

# CHASE – Centre for Health through Action on Social Exclusion

*Taking Stock, September 2013*



## Contents

### CHASE Research

#### Project Updates

A good place to raise a family.....	page 2
Social work and faith-based organisations.....	page 2
Supporting resilience.....	page 3
The sexual and reproductive health of university students .....	page 3
Deakin at your Doorstep: Access to learning in the cloud .....	page 4
'You the Man': promoting bystander engagement and violence prevention.....	page 4
Young Women's Future Life Aspirations .....	page 5

#### Recently Completed PhDs

Measuring harm: Governing the effects of child sexual abuse .....	page 5
The relationship between physical activity and motherhood in older Somali women .....	page 6

#### CHASE News

CHASE partner event: "Coming out" in Italian families – the journey is still a difficult one for many.....	page 7
NOW OUT: Practising Social Inclusion .....	page 8

#### CHASE staff and contact details .....

page 8

## CHASE

CHASE brings together a group of 30 academic staff, located mainly in the School of Health and Social Development, across both Burwood and Waterfront campuses. We also have a large number of honours and PhD students under our supervision.

The group is multidisciplinary and multiprofessional, including public health, health promotion, health sciences, social work, occupational science and therapy, sociology, anthropology and disability studies.

The CHASE vision is working collaboratively with communities, organisations and governments to promote social inclusion and to enhance the health and wellbeing of all, particularly those populations, communities and individuals who experience social exclusion.

In this issue we as well as our customary project updates, we feature the work of just two of our current honours students and two recently completed PhDs.

## SAVE THE DATE

CHASE symposium:

Tuesday February 18th 2014

9am – 4pm

Melbourne City Centre

(Level 3, 550 Burke Street, Melbourne)

To register your interest in receiving the program, please email [melissa.graham@deakin.edu.au](mailto:melissa.graham@deakin.edu.au)

## CHASE RESEARCH

CHASE's purpose is to undertake research and development of the highest quality, including the development of theory, in partnership with communities and organisations; and, to provide evidence-based policy and practice advice to government and industry. Twice a year we produce a report that gives a brief summary of some of CHASE's current activity and our forward directions.

In this issue we provide updates on some of our projects and feature the work of some of our current honours students and recently completed PhD students.

## PROJECT UPDATES

### A good place to raise a family

This project is led by CHASE members Dr Fiona Andrews and Associate Professor Julia Shelley. The project aims to identify factors that affect residential location choices, and the quality of experiences of parents raising children in inner versus outer suburbs of Melbourne. The research is being undertaken in collaboration with two project partners, the City of Wyndham and the City of Maribyrnong.

There have been several exciting developments with this project since the last newsletter. Katherine Ware, a postgraduate student undertaking a Masters degree in Health Promotion at Deakin University received a higher distinction for her project on grand-parenting in the City of Wyndham. Katherine's project was embedded in our Good Place to Raise a Family project and specifically explored grandparents' experiences of caring for grandchildren in the City of Wyndham, the impacts on grandparents' health and wellbeing, and their support needs. Her research found both positive and negative impacts on health and wellbeing as well as identifying specific support needs. This was presented to the City of Wyndham last year in a workshop for Council staff. Katherine is also in the process of writing up her findings for publication.

We have also been invited to attend the Maribyrnong Early Years Alliance workshop on 20th March to present our findings from stage two of the Good Place to Raise a Family project which involved in-depth interviews with parents of preschool aged children in the City of Wyndham and City of Maribyrnong.

Finally, we are completing stage three of the project in the City of Wyndham. This involves interviews with parents living in two very new estates in the municipality to capture

the experiences of parenting and place among parents in less-established communities.

### Social work and faith-based organisations

The early years of the 21st century have seen renewed interest in the role of faith-based organisations in the social services with governments in a number of countries including Australia and the United Kingdom proposing that churches and religious agencies should take more responsibility for provision of welfare services. Having completed a set of interviews with Australian social workers employed in organisations which are associated, or identify, with a religious tradition, Professor Beth Crisp spent part of 2013 based in Edinburgh where she undertook interviews with Scottish social workers and worked on the manuscript for her forthcoming book from this project. Her research has been interested in both situations in which the involvement of faith-based organisations has been controversial as well as identifying areas where the scope for involvement of faith-based organisations could be further explored.



