

GUEST EDITORIAL: CLIMATE DISPLACEMENT IN THE PACIFIC – SPECIAL FORUM

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This issue of the QUT Law Review features a collection of papers on the topic of climate displacement in the Pacific. The collection arose out of a symposium held at QUT in May 2014 and co-hosted by the Faculty of Law and Friends of the Earth. The focus of the symposium was on the potential of pre-emptive migration pathways to address the challenges of climate change-related displacement in the Asia-Pacific region. The guest editors wish to thank Wendy Flannery of Friends of the Earth (Brisbane) for her hard work in organising the symposium and her ongoing commitment to this serious issue.

The predicted impacts of climate change on small island and developing States in the Asia-Pacific region is by now well-accepted, and in some places effects such as rising sea levels, saltwater incursion and increased extreme weather are already being observed. Some individuals and communities are already confronting the real possibility of needing to relocate, either internally or to another country. Such relocation will have significant impacts on communities' livelihoods, health and social, cultural and spiritual connections. Despite this reality, effective international and regional legal mechanisms for dealing with climate-induced displacement are lacking.

The papers in this special forum address the topic of climate displacement from a variety of perspectives. The first paper, by Sophie Pascoe, examines the plight of the Carteret Islanders in Papua New Guinea who are relocating to other areas as their islands become uninhabitable due to rising sea levels. Pascoe examines the case of the Carteret Islanders in terms of the impacts of relocation on their right to self-determination and the consequences this can have for their political, social, cultural and economic rights.

The second paper, by Bridget Lewis, examines the potential of regional migration strategies in the Asia-Pacific region to minimise the harms inherent in relocation. It considers the issue through the concept of neighbourliness and argues that Australia should play a greater role in facilitating regional migration where in situ adaptation is no longer feasible.

The third paper, by Mark Baker-Jones and Melanie Baker-Jones, is a case study of recent litigation in New Zealand. In *Teitiota v The Chief Executive of Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment*, Mr Teitiota challenged his deportation to Kiribati, arguing that he was entitled to protection under the *Refugee Convention* against the impacts of climate change. As the paper argues, Mr Teitiota's ultimately unsuccessful claim highlights the ineffectiveness of the *Refugee Convention* to protect people forced to flee as a result of climate change, and points to the need for an alternative solution.

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We hope that readers will find this special forum interesting and informative, and that it will prompt further discussion and innovative thought on this important issue.