



Department of Social Work Newsletter

Issue 1, 2009

Welcome

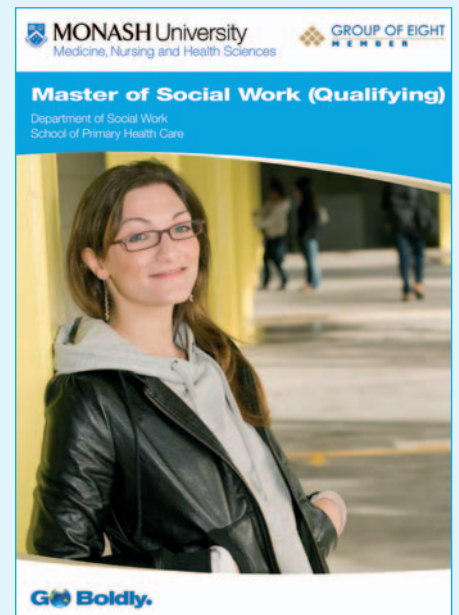
Welcome to the first ever edition of the Monash Department of Social Work Newsletter.

We plan to publish this Newsletter on a bi-annual basis to inform graduates, current undergraduate and postgraduate students, field agencies and our many other stakeholders of news and activities from our very busy department.

We currently have a number of highlights to report:

- Our Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) has been successfully re-accredited by the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) for a further five years.
- Our new Master of Social Work Qualifying will be commencing in 2010, and has been provisionally accredited by the AASW.
- Our appointee to the new position of Associate Professor in Health and Social Work (jointly with Southern Health) commenced in October. Her name is Fiona McDermott.
- We recently hosted the annual conference of the Australian Association of Social Work and Welfare Educators (AASWWE) on critical reflection in social work and welfare practice and education at our Caulfield campus on October 1 and 2.
- Grace Brown (formerly of La Trobe University) has recently joined us for 12 months to strengthen the academic structure of our BSW.
- Dr Uschi Bay (formerly of Deakin University) will be joining our staff to progress the development of our new Master of Social Work Qualifying.

We look forward to your feedback on this first edition, and welcome your news and input for future editions.



Feature wall, Department of Social Work

Current staff profiles

Professor Margaret Alston, B.Soc. Stud (Syd), Dip. Comp. Applic. (RMIHE), M. Litt (UNE), PhD (UNSW), assumed duties as Head of Department in July 2008. Prior to commencing at Monash she was Professor of Social Work and Human Services and Director of the Centre for Rural Social Research (a subprogram of the Institute of Land, Water and Society) at Charles Sturt University. She is also an Honorary Professor at the University of Sydney. She has served on a number of Boards including the Foundation for Australian Agricultural Women, Family Services Council, Family and Community Services Department in Canberra and the National Women's Advisory Group overseeing the Rural Women's Policy Unit in the Department of Primary Industries and Energy. In 2008 she was appointed to the Australian delegation attending the commission for the Status of Women meeting in New York. In 2009, 2007 and 2003 she spent time as a visiting expert in the Gender Division of the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation in Rome. She has published widely in the field of rural gender and rural social issues. She has also acted as a gender expert for UN-Habitat in Kenya in 2009. She has been a keynote speaker at a number of national and international conferences over the last several years and is sought out for media commentary on the rural social condition, and on climate change and gender issues.

Professor Thea Brown, BA, Dip Soc. Wk, PhD, was appointed as Professor of Social Work in 1988, serving as Head of the Department, the Director of International Programs and Deputy Head and now Professor, Research. Prior to this she worked as a social work manager in health services in NSW, in health and local government in Victoria, and as an academic in Social Work at Melbourne University. She has had a long interest in social work education. At Monash she established the first Distance Education Degree in Social Work internationally, the on campus and distance education coursework MSW, and the BSW and MSW degrees accredited both in Australia and in Singapore and delivered in Singapore. Her most recent research focus has been on separating parents and their children, on family violence and parental separation and divorce and on services supporting separating parents. She has served on a number of governmental committees in the family law policy area. She co-authored with Renata Alexander, *Child Abuse and Family Law*, Allen and Unwin, 2007.

