Leadership Award, and in 2017, he was recognised as a Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum.

RSVP by Friday 15 September 2017:

E CDUEvents@cdu.edu.au

T 08 8946 6554

This event may count as MCLE/CPD points.