*Host for Prof Crisp at Edinburgh University, UK*

In Edinburgh, Professor Crisp held a fellowship from the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities (IASH) at the University of Edinburgh which promotes interdisciplinary research in the humanities and social sciences. Like CHASE, IASH encourages dialogue and collaboration between scholars of different backgrounds and seeks to make a space where inventive work is not constrained by traditional disciplinary boundaries. For further details about some of the recent projects at IASH go to <http://www.iash.ed.ac.uk/seminars.html#wip2013>

## Supporting resilience in children and young people

Professor Ann Taket, Professor Karen Stagnitti and Siobhan Casey are CHASE members involved in the 'Supporting Resilience' study, together with researchers in the School of Education and Associate Professor Andrea Nolan at the College of Education, Victoria University. The study aims to explore the conditions and characteristics of resilience in children and their families and communities, and to examine the educational, health, work-related, or leisure interventions that support and foster resilience. The research has been carried out in collaboration between Deakin University, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD), VicHealth (the state health promotion agency) and Community Connections (a state-wide NGO). The study was funded by the Australian Research Council (ARC). It provided an excellent opportunity to investigate the phenomenon of resilience in depth in the context of significant periods of transition for children and young people.

Data collection on the study was completed in 2012. A major emphasis of our work this year will be producing publications to disseminate the findings from the study.

### Publications already available:

Casey SA, Stagnitti K, Taket A and Nolan A (2012) Early peer play interactions of resilient children living in disadvantaged communities. *International Journal of Play* 1(3): 311-323. Email [ann.taket@deakin.edu.au](mailto:ann.taket@deakin.edu.au) if you would like to receive a copy.

Taket A, Stagnitti K, Nolan A and Casey S (2012) Preschool Teachers' Strategies for Supporting Resilience in Early Childhood, *Professional Voice* 9(1): 39-45. *The issue of the journal in which this appears can be downloaded from:* <http://www.aeuvic.asn.au/292740.html>

### Forthcoming publications:

Nolan A, Stagnitti K, Taket A and Casey SA (forthcoming 2014) Supporting resilience in the early years: Making a difference. In: S. Garvis and D. Pendergast (eds) *Health and Wellbeing in the Early Years*, Cambridge University Press.

## The sexual and reproductive health of university students

This research project is being carried out by Kelly Hayden as part of her Bachelor of Public Health and Health Promotion

Honours year, supervised by Dr Melissa Graham and Greer Lamaro.

The study aims to provide the first comprehensive examination of the sexual and reproductive health of university students within Australia. Attending university marks a significant life event which can considerably change one's sexual and reproductive health as a result of changes to one's personal and social circumstances. University student lifestyles are often associated with being one of exploration and experimentation, which is synonymous with students partaking in more alcohol and drug use and participating in more social and sexual activities. A global systematic review on alcohol use and sexually risky behaviours of university students found that alcohol was strongly related to decreased condom use, multiple sexual partners and greater number of casual sex partners. This is of particular concern given binge drinking is more frequent among university students than their non-student peers. Furthermore research in Australia and New Zealand suggests that alcohol use is associated with not using condom and negative sexual experiences.

Research conducted in the US, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom on the sexual health of university students, suggests that this particular population group are at risk of poor sexual and reproductive health due to the specific behaviours associated with the social context of university. Despite a paucity of research with Australian university students, an increasing incidence of STIs, high rates of unplanned pregnancies, termination, low and inconsistent contraception use and high levels of harmful drinking have been identified among young people aged 20-29 more broadly. This age group is also the most likely to be undertaking university studies.

Students from the Faculty of Health at Deakin University will be invited to participate in an anonymous on-line survey. Students will be asked questions regarding their sexual and reproductive health, sexual behaviours, alcohol and drug use, sexual assault, relationships, contraception use, pregnancy and STI/HIV. It is expected that up to 500 students will be recruited to participate in this research.

It is anticipated that the findings from this research will provide a greater understanding of the current issues facing university students while providing crucial data for interventions to assist in improving the sexual and reproductive health of university students. The study will be completed by the end of 2013.

## Deakin at your Doorstep: Access to learning in the cloud

Project leader: Dr Sophie Goldingay

Research associate: Dr Clare Land

Reference group: Norah Hosken, Sharlene Nipperess, Mark Furlong, Russell Shuttleworth, Ann Carrington

During 2012 and 2013, new interactive learning experiences were designed and trialled for off campus students in social work courses which utilise technology and a range of online peer and group activities and assessments. Students have been able complete their activities wherever they are geographically. While these units have consistently received high student evaluation of teaching and units (SETU) scores, these scores do not reveal the detail of learning outcomes, in particular how well prepared the students are for their practicum experience as a result of participating in this course. Therefore, the social work team, with the support of University funding, are undertaking a survey of off campus students and their field educators to gather information about evidence of learning outcomes achieved during their first two years of study. This survey may provide evidence of what is currently effective and what could be improved in order for students to be practicum and ultimately workforce ready (i.e. validating standards). This will be important to course enhancement for social work in order to retain the equity and access benefits of online learning, while at the same time deliver important learning outcomes that adequately prepare students for social work practice.

