

EDITORIAL

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It was originally hoped this Thematic Issue of the *University of New South Wales Law Journal* might coincide with that which, as I write, remains sadly elusive – a final agreement in the Doha Round negotiations currently being conducted under the auspices of the World Trade Organization ('WTO'). I am unapologetically of the view that wealthy and developing countries alike will be poorer if the world fails to strike a deal that properly honours the values upon which the so-called Development Round was launched in Qatar in 2001.

But to keep some perspective, it is worth mentioning three important points that emerge from the arguments and analysis within this Thematic. First, though the evolution of multilateral trade law has involved steady liberalisation, this process has been nothing if not tediously incremental. Second, Doha, like its predecessors, is unlikely to be a panacea for the billions whose day-to-day lives are adversely affected by the distortions that infect international trade. Third, while the promise of Doha has, from the outset, been synonymous with the aspirations of developing countries, freer trade cannot, by itself, yield economic development.

Far from blindly promoting a new multilateral deal at any cost, the expert contributors to this Thematic have thus skilfully laid out the legal and economic complexities shaping global commercial interaction. Their articles offer a mix of concise commentary and highly specific technical analysis. And while there is plenty of discussion on the key Doha issues, I believe there is also much to remind us of the significance of international trade regulation even in the absence of an agreement to revitalise the WTO.

In assembling this collection of articles I benefited immeasurably from the constant guidance of Bryan Mercurio of the UNSW Law Faculty. Bryan is not only a trade specialist and an author in this Thematic, but his teaching on international trade law was very much the source of my inspiration when I proposed this topic to my colleagues nearly a year ago. I would also like to thank the Dean of our Faculty, Professor David Dixon, for his steadfast support of this student-run publication.

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I am very grateful for the outstanding scholarship produced by each of the authors; I trust their work will make a strong contribution to interest in international trade and the WTO in Australia.

Lastly, special thanks are due to my colleagues on the Editorial Board for their exceptional work, and in particular to Talia Epstein for her tireless efforts and remarkable stewardship of the *UNSW Law Journal*.