



Melbourne Law School

IILAH SEMINAR SERIES

TIME TO DRAW THE LINE, IN THE TIMOR SEA THAT IS

JANELLE ANNE SAFFIN
ACTIVIST, ADVOCATE, EDUCATOR

The Timor Sea dispute between Australia and Timor-Leste can only be settled with the drawing or delimitation of the maritime boundary. It can be done by negotiation or by submitting to the judicial umpires, the ICJ or ITLOS. Australia prides itself on settling these matters bilaterally and has done so with PNG, NZ, Solomon Islands, New Caledonia and Indonesia, but refuses to do so with Timor-Leste. Australia also removed itself from the judicial umpires, the ICJ and ITLOS in 2002 on the eve of the restoration of Timor-Leste's independence. So where does this leave Timor-Leste? What are its options? This begs the question as to why Australia has not wanted to delimit maritime boundaries with Timor-Leste and why it would remove the judicial umpire.

Janelle will canvass these questions, looking at the legal nature of delimitation of maritime boundaries, covering the median line (equidistant approach) and continental shelf arguments, past agreements with neighbours and if they can bind third party states, and the petroleum political nature of the Timor Sea that guided Australia's approach to its relationship with Indonesia, Portuguese Timor and now spills over to its current relationship with Timor-Leste.



Janelle Saffin's involvement and political activism with East Timor began over 30 years ago. When she was in Federal Parliament, from 2007 - 2013 she chaired the Australian Parliament-Timor-Leste Group, advising the Australian Government and the Foreign Minister on matters relating to East Timor. As a Southern Cross University Council member and fellow she has supported a number of Timorese students, and has presided over the graduation of Timorese students in Dili in 2010.

Wednesday 22 July 2015

1.00 - 2.00pm

Melbourne Law School

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