

Workshop on 'International Law and the Blue Economy', Institute for International Law and the Humanities (IILAH), Melbourne Law School, 7-8 May 2026

Call for Papers - Deadline 25 November 2025

This workshop aims to investigate the role of international law in the '[Blue Economy](#)'. Scientists [are sounding the alarm](#) on threats to the ocean from combined pressures of climate change, overfishing, pollution, and conflicting uses. Policy-makers [are claiming](#) that economic growth can be delivered compatibly with environmental sustainability and human welfare. In these conditions, can international law support ocean health and wellbeing? On the one hand, international law can safeguard ecosystems, communities and societies that sustain the ocean. On the other hand, it constructs relations of property and production that can cause harm. It is also important to understand links between ocean-specific areas of law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and other treaties and customary international law. It is also important to understand links between ocean-specific areas of law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and other areas, such as the customary duty to prevent significant harm to the environment (as recently articulated by the [International Court of Justice](#)).

This two-day event, supported by an Australian Research Council Future Fellowship, will generate critical and creative ideas about states' obligations and rights in exclusive economic zones, in supply chains, in production and consumption activities, and in the global commons.



When? 7-8 May 2026, with applications closing **25 November 2025**.



Who? Australian and international **legal scholars and practitioners** including senior academics, early career researchers, government officials and staff of international organisations.



What? Papers (unpublished – 6,000 words) will include doctrinal, critical, comparative and socio-legal methods, to be **revised and developed** into an open access edited collection. Papers can be on any of the below:

- **Existing sectors** (shipping; fisheries; plastic production; tourism; etc) and **new sectors** (blue carbon; nature positive policies and MPAs; coastal renewable energy; deep seabed mining; etc).
- **Cross-cutting topics** (eg science-based regenerative Blue Economy; human rights and rights for nature; legal personhood; ecosystem approach; marine justice; ocean stewardship; blue finance; Indigenous and traditional knowledge; public participation; marine spatial planning; biodiversity corridors; etc).
- **Normative integration and regime interaction in the Blue Economy**, as addressed by courts and other international institutions.
- **Insights about disruption to, or reform of, the Blue Economy** by legal initiatives (including the **BBNJ Agreement** and the **WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies**).



Where? The Institute for International Law and the Humanities (IILAH), **Melbourne Law School**.



How? Send your application to the workshop convenor, **Professor Margaret Young, University of Melbourne**, including: **paper title, abstract** (200-300 words), and a **one-page CV**.

Confirmed speakers include Professor Elisa Morgera (UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Climate Change), Professor Marcos Orellana (UN Special Rapporteur on Toxics and Human Rights), Professor Irini Papanicolopulu, Associate Professor Michelle Voyer and Dr Ekaterina Antsygina.

A limited number of travel and accommodation bursaries are available for participants from low-income countries. Please indicate in your application if you are seeking a travel bursary.

Deadlines for applications is 25 November 2025.