

January 27, 2026



The Australian Government's Response to the Bondi Beach Tragedy - A Legal Analysis: In Conversation with Prof. Benedict Sheehy

Organized by Toronto Metropolitan University's Institute for the Study of Corporate Social Responsibility

Session starts at 5:02 pm

Tuesday, January 27, 2026

Toronto Metropolitan University,

Toronto, Canada

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Toronto Metropolitan University*

Land Acknowledgement

"Toronto is in the 'Dish With One Spoon Territory'. The Dish With One Spoon is a treaty between the Anishinaabe, Mississaugas and Haudenosaunee that bound them to share the territory and protect the land. Subsequent Indigenous Nations and peoples, Europeans and all newcomers have been invited into this treaty in the spirit of peace, friendship and respect."

** Toronto Metropolitan University was formerly known as Ryerson University.*

ISO 26000 Social Responsibility definition

Social Responsibility: *the responsibility of an organization for the impacts of its decisions and activities on society and the environment, through transparent and ethical behaviour that:*

- *Contributes to sustainable development, health and the welfare of society;*
- *Takes into account the expectations of stakeholders;*
- *Is in compliance with applicable law and consistent with international norms of behaviour; and*
- *Is integrated throughout the organization and practiced in its relationships*

The need for “sustainable governance”

Sustainable governance starts from the proposition that the best likelihood of addressing the complex, fast evolving, multi-jurisdictional environmental, social and economic challenges we face in the 21st century will involve ***harnessing the unique energies and capabilities of all three of government, the private sector and civil society***, using a combination of rule instruments, processes, institutions and actors, sometimes operating collaboratively, and sometimes operating in more of a “check and balance”/rivalrous manner.

Webb (2005), “*Sustainable Governance in the Twenty-First Century - Moving beyond Instrument Choice*”

Sustainable governance taxonomy

- **Institutions** – specialized entities performing public-interest oriented functions or processes (public, private, civil society): for example, legislatures are a public sector institution, ISO is an example of a non-state rule-making institution)
- **Rule instruments** – articulations of normatively acceptable and unacceptable conduct, typically consisting of criteria for objectively assessing conformity or non-conformity: for example, laws are public sector rule instruments, and ISO standards are an example of non-state rule instruments
- **Processes** – inter-active activities associated with rule making, rule application, rule implementation and penalty/reward decisions. For example, environmental agencies carry out government rule implementation processes and certification agencies carry out non-state conformity assessment processes
- **Actors** – interacting individuals and entities that play some role in the broader governance ecosystem: e.g., inspectors, judges, auditors, are all individual actors

Did you know?

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About Prof. Benedict Sheehy

- Dr. Sheehy is a professor at the University of Canberra Law School in Australia.
- Dr. Sheehy has PhD degrees from Australian National University and a PhD, Juris Doctor from the University of Windsor. He also holds Masters degrees from University of Queensland and McMaster University, and a Bachelor's degree from Eastern PBC.
- Dr. Sheehy is an internationally recognized leader in the fields of corporate social responsibility, corporate law and regulatory theory.
- He has published extensively in leading legal and other journals.
- Dr. Sheehy's work with interdisciplinary researchers from around the globe has led to significant published research, examining different aspects of how law works, how law fails and how society can more effectively achieve long term environmental and social sustainability using various types of law in a wide variety of contexts.

About this session

- On 14 December 2025, two gunmen opened fire during a Hanukkah celebration at a park adjacent to Bondi Beach in Sydney, Australia, killing 15 people and injuring dozens more. In the aftermath, serious questions have arisen about the adequacy of the Australian Government's legal and regulatory response to the risks of mass-casualty violence in open public spaces.
- This one-hour session will examine how Australia's firearms laws, policing powers, emergency-management frameworks, and public-space safety regulations operated before, during, and after the incident, and whether they were fit for purpose in preventing, containing, and responding to the attack.
- Themes that will be explored include the challenges associated with fragmented legal authority, inter-agency coordination, information-sharing and escalation pathways, and how to maintain an appropriate balance between civil liberties and public protection. If time allows, reforms for building a more resilient, integrated public-safety governance approach will be explored.

Notice

***If you have a question or comment, please email:
kernaghan.webb@torontomu.ca***

*I will do my best to fold in your questions/comments into
the conversation.*