

EVENT DETAILS:

Date: Thursday, 2 April 2009
Venue: Room 920, Level 9
Melbourne Law School
185 Pelham Street Carlton
Time: 12.45 - 2.00pm
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IILAH SEMINAR

SAFETY STANDARDS AND INDIGENOUS PRODUCTS: WHAT ROLE FOR TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE?

PRESENTED BY MEREDITH KOLSKY LEWIS
(VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON LAW FACULTY)

Professor Anne Orford will chair the seminar.

In this seminar Meredith will examine legal questions relating to the export of indigenous plant-based foods and medicinal products. In particular, it will look at recent bans and other forms of import restrictions on kava from Pacific Island countries and tea tree oil from Australia. Both products have traditional uses which date back hundreds of years. In both cases, the products have been adapted into new uses, and health problems have been linked to these new uses. Yet the trade restrictions have covered the products as a whole, thus burdening the traditional uses as well as the new, adapted uses. The seminar will consider the implications of such bans on indigenous communities/developing countries, and explore whether steps could be taken to minimise the risk of imposing overbroad regulations on products which may have a traditional and safe use as well as new, perhaps not-so-safe uses. In this regard Meredith will suggest that traditional knowledge, which is at present a concept limited to the intellectual property/TRIPS context within the WTO, may also have a role to play in the SPS and TBT contexts.

Light lunch available @ 12.45pm in room 920.

Meredith Kolsky Lewis (BA Northwestern University, JD & MSFS Georgetown University) is the New Zealand alternate member of the International Trade Law Committee of the International Law Association; a Founding Executive Committee member and currently Secretary of the Society of International Economic Law (SIEL), and a member of the Asian WTO Research Network. She has provided trade-related technical assistance in Vietnam (funded by NZAID) and Indonesia (funded by US AID) and has provided training on various WTO issues for the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Meredith is serving as a judge in the preliminary written and final oral rounds (in Taipei) of the 2009 ELSA WTO Moot Court Competition.

Meredith has been awarded a Visiting International Researcher Fellowship by the Melbourne Law School. She is conducting joint research relating to food miles with Andrew Mitchell (Melbourne).