THE LECTURE

Sceptics have labelled human rights as a concept that is the luxury of elites. What is it that human rights can offer us in terms of improving the quality of life of the most marginalised within our community? How do universal human rights offer a practical way of improving the rights of the most disadvantaged within our community, particularly Aboriginal people?

This lecture will look at the important role that universal human rights can play in setting standards within the community. It will also discuss the impact of a human rights framework on Indigenous people, particularly women, in relation to issues such as violence and sexual assault. Rejecting notions that human rights are simply a Western concept, this lecture will also argue that such frameworks do not pose a threat to Indigenous cultural values but actually can strengthen them.

THE LECTURER

Prof. Larissa Behrendt is a Eualeyai/Kamillaroi woman. She is Professor of Law and Director of Research at the Jumbunna Indigenous House of Learning, University of Technology, Sydney. She has a law degree from the University of New South Wales and a Masters of Laws and Senior Doctorate of Jurisprudence from the Harvard Law School. Her current research is focused on Indigenous governance and Indigenous policy issues. She is the author of Achieving Social Justice and the award-winning novel, Home. She is a Director of the Bangarra Dance Theatre and the Sydney Writers Festival. Larissa also sits on the Board of the Museum of Contemporary Art. She is a Judicial Member of the Administrative Decisions Tribunal and the Serious Offenders Review Council. She is also a columnist for the National Indigenous Times.

The views expressed in this lecture are those of the presenter and do not necessarily represent the views of The Australian National University.