

STUDENT PROFILE 2010

PhD Students



Alison McLennan | PhD

Alison was interested in the way in which science and law interact in fields such as bioethics, intellectual property, health law, environmental law and biosecurity. She decided to undertake research in legal issues relating to a new field of biotechnology called synthetic biology. "Synthetic biology goes beyond previous genetic technology by trying to construct whole organisms from scratch in the laboratory, as well as attempting to engineer organisms which have functions that do not exist in nature. This raises a whole range of interesting legal, ethical and policy issues" Alison says.

Alison has been interested in an academic career since she was an undergraduate students, so undertaking a PhD was a natural progression. "I enjoyed my honours project and wanted to have the opportunity to do an in-depth research project. I also chose this path because I enjoy teaching".

"I wanted to work with some of the outstanding academics at ANU. I really enjoyed the College culture when I was an undergraduate and thought that I would enjoy being part of this environment. ANU also provides excellent opportunities for gaining teaching skills and experience" Alison says.



David Heckendorf | PhD

David Heckendorf relocated from Armidale to Canberra to study. David says "Being disabled with Cerebral Palsy, Canberra provided an excellent mix of facilities and specialist services, especially at the ANU". David is currently a policy manager in the ACT Government's disability area. "

I wanted to research in law to gain marketable employment related skills. My personal experience, legal curiosity, and my employment position led me to research the interactions and interconnections between the law and disability".

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Fanny Thornton | PhD

Prior to commencing her PhD at the ANU College of Law, Fanny Thornton was working in the area of refugee advocacy. She realised that many of the issues that arose during her work could be fully explored by undertaking a research degree.

Fanny, originally from Germany, is researching Climate Change Displacement and International Law. "I chose to undertake my research at ANU, because of the Law School's strong focus on international law." Fanny says. "One of the best things about research at the ANU College of Law is the level of supervision available and the efforts made to integrate research students into the College's academic community."

Fanny says that after she has completed her research degree, she hopes to continue in a research career as an academic or to work for an international organisation involved in refugee or migration issues.



Aurélie Buthod-Garçon | PhD

Aurélie, from France, decided to undertake a PhD at ANU after completing a Master of International Law at the University of Sydney. "Throughout my time in Sydney, I worked and researched on topics such as Public International Law, Environmental Law, Human Rights Law and Humanitarian Law. I found that the Master degree was a good 'first approach', but I really wanted to deepen my understanding of these issues and make a contribution to the field in France and Australia. Undertaking a PhD in Public International Law gave me the opportunity to focus on this subject for 3 years".

For Aurélie ANU's world-class reputation was a big factor in deciding where to study. "It's one of the highest ranking research universities in the world, and the highest ranked in Australia. We also have numerous opportunities to attend seminars, talks from leading Australian and international professors and scholars. Being situated in Canberra is a bonus, as it's the political heart of Australia and a great place to network" Aurélie says. "The ANU Law School is an excellent faculty which provides an academically thriving environment for students. As a PhD student, you're constantly around eminent professors and lecturers who are incredibly supportive and helpful. The student life here is very stimulating, and the facilities offered to PhD candidates are outstanding."