

# CENTRE FOR HEALTH, LAW & SOCIETY GUEST LECTURE

## RESPONDING TO TRAUMA AND UNCERTAINTY:

Conversations with people seeking asylum  
in Australia's mandatory detention system

Poh Lin Lee is an internationally renowned social worker and narrative therapist who provided torture and trauma counselling services on Christmas Island between 2011 – 2014. In this lecture, Lee discusses the context of working alongside survivors of torture and persecution as they are held in Australia's immigration detention centre. Lee highlights the ways in which power and ongoing systemic abuse re-invigorate and contribute to ongoing, multiple trauma. Engaging with a social justice framework, she addresses the limitations of therapeutic practice, which is often confined to traditional notions of private conversations. Those who work with asylum seekers, she argues, have a responsibility to cross the borders between therapeutic practice and other fields of practice, to ensure that the problems experienced by asylum seekers are de-individualised, and rather understood as a wider problem that include border politics, state control, notions of welcome and integration, and our collective participation in the structures that validate and uphold human rights and dignity (or don't). The lecture will be followed by a question and answer session facilitated by Dr Tarryn Phillips from the Centre for Health, Law and Society and the Crime Justice and Legal Studies program at La Trobe University.



**Poh Lin Lee** has been providing therapy to individuals, families and communities for 14 years, including in Australia, Mongolia, Benin, Singapore, New Zealand, Malaysia, Palestine, Turkey, Ukraine, Germany, Belgium, Greece, UK and Spain. As well as providing torture and trauma counselling services on Christmas Island between 2011 – 2014, she continues to work with people seeking asylum through a collaborative film project with director Gabrielle Brady, *The Island of the Hungry Ghosts* (awarded Best Documentary, Tribeca Film Festival).

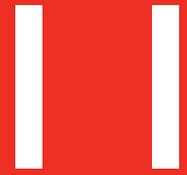
# CHLS

Centre for Health, Law and Society



**LA TROBE**  
UNIVERSITY

## March



### TIME

10.30am – 12:00pm

### VENUE

Law Moot Court  
Room 232  
Social Sciences Building  
La Trobe University  
Melbourne (Bundoora)

### REGISTER

<https://pohlinlee.eventbrite.com.au>

**LIGHT CATERING PROVIDED**

## CONTACT:

**CENTRE FOR  
HEALTH, LAW & SOCIETY**

[chls@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:chls@latrobe.edu.au)  
T:@HealthLawSoc

### DEPARTMENT

La Trobe Law School  
[www.latrobe.edu.au/law](http://www.latrobe.edu.au/law)