Kerry Brydon, B. Comm. (Melbourne), BSW (Melbourne) MSW (Research) (Monash), has a background in the child protection arena. She joined the Department of Social Work in 2003, and currently coordinates the Singapore program. There have been many highlights in the Singapore program as well as many challenges. Major milestones to date have included the achievement of full accreditation by the Australian Association of Social Workers as well as being accredited by the Singapore Association of Social Workers, the graduation of the first cohort of students at the end of 2005 and the graduation of the first honours cohort of students in 2008.

Marija Dragic, J.P, BSW (RMIT), MSW (Monash), has spent her social work career working with migrants and refugees and for the past nine years was Senior Social Worker/Settlement Manager at the South Eastern Region Migrant Resource Centre located in Dandenong, Melbourne. The Dandenong area has a high concentration of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and is in the heart of refugee resettlement. Marija co-ordinates the Fieldwork Department at Monash, acts as the department representative for the Bachelor of Health Science/Bachelor of Social Work degree and teaches Cross Cultural Social Work. Marija continues her work with refugees and is a consultant to the Springvale Community Aid and Advice Bureau in their Refugee Brokerage Program. Marija is the voluntary President of the Serbian Welfare Association of Victoria – an organisation she helped to establish in 1992 as a result of the war in the former Yugoslavia.

Dr Ralph Hampson, BSoc Stud (UniSyd), MA (Psycho-social Studies) (UniMelb), PhD (Melb), recently completed his PhD on the impact of the built environment on the lives of older people, who live in residential aged care facilities. He is passionate about the rights of residents in aged care facilities to live in environments that facilitate engagement with the community. He has also undertaken research and consultation in relation to health policy and planning, with a particular emphasis on the impact of healthcare services on the consumer. He has taught at both masters and undergraduate levels in social policy, provision of healthcare services, community health services and Social Work practice. In his earlier career Mr Hampson was a clinical Social Worker with children and families. From 2008 he has taken up two new roles – Coordinator of the Master of Social Work at Monash University and a new position with JewishCare, a major provider of aged and community services, responsible for Research and Innovation.

Dr Catherine Flynn, BSW (Honours) (Monash), Grad Cert Psychotherapeutic Studies (Queens University, Belfast), Practice Teaching Award (General Social Care Council, Northern Ireland), PhD, recently completed her PhD on the impact of maternal incarceration on adolescent children, graduating on May 7, 2009. Before academia, she worked in direct practice for ten years sharing time between Australia and Northern Ireland; working initially in casework with young people in contact with the juvenile justice system and later with homeless women and children. In recent years she has been actively engaged in a range of research projects: examining women's access to welfare services after prison in Victoria, evaluating a community support program for high risk infants, as well as investigating the factors which support students from diverse background to succeed in higher education. She is now exploring research opportunities in the areas of people trafficking and care planning for young people whose mothers are facing imprisonment. Cathy currently lectures in the undergraduate program, enthusiastically teaching Social Work research methods and coordinating the Honours program.



Peter Boss Honours Prize recipient Jane Cowan with Lesley Hewitt, May 2009

Ms Lesley Hewitt, BSC, BSW Honours (Monash), MSW (La Trobe), joined the Department of Social Work in 1991 after working for several years in child protection services in both policy and direct service. Lesley was the inaugural co-ordinator of the first 24 hour hospital-based sexual assault counselling service operating at the former Queen Victoria Medical Centre. She has published in the area of sexual assault, family violence and child abuse. Her MSW thesis explored factors that influenced the decisions of child protection workers investigating allegations of child abuse. Her current research interests include family violence with particular emphasis on the impact on children, and she is a member of the Departmental research team that includes Thea Brown and Rosemary Sheehan who are examining how the Family Court of Australia deals with child abuse allegations. Lesley has been involved in utilising online technology in the teaching of the undergraduate social work degree and has completed post graduate qualifications in this area.

