

22 April 2013, Monday ✦ 10.30am – 12.00pm ✦  
Federal Conference Room, Federal Building, NUS (BTC)

## ***Vietnamese Courts: Reform and Identity***

**by Professor Pip Nicholson**

**Director of Asian Law Centre, Melbourne Law School, Australia**

### **ABSTRACT**

The Vietnamese Party-State has debated political-legal reforms since its adoption of *đổi mới* (Renovation) in 1986 with the discussions becoming more focussed after the 2005 publication of Politburo Policy Resolutions 48 and 49 relevant to the justice sector. Concurrently, in 1992 and 2002 the Vietnamese court system underwent substantial reform. This paper explores the reforms to date, reflecting on the variability of their impacts. It also offers a discussion of the role and emerging identity of the Vietnamese court system in the twenty-first century. Vietnam today has a more self-managing and professionally equipped court system than previously. The courts also seek to enable better access to justice for citizens and more transparent institutional processes. These developments should not be confused with the introduction of an independent court system.

### **ABOUT THE SPEAKER**



Prof. Pip Nicholson is the Director of the Asian Law Centre. She is also the Centre's Associate Director (Vietnam) and Director of its Comparative Legal Studies Program. Her teaching and research are in dispute resolution, comparative legal studies, law and reform in Asia and law and society in Asia. Pip has degrees in Arts and Law from Melbourne Law School ('MLS'), a Masters in Public Policy from the ANU and a doctorate from the MLS. Pip has previously been admitted as a barrister and solicitor of the Supreme Court of Victoria.

Pip's publications include: *Socialism and Legal Change: The Dynamics of Vietnamese and Chinese Reform* (co-edited with John Gillespie, 2006); *Borrowing Court Systems: the Experience of Socialist Vietnam* (Martinus Nijhoff, 2007); *Examining Practice, Interrogating Theory: Comparative Legal Studies in Asia* (co-edited with Sarah Biddulph, Martinus Nijhoff, 2008); *New Courts in Asia* (co-edited with Andrew Harding, Routledge, 2009); and *Law and Development and the Global Discourses of Legal Transfers*, (co-edited with John Gillespie, Cambridge University Press, 2012).

Pip holds an ARC grant with Camille Cameron to investigate court-oriented legal reform in Cambodia and Vietnam. She also holds an ARC grant with Tim Lindsey to analyse 'Drugs, Law and Criminal Procedure in Southeast Asia'.

Her current research interests include law and legal change (including court and legal sector reform) in transitional countries, drug trials in Asia and cross-cultural legal research and development. Pip has spoken on these issues in Vietnam, the USA, Canada, Japan, Vietnam, France, Thailand, Hong Kong, Sweden, UK and the Netherlands.

Pip is an internationally recognised expert in courts and legal reform (particularly within socialist states). She has consulted widely on these issues.

**Admission is free.**

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**Closing Date of registration : 19 April 2013, Friday, 5pm**