 Acts of maritime piracy off the Somali coast have been gaining increasing world attention in the past year, however the scourge of piracy is nothing new. The Straits of Malacca have been notorious pirate infested waters and in 2004, 40% of pirate attacks could be traced to those waters. The challenge for the international community (which is heavily reliant on maritime trade and tourism) is to identify methods of combating an age old problem within the confines of centuries old law. There are certain developments which the law has not kept pace with. A significant issue is that the definition of piracy—acts violence or detention for private ends by the crew of a private ship against another ship on the high seas or outside the jurisdiction of any State, is at odds with the fact that many acts of piracy occur close to the coast line within coastal State jurisdiction. Further the recognition of flag State sovereignty and coastal State jurisdiction over territorial waters leaves little manoeuvring room for those States seeking to get tough on pirates. The ad hoc solution of the UN Security Council with the adoption of Resolutions specific to the Somali crisis provides a short term fix and as has been seen, the pirates adapt and move elsewhere. Dr Baird will explore some of the legal and political issues involved in considering measured responses to maritime piracy.

Dr Rachel Baird is a senior lecturer at USQ, School of Law. She has researched many aspects of international law of the sea including illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the Southern Ocean; whaling in Antarctica and more recently maritime security. She is also a Reserve legal Officer with the Australian Air Force (advising on maritime law) and a consultant at Clayton Utz Solicitors. She holds a PhD from the University of Melbourne.

Thursday 21 May 2009
N16 Room 1.22
Nathan campus
12.30 - 1.50pm

To RSVP, please contact Natasha Vary on (07) 3735 5322 or n.vary@griffith.edu.au no later than 5.00pm Tuesday 19 May 2009