Associate Professor Max Liddell, BA (Melbourne), MSW (Ottawa), PhD (Monash), is a highly experienced practitioner and manager of family and children's services in both Australia and North America, with extensive practice in casework, family work, group work, community development and lobbying. Prior to joining Monash in 1989 he had many years experience in planning and leading successful lobbies in the human services, and a number of years as a private consultant, specialising in program planning and evaluation and management issues. He is one of Australia's most experienced human service program evaluators. His research interests currently are in policy and legislation developments in child protection and child welfare systems nationally, and into the processes used by local citizens in initiating community development processes. He is a consultant to a variety of community development projects. He was co-author of *Young People Leaving Care and Protection*.

Jennifer McConachy, BBSoc (Latrobe), BSW (Latrobe) MSW (Monash), joined the Department in May 2008. She is the off-campus Co-ordinator for the BSW and the Co-ordinator of rural and interstate fieldwork. Jennifer will teach a new introductory Social Work subject in the double degrees (BA/BSW and BHSc/BSW) from 2010. She previously worked in the Victorian Department of Human Services in the areas of policy and programme development for out-of-home care services for children; as well as in-patient aged mental health, foster care, family preservation and

reunification for clients of child protection, family counselling and child and adolescent mental health. She is currently undertaking a PhD focussed on kinship care, and will be presenting a workshop at Prato about the legal implications and realities of kinship care.

Dr Robyn Mason, BA, BSW, PhD, Dip Ed (Melb.), joined the Department in November, 2008, specifically to develop the new Master of Social Work (Qualifying) degree. Robyn's doctoral research, completed in 2005, built on her practice experience in rural women's support services and was based on a national survey of 160 women-specific services. The study explored features of women-specific services in non-metropolitan Australia, concluding that these services are sites for women's social citizenship, especially in their passionate pursuit of a feminist response to women's lives. Robyn has taught social work and social welfare in metropolitan and regional universities in Australia and has practice and management experience in sexual assault support, rural Aboriginal health, community work, mental health and aged care.

Dr Philip Mendes, BA, BSW, PhD, teaches the three Social Policy and Community Development subjects, and is also co-ordinator for the on-campus undergraduate Bachelor of Social Work. He is an acknowledged expert on community welfare lobby groups, having completed his PhD on the peak community welfare lobby body, the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS). He has also researched on a range of social policy and community development debates including young people leaving state out of home care, globalisation and the welfare state, neo-liberal think tanks, and illicit drug policies. He has published widely in peer reviewed academic journals (over 80 publications in total), and is the author or co-author of six books including Australia's Welfare Wars (UNSW Press 2003), Harm Minimisation, Zero Tolerance and Beyond: The Politics of Illicit Drugs in Australia

(Pearson, 2004), Inside the Welfare Lobby: A history of the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) (Sussex Academic Press, 2006), and Australia's Welfare Wars Revisited (UNSW Press, 2008).

Dr Bernadette Saunders, BA (La Trobe), BSW (Melb), Dip Ed (Monash), MSW (Monash), PhD (Monash), has experience as a Medical Social Worker. In 1996, she was invited to join both the Child Abuse and Family Violence Research Unit at Monash University (now known as Child Abuse Prevention Research Australia – CAPRA) as a researcher, and the Social Work department as a sessional teacher. The ARC funded research project in which she participated explored risk assessment in child protection practice and the response of community professionals to mandatory reporting legislation. This, and subsequent, research at CAPRA resulted in national and international refereed journal articles and book chapters on child abuse risk assessment; language and children's rights; child abuse and the media; and the physical punishment of children. Her PhD research focused on physical punishment, childhood and the intergenerational transmission of family violence. Her book (with Chris Goddard) 'Physical punishment in childhood: the rights of the child' (Wiley/Blackwell) is to be published January 2010.

Associate Professor Rosemary Sheehan, (B.Soc.Stud:Syd; MSW:LaT; PhD:Monash), teaches health and mental health in the undergraduate and postgraduate social work programs and co-ordinates the Higher Degrees by Research program. Her published research covers a range of areas: child welfare and the law, family violence, mental health, judicial and corrections responses to offenders, with particular reference to women offenders, and social work curricula. Her publications include: Magistrates' Decision-Making in Child Protection Cases (2001), Working with Women Offenders (2007, Willan, UK) with A/Prof Chris Trotter and Prof Gill McIvor (Stirling, Scotland), and Parents as prisoners: maintaining the parent-child relationship (CRC funded study,

2007). Her current research projects include: the development of a national profile of Australia's Children's Courts (ARC funded) and an exploratory study of immigration and mental health.

