

## EDITORIAL

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It is with great pleasure and pride that we introduce the inaugural volume of the *Statelessness and Citizenship Review* ('the *Review*'), celebrating a new milestone in the evolution of statelessness studies.<sup>1</sup> Over the past decade, there has been an exponential increase in scholarly attention and diversity of research projects focused on statelessness. With it, the volume of articles on the issue has surged, securing a place among the other literature in a wide array of existing journals that touch on related issues — not only international law and human rights, but also migration, refugee, gender and citizenship studies, to name a few. Our view, which was happily shared by the esteemed scholars who eagerly agreed to join the *Review*'s Editorial Board and the entire Editorial Team, is that the time has nevertheless come for a dedicated journal on statelessness and citizenship issues.

In the first place, this is because the academic world has shown an ever-growing appetite to come together, across disciplinary divides, to engage in what David Baluarte describes in his piece for the *Symposium* in this issue as 'our collective project'. This is evidenced, among others, by the high level of interest drawn by the Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion ('ISI') working paper series that ran for three years (a total of five editions between 2015–17) and helped to test the waters for a dedicated publication; the establishment in 2017 of the International Network of Statelessness Scholars — an online community for sharing research updates, questions and ideas; the convening of the first ever global PhD workshop on statelessness in 2018 which prompted the launch of the Global PhDs on Statelessness network now hosted on the Peter McMullin Centre on Statelessness' website; and the large number of contributions to the 2019 ISI World Conference on Statelessness in The Hague. Today's statelessness scholars want not only to debate the issues that they are investigating within a particular discipline (eg political science) or as situated in an established field (eg migration studies), they are very deliberately seeking out avenues to engage in cross-cutting conversations

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<sup>1</sup> Scholars have begun to articulate the need for 'a shift in the vernacular, from statelessness as a subject entrenched in legal studies, to statelessness as a field open to permeation: Statelessness Studies'. Deirdre Brennan, 'Statelessness and the Feminist Toolbox: Another Man-Made Problem with a Feminist Solution?' (2019) 24(2) *Tilburg Law Review* 170, 171.

that place statelessness at the centre of exploration. We hope that the *Review* will provide a lasting opportunity for this collaborative and multi-disciplinary effort.

Phillip Cole and Lindsey Kingston's contributions to the *Symposium* in this issue help to elucidate the second reason for the timeliness of the *Review's* inauguration. As more academic work is done and as more scholars are drawn into this issue, it is becoming evident in ever wider circles that we must 'take statelessness seriously', as Cole describes, because the study of statelessness may lead to new insights that have 'radical implications' for our understanding of the world (in Cole's case, political theory). We hope that the *Review* will help to nurture and encourage such exploration by filling the gap that has until now existed for a specific journal in which the major questions prompted by statelessness are asked — and answers discussed. As Kingston is right to emphasise, 'statelessness is complicated [and] cannot be neatly categorised within any academic discipline or assigned any one-size-fits all "solution"', which means that we must capitalise on and protect the 'political and academic space to dig deeper... [for] this, my friends and colleagues, is where things get interesting'. As editors-in-chief of the *Review*, we look forward to participating in the shaping of this field going forward and witnessing its further progress in the years to come.

Contemporary state practice concerning deprivation of citizenship in response to the so-called 'foreign fighter' phenomenon, the forced deportation of the Rohingya in August 2017 and questions around the status of the children born to refugees fleeing Syria or to former members of ISIS, are just some examples of contemporary challenges that academia must engage with. This is a third key motivation for establishing a journal: to monitor, research, understand, explain, critique and contribute towards informing appropriate responses to situations of statelessness around the world. The *Review* is a co-creation of ISI and the Peter McMullin Centre on Statelessness, and as such is exemplary of the exciting collaborations that are being forged between different actors around these issues. Indeed, it is important to recognise that the impressive pace at which academic involvement in statelessness has developed over the last decade is matched — or was perhaps prompted — by a similarly striking evolution of global engagement. From the early 2000s when United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (the agency mandated by the General Assembly to lead United Nations efforts to tackle statelessness) had only a single staff member in a full-time statelessness post, to the commemoration this year of what is already the half-way mark of the ambitious Global Action Plan to End Statelessness. From a time when ratification of the two UN statelessness treaties was so low as to suggest that they were obsolete instruments, to an era of renaissance for these conventions and of the adoption of new legal and political commitments to work together to address statelessness. From a period in which civil society interest in statelessness was limited to a few isolated individuals who described their early exploits in this area as a 'lonely' experience, to an age in which statelessness and the promotion of the

