

Kieran Pender wins ACT Young Lawyer of the Year award

The Human Rights Law Centre's Kieran Pender has jointly taken out one of the ACT Law Society's most prestigious awards.

Pender, who has a focus on the protection of whistleblowers, defending free speech and ending mass surveillance, [won the ACT Young Lawyer of the Year award](#) alongside Caroline Beasley from Clayton Utz Canberra. The award recognises outstanding early career lawyers.

In recent months, Pender has pushed the Human Rights Law Centre's engagement with the federal government's new Identify and Disrupt surveillance law, appearing before the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security.

He has also written columns and given media interviews about the ongoing prosecutions of whistleblowers Bernard Collaery, David McBride and Richard Boyle, and appeared before the Independent National Security Legislation Monitor in relation to the Witness J secret trial.

Pender is also an honorary lecturer at the Australian National University's College of Law, and a writer with *The Guardian*.

Human Rights Law Centre Legal Director Daniel Webb said:

“This is fantastic recognition of Kieran and the exceptional work he is doing to ensure Australia's whistleblowers are protected, not punished.

“People who speak up about wrongdoing are crucial to our democracy, but too often whistleblowers in Australia are being punished and prosecuted for doing the right thing. Kieran's legal and advocacy work is making a real difference towards a more transparent and accountable democracy.”