Associate Professor Chris Trotter, BA, TSTC, Dip Social Studies, MSW, PhD, worked for many years as a social worker and manager in child protection, juvenile justice and adult probation prior to his appointment to Monash University in 1991. He has undertaken many research projects and published widely on the subject of effective practice with involuntary clients including clients in the child protection and justice systems. He has an international reputation for his work on pro-social modelling. His book Working with Involuntary Clients, now in its second edition, has sold widely and is published in German, Japanese and Chinese translation. Helping Abused Children and their Families has also sold widely. He teaches Working with Individuals in the BSW, Criminology and Social Work and Advanced casework in the MSW and supervises nine PhD students. He is also Director of the Monash Criminal Justice Research Consortium.

Stephanie Vronis, B.A. (Monash) BSW (RMIT), joined the Department of Social Work in 2007 after seven years of experience in working with migrants and refugees. Ms Vronis has primarily worked with refugees in re-settlement, community health, advocacy and community development. In 2005, Ms Vronis focussed her work on developing, co-ordinating and delivering a three year family relationship service pilot program to newly arrived refugees. Part of this work involved co-ordinating the relationship service, providing family support, counselling and delivering programs to families on how to parent across cultures. Ms Vronis began her work in the welfare field delivering individualised learning programs to children with autism and other related intellectual disabilities. Currently, Ms Vronis is part of the fieldwork team and the Skills Co-ordinator at Monash.

Research highlights

Projects and Grants

Attorney-General's Family Violence and Family Law Research Grant

Professor Thea Brown won a grant from the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department in April 2009. The research is to be conducted between members of the Well Being of Children Following Parental Separation and Divorce Research Consortium and the Hawke Research Institute Uni SA with the aim of exploring how families with past or current experiences of family violence are managing in the new socio-legal family law services system following the changes introduced by the 2006 family law legislation. Professor Thea Brown and Associate Professor Dale Bagshaw (Uni SA) are co-directors of the project for the tender of \$300,000. The project will run for one year.

ARC Discovery Grant

Associate Professor Rosemary Sheehan has been awarded, with Professor Allan Borowski (LaTrobe University) an ARC Discovery Grant 2009–10 for a national study of Australia's Children's Courts, entitled: Challenges, possibilities and future directions: a national assessment of Australia's Children's Courts. (\$580,000)

Monash Strategic Grants

Dr Ralph Hampson in the area of aged care: "A stakeholder-driven approach to development of a core allied health outcome dataset in adult and aged rehabilitation services". (\$48,000)

Professor Margaret Alston to continue her work on the social impacts in the Murray Darling Basin area and communities along the Murray River facing further reduced water supplies (\$52,000). She has also been funded by the Federal Department of Agriculture to assess Australian women's response to climate change.

Helen MacPherson Smith Trust, 2008-09

Dr Philip Mendes: "Examining the support needs and pathways of young people leaving state care in rural Victoria" in partnership with St Lukes Anglicare. Helen MacPherson Smith Trust, an independent philanthropic trust. (\$75,000)

The goal of this research is to attain detailed information on the life circumstances of young people who have recently left care in rural and regional and urban Victoria (with a particular emphasis on indigenous care-leavers) by exploring their perspectives and insights.

Philip is also part of a consortium which secured \$175,000 from the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute to examine housing options for young people leaving state care.

Other research highlights

Professor Margaret Alston is engaged as a visiting expert working on a United Nations project on gender and climate change. She has recently been in India where data is being collected in six rural villages. The project is being run under the auspices of the Gender Division of the UN's Food and Agricultural Organisation. Professor Alston visited some of the research sites in India on her recent visit. Further sites for the project will be chosen in a number of countries across the world.

She is also the Director of the new Gender, Leadership and Social Sustainability (GLASS) Research Unit. The GLASS Research Unit aims to undertake high quality research focusing on gender, leadership and social sustainability. The Unit also aims to contribute to community debate and policy development in these key areas.

