Voices at Work
Australasian Meeting
Melbourne, Australia (venue to be confirmed)
20-21 July 2012

The Leverhulme Trust

Call for Papers

Voices at Work is an ambitious project that seeks to examine the role of law both in the decline of collective worker representation and in a potential reversal of this trend. It aims to bring together scholars and policy makers from five common law countries (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, United Kingdom and United States) to promote comparative reflection on these important issues. More information about the aims of the project is available at the Voices at Work website: http://voicesatwork.org.uk/. The project is funded by the Leverhulme Trust (UK).

The launch conference for Voices of Work was held at Oxford University on July 29-30, 2011. The program revolved around the themes of whether, why, and how law can promote worker voice, with specific attention to issues of organization, representation and negotiation. (For a copy of the program, click here.) A selection of the conference papers will be published in a special issue of the Comparative Labor Law and Policy Journal in 2012. Other contributions from scholars in a variety of jurisdictions will appear in an edited collection of essays scheduled for publication in 2013.

The North American regional meeting of the Voices at Work project takes place on March 16-17, 2012, at Osgoode Hall Law School, York University, Toronto. (For a copy of the program, go to: http://voicesatwork.org.uk/2011/new-call-for-papers-toronto-workshop/sched-feb13-5/.)

The Australasian regional meeting of the Voices at Work project will be held on Friday 20-Saturday 21 July, 2012, in Melbourne.
The Australasian meeting will focus on the following general themes (although papers addressing other dimensions of employee voice will be considered):

1. **Institutions of Voice**

   (e.g., The Future of Unions and Collective Bargaining; The Statutory Framework for Collective Bargaining in Australia and New Zealand; Are New (More Effective) Legal Frameworks Needed?; Australian and New Zealand Variants on ‘Union Recognition’ and ‘Good Faith Bargaining’; The Role of Union and Non-Union Bargaining Representatives; Non-Union Employee Representation Structures (e.g., Joint Consultative Committees, OHS Committees, ‘Mini Unions’ & ‘House Unions’ in New Zealand); Forms of Representation for Vulnerable Workers (e.g., The Low Paid, NESB Workers); Employee Share Ownership: What Kind of Voice?)

2. **Power and Voice**

   (e.g., The Fate and Future of Strikes; Union and Employer Strategy around Industrial Action (e.g., The Qantas Dispute); Alternative Forms of Collective Action; Rights/Litigation as Power? (e.g., Australia’s General Protections Provisions); Australian & New Zealand Discourse on Labour Rights as Human Rights; Class Action Litigation as a Vehicle and Inducement for Worker Voice; Constitutionalized Labour Rights as a Power Resource?; Common Law Limitations on Employee Voice)

3. **Locations of Voice**

   (e.g., Workers’ Voices in Politics and the Community; in Regulation and Rights Enforcement (OHS, Minimum Standards, Equal Pay, etc.); in Corporate Governance; in the Public Sector)

4. **Is Good Capitalism (with Worker Voice) Possible in a Global Economy?**

   (e.g., Are There Spaces for Worker Voice? Where? Can Corporate Social Responsibility Provide a Normative Framework for Promoting Worker Voice? Can Consumers and Shareholders be Allies for Workers? Worker Voice around The Future of Manufacturing & Government Assistance to Industry in Australia; Individual Expression of Employee Voice)

We are primarily interested in papers based on developments in Australia and New Zealand. Comparative and collaborative studies are welcome. Abstracts addressing one or more of the workshop themes should be submitted to Anthony Forsyth by Monday 2 April 2012. Accepted presenters will be notified by Friday 20 April, and will be expected to submit a draft paper or detailed PowerPoint presentation by Friday 29 June. Papers will be made available in a password protected portion of the Voices at Work website and participants will be expected to have read the papers in advance. We are seeking an arrangement to publish selected papers from this workshop in a special edition of an academic journal. In addition, the Voices at Work project aims to publish an edited volume,
and a selection of papers from the Melbourne workshop may be included in that volume. A conference to launch this edited book will be held at Hertford College, Oxford University in 2013.

We aim to keep the Australasian regional meeting relatively small to facilitate discussion. In addition to the workshop participants, a number of Australian and New Zealand academics working in areas related to the conference themes will be invited to attend, along with representatives from key trade union and employer organisations, and members of employment/industrial tribunals. Expressions of interest in attending may also be sent to Anthony Forsyth.

**Conference Organizers:**

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