right to a nationality has dedicated non-governmental organisation initiatives operating at local, country, regional and global levels. In the midst of this fast-evolving environment, there is much to study, to debate and to share. We intend for the *Review* to be a resource that is of use to anyone working in this field as they seek to further their understanding of the issue.

The *Review* is a high-quality journal with the demanding standards required by an academic publication. The scope of the journal is wide in terms of subject matter interest, taking a broad approach to the topics within the ambit of statelessness and citizenship. It is not confined to any particular region, or issue, or methodology. The inaugural volume presents a diverse mix of geographic research foci — including Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Viet Nam and a book review on a publication about the African region. It also features big-picture, conceptual research (Allison Petrozziello and Marija Dobrić) as well as in-depth, localised empirical studies (Jamie Liew) and work that mixes both (Patrick Balazo and Susan Kneebone, Brandais York and Sayomi Ariyawansa). The journal is explicitly and avowedly inter-disciplinary, recognising that to understand statelessness we need an exchange that cuts across disciplinary silos and that the study of statelessness has also much to offer to a multitude of disciplines. We were delighted to already receive contributions to the inaugural volume from scholars with different disciplinary backgrounds and approaches and will make every effort to diversify this further as the journal becomes more established.

At the same time, the *Review* reserves a special place for the discussion of case law, in recognition of the need to pay greater attention to the many and often ground-breaking jurisprudential developments in this field. The *Case Notes* by Bronwen Manby, Katja Swider and Kim Rubenstein and Elizabeth Harris cover landmark cases from the African and European regional human rights courts and the Australian national legal system that, between them, touch on themes as diverse as the deprivation of nationality as a political tool, the identification and protection of stateless persons in a migratory context and the right of every child to a nationality. Unpacking the approach that courts take to real-world situations of statelessness can help to inform not just our understanding of the progressive development of statelessness law, but also how to situate this in its wider political, historical and social context. The *Critique and Commentary* section, which in this inaugural volume presents a *Symposium* on ‘The State of Statelessness Studies’ with the contributions by Baluarte, Cole and Kingston cited earlier, enables the journal to accommodate commentary on policy developments, proposals, developments and ideas — from any discipline or sector.

In closing, a few words about the production of the *Review*. From the outset, ISI and the Peter McMullin Centre agreed to combine the commitment to deliver a high-quality publication with a commitment to ensure that the product of all the hard work that goes into such an endeavour would be freely accessible to all. For us, especially in light of the subject of the work and the evolution of the field (both

within and beyond academia, as set out above), guaranteeing open access was essential. We feel honoured that the members of the *Review*'s Editorial Board, who all contributed towards progressing the field of statelessness to a place where its own journal was warranted, supported this vision and agreed to take part. The production process is a collaborative effort but the editorial work for this volume has been undertaken by a group of dedicated and extremely thorough law students at Melbourne Law School ensuring a high level of accuracy, quality and veracity of all contributions. We are grateful to them and to the members of our Editorial Team — Timnah Baker, Maria Jose Recalde Vela, Eliah Castiello, Katia Biancchini and Kristy Belton — for their time and enthusiasm for this brand-new project. We look forward to continuing this collaborative undertaking in future volumes and delivering a journal that helps to progress 'our collective project'.