

Abstract:

This seminar will focus on the practical value of some of the key theories in Global Business Regulation for empowering Indigenous directed economic models of sustainable development. The World Bank estimates that herbal medicine will reach a value 3 trillion (US) dollars by 2050. 77 per cent of such plant related therapies find a significant degree of origin in Indigenous communities. However, cases of benefit sharing reaching communities are rare. Current models of international and intellectual property law are severely limited in their ability to address this injustice.

The seminar will discuss advances in the establishment of sustainable economic models of real benefit to Indigenous peoples, based on principles of equality and empowerment, where Indigenous-directed centres of research are a key component. A working model significantly influenced by the principles in 'Global Business Regulation' has been created at Macquarie University after the approval and recent completion of a first stage 100k Vice Chancellor's Grant. As part of the Macquarie model, a community guide for both Aboriginal communities and universities was written in consultation with a number of Indigenous communities and with the pro-bono support of Deacons law firm. These resources represent a radical paradigm shift in moving away from tokenistic benefit sharing arrangements, based on a dominant 'us/them' model seen in the CBD. Processes of transformation reflect principles of the unity of the human family, and the unity of spiritual and material reality that are central to many Indigenous concerns. This includes being concerned to recognise and repatriate the spiritual, intellectual and commercial aspects of knowledge sourced from Indigenous peoples.

In mid-July, Pacific and Asian Indigenous regional consultants for the Convention on Biological Diversity, took this guide to the recent Advisory Committee on Article 8(j) in Montreal 11-14 July. A number cultural representatives and directors of international organisations are calling on some of its ideas to contribute to the next stage in the evolution of law and ethics. The seminar will explore some of the practical aspects that have led to what may become

an international standard for action in achieving transnational justice in the area of bioprospecting and Indigenous intellectual property.