

Our Vision:

The Indigenous Law Research Unit (ILRU) is a dedicated research unit at the University of Victoria's Faculty of Law committed to the recovery and renaissance of Indigenous laws. We believe Indigenous laws need to be taken seriously as laws. We partner with and support work by Indigenous peoples and communities to ascertain and articulate their own legal principles and processes, in order to effectively respond to today's complex challenges.

The ILRU team develops and employs innovative methods for engaging with the full scope of Indigenous laws, including:

- Social (human to human, gender and equality, fairness, violence and vulnerability, and harms and injuries),
- Economic (Indigenous law and economies),
- Environmental (land, water, non-human life forms), and
- Political (governance, institution-building, inter-community and inter-societal relations, legitimacy and accountability).

We believe Indigenous legal research must be conducted with the highest standards of rigor and transparency. We want to recover Indigenous laws' capacity to be publically applied, critically evaluated, openly debated, and adapted or changed as needed. We provide education, training, and ongoing guidance to communities and professionals engaging with Indigenous laws. We develop world-class theoretical and substantive Indigenous legal educational materials and academic resources. We bring together Indigenous law practitioners and diverse thinkers to share challenges and solutions, identify critical issues and advance best practices in accessing, understanding, and applying Indigenous laws today.

Our goal is to create sites of respectful dialogue and collaboration in order to reinvigorate communities of Indigenous legal practice locally and globally. Our vision is for Indigenous laws to be living and in use on the ground, and to be researched, taught and theorized about just as other great legal traditions of the world are. Revitalizing Indigenous laws, legal institutions, and their legal processes is essential to re-building healthy Indigenous citizenries in self-governing, lawful communities. Creating more respectful and symmetrical relationships across legal traditions is a necessary part of building and maintaining robust reconciliation within and between peoples, now and for future generations.

Our Team:

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Scope of Work:

The Indigenous Law Research Unit (ILRU) collaborates and supports two major streams of Indigenous laws research:

Lands, Waters and Resources	Governance, Justice and Citizenship
<p>Examples of past and current projects include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • marine use management • water laws • resource stewardship • sustainable development • lands and boundary disputes 	<p>Examples of past and current projects include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • constitution-building • harms and conflicts • criminal justice processes • matrimonial property dispute resolution mechanisms • child welfare • navigating issues of gender, sexuality, and sexual equality

How we Work:

The ILRU can collaborate and support communities in different ways according to each communities' own goals and resources and our current capacity. We do our best to support all interested communities in whatever way is most suitable and possible.

Short Term/Contract Research: There may be discrete issues or specific, time limited projects where it might be useful for communities or groups to partner with or contract an academic partner. These may be a targeted report, paper, resource or event developed for the community partner or contractor, that may be adapted, subject to community review, to produce academic resources and publications.

Long Term/Major Research Projects: These are major collaborative projects that run over a year or more and require intensive time and resources. These research projects produce a substantial body of work that is returned to the community partner for their use and application, and can be adapted, subject to community review, to produce academic resources and publications.

Training and Support: Communities in the beginning stages of decision-making around how to approach an issue or are confident they have enough capacity and support to run their own Indigenous laws projects, may still access the ILRU for training and support. We offer two-day workshops or one-week intensive training sessions on critical issues and methodology suitable for community participants and students of all educational backgrounds. The ILRU team can offer ongoing support to communities running their own projects through advice, trouble-shooting, and useful case examples of particular academic resources.

