

LEGAL INTERSECTIONS RESEARCH CENTRE (LIRC) **SCHOOL OF LAW**

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'Not just one thing': Homelessness and crisis in Melbourne

**Presented by James Petty,
LIRC Visiting PhD Scholar & PhD Candidate, University of Melbourne**

Date: 14 October 2015
Time: 4:30 – 6:30 pm
Location: Moot Court (67.202)
RSVP: [Online](#)

The language of crisis permeates discussions of homelessness, from individuals accessing 'crisis accommodation', crises in the service sector as well as in the supply of affordable housing. Yet framing homelessness in the language of crisis occludes the various structural, normative and legal factors that entrench homelessness as a common social phenomenon. Herein lies a tension, in that despite the prevalent language of crisis, homelessness is also often framed as inevitable, a tragic yet stalwart feature of both social and physical (and particularly urban) space. In framing certain socio-cultural practices, identities and behaviours as 'homelessness', we ascribe them an element of externality, locating it outside the normative social and legal bounds of society. This isolates a highly diverse community and locates them fundamentally 'outside': of the institution of the home; of the economy; of the normative social world; and of contemporary conceptualisations of citizenship and the social and legal benefits that accompany it. My research examines this notion of crisis and considers its applicability to homelessness in Melbourne as well as identifying various contradictions within social, political and legal understandings of the issue. With a conceptual framework drawing on post-structuralism, critical and cultural criminology, I examine four key spaces in which these narratives and contradictions of 'crisis' play out: biography, visibility, geography and responsibility.



James Petty is a PhD candidate in Criminology at the University of Melbourne. His research interests include homelessness and poverty, urban and public space, theories of citizenship, drug policy, critical and cultural criminology, feminism and queer theory, comic books and ethics. He has recently published an article in the International Journal of Crime, Justice and Social Democracy examining the controversy around the use of 'anti-homeless spikes' in London and a book chapter in Graphic Justice (2015) on spectatorship, violence and ideologies of justice in the comic Watchmen.