Current projects of the Unit include: 'Social Impacts of Drought and Declining Water Availability in the Murray Darling Basin' and 'Contemporary Birthing Experiences of Women Living in Rural and Remote NSW'. Professor Alston is currently also working as an invited expert on an international project investigating gender and climate change with the Gender Division of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation.

Associate Professor Chris Trotter's

Collaborative Family Work Model has been extensively used by the NSW Department of Juvenile Justice to develop their new "Act Now Together Strong" Model for intervening with young offenders and their families.

Chris is also one of the convenors of the new Monash University Criminal Justice Research Consortium (CJRC) which brings together academics united by an interest in criminal justice research, and seeks active engagement with industry. The mission of the CJRC is to become an acknowledged leader in criminal justice research and a major contributor to policy development, through the application of combined expertise to the complex research questions of criminal justice.

Members of the CJRC include more than 50 academics and higher-degree students from many and varied backgrounds and belonging to six faculties of Monash University. The activities of the CJRC are led by an Executive Committee comprised of representatives from these faculties. The CJRC actively engages with industry, in part through regular meetings with an Advisory Committee that is made up of representatives from interested government and non-government organisations at both the state and federal level.

Phd student Jo Famularo-Doyle

was recently interviewed on the ABC Radio National "All in the Mind" program regarding her expertise on acquired brain injury.

Dr Philip Mendes has been invited to co-edit a special edition of Parity Magazine on "Young People Leaving Care and Homelessness". He will also be presenting papers at two forthcoming conferences, Youth Affairs Council of Victoria in Ballarat, and the Asia Pacific Regional Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect in Perth, and has recently published peer reviewed articles on young people leaving care in Asian Social Work and Policy Review, Family Matters, Developing Practice, Australian Social Work, Social Alternatives and Youth Studies Australia. He is currently co-authoring a new book, Young People leaving state out-of-home care: a research-based study of Australian policy and practice, for publication in late 2010.

Professor Thea Brown is the leader of the Well Being of Children Following Parental Separation and Divorce Research Consortium. The consortium consists of 15 members from the areas of research, policy development and service provision, and is funded by the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY).

The project began in January 2009 and is expected to finish in October 2009. The goal of the funding body, ARACY, is to promote the health and well being of children and youth through the development of multi-disciplinary research. The scheme under which the consortium is funded, aims to create research consortiums in order that they develop new research initiatives in areas affecting children and youth.

Associate Professor Rosemary Sheehan

was the convenor of the "Children and the Law: International approaches to children and their vulnerabilities" conference held at Prato in Tuscany, Italy from 7-10 September 2009.

New and existing programs

Master of Social Work (Forensic Studies) from 2010

The Department of Social Work is pleased to announce the introduction of an exciting new postgraduate degree: the Master of Social Work (Forensic Studies) offered in conjunction with Monash University's Centre for Forensic Behavioural Science. Forensic Social Work is an emerging field of practice for social work.

Forensic behavioural science is at the interface of human services and social work

The information in this newsletter was correct at the time of publication. Monash University reserves the right to alter this information should the need arise. October 2009. CRICOS provider: Monash University 00008C TSG232658



Pre-Graduation drinks May 2009: Dr Catherine Flynn, Associate Professors Chris Trotter and Rosemary Sheehan

employment in the fields of the mental health, child protection, dual diagnosis, disability and criminal justice, and increasingly requires this knowledge and expertise to both better respond to client needs and improve career advancement.

This new degree targets these specific postgraduate social work needs and draws on a range of disciplines including psychology, psychiatry, criminology, law, social work and ethics to respond to real-world workplace challenges.

Master of Social Work (Qualifying)

Commencing in 2010, this new degree provides an additional pathway into the profession for eligible graduates. The MSW (Qualifying) is a 96 credit point degree, completed over two years of full-time study or the equivalent period of part-time study.

It will be available to both on-campus and off-campus students. The curriculum meets AASW requirements and builds on Monash Social Work areas of strength, especially in gender studies, sustainability, child wellbeing and health.

The degree includes considerable emphasis on community and field engagement and leadership, including two fieldwork practica (1000 hours) and opportunities to work with organisations to complete projects and research.