## 'You the Man': a theatre-based program for promotion of bystander engagement and violence prevention

As we increase our efforts in primary prevention of violence against women and children, exploring a range of different programs for use is very important. You the man is a successful theatre-based program for promotion of bystander engagement and violence prevention. The program is delivered as:

- a 35-minute, one-actor, play that portrays six characters (none of whom are victims or perpetrators). Each wrestles with their response to unhealthy relationship issues; **followed by,**
- post-performance panel discussion with local counsellors, advocates, and experts (a variety of different formats have been successfully used).

The script of the play remains unchanged from performance to performance, but the format of the post-performance

panel is tailored to the setting, the local circumstances, and other violence prevention activities happening locally. The panel discussion introduces the audience to local resources that can help support them in practising safe intervention as bystanders and can help those experiencing domestic violence or sexual assault.

'You the Man' has been presented in US high schools and colleges since 2002. It was originated by Cathy Plourde, now based at the University of New England (UNE) in the US, where she is Adjunct Professor of Integrated Health Sciences, Westbrook College of Health Professions.

Professor Ann Taket is leading a team from the Faculties of Health and Arts and Education at Deakin University who have worked with Cathy to produce an Australian version of the program. During May-June we held a state-wide program of presentations where the discussion explored the potential use of the program in Victoria. These events involved over 250 stakeholders in the health, education and local government sectors across Victoria and indicated an enormous level of interest in the use of the program in a range of settings (secondary schools, tertiary education, workplaces and community, including sporting clubs) in rural, regional and metropolitan Victoria as a part or component of settings-based strategies for preventing violence against women and/or gender equity.



*The creative writing team for the Australian script, left to right: Patrick van der Werf, Cathy Plourde, Virginia Murray and Ann Taket. Patrick and Virginia work in the School of Communication and Creative Arts at Deakin*

The consultations also identified a diverse range of enthusiastic individuals who wanted to be involved in the various stages of the work of producing the Australian version and piloting it across the state. The consultations confirmed that what was required was a translation of the

play into the Australian cultural context, rather than any extensive reworking of the story arcs presented within the play.

The Australian script for the play has now been produced and a series of informal readings held with a range of experts in the field of violence prevention to confirm the applicability and appropriateness of its contents. We have engaged a highly experienced director, Suzanne Chaundy, to work with us. The play will be in rehearsal during October this year. In November we will hold four preview performances, and there will then be a pilot season over March to September 2014, where the program will be provided in a range of settings and locations across Victoria. In the pilot season we will research the program's short term impact, to confirm whether the same level of impact is achieved as in the US. We currently have the funding to support 30 different performances as a part of the pilot program.



*Suzanne Chaundy, the Australian director for You the man*

Following the pilot season, we will then be seeking large scale research funding to take the work further forward.

If you would like to be put on the mailing list for detailed updates on this exciting program of work, please email Professor Ann Taket at [ann.taket@deakin.edu.au](mailto:ann.taket@deakin.edu.au).

## Young Women's Future Life Aspirations

This research project is being carried out by Megan Bugden as part of her Bachelor of Health Science Honours year, supervised by Dr Melissa Graham and Dr Lisa Hanna. This project aims to gain an understanding of the aspirations young women have for their future life, and how their social

and cultural environments have influenced the formation of these aspirations.

Recent social change has led to more women than ever furthering their education and joining the full-time work force. However, within Australia, social and cultural environments emphasise the important role motherhood plays in becoming a woman. Given this, young women may be facing a new conflict between highly valued components of their self-identity as the need to be an independent, autonomous individual clashes with their role of becoming a mother. In the face of conflict young women have found comfort in the traditional gender roles exhibited by previous generations. However research suggests that the increases in childlessness may lead to different future life course aspirations for young women.

Ethics approval was obtained from Deakin University, the Catholic archdiocese of Melbourne and the diocese of Ballarat. Schools in these areas have been contacted and invited to participate. Approval to recruit through public secondary schools is pending.

Young women aged between 16 and 18 years are currently being recruited to participate in an in-depth unstructured interview. To date two interviews have been conducted and it is anticipated that up to 10 young women will be recruited. All participants will also be provided with the opportunity to take part in a second follow-up interview. The study will be completed by the end of 2013.

## RECENTLY COMPLETED PHDS

### Cameron Boyd: Measuring harm - Governing the effects of child sexual abuse

Supervisor: Professor Bob Pease

The primary research question was 'How have techniques of psychological measurement and statistical analyses been made to function as objective methods for determining the effects of child sexual abuse?' This question has been developed through an understanding that research on the effects of child sexual abuse, both on children and on adults who were abused as children, is often performed as a scientific practice (the field has 'crossed the threshold of scientificity'). This frequently involves measuring differences in psychological attributes between abused and non-abused individuals. The representation of the harm of child sexual abuse in a scientific style has been important for the recognition of the suffering caused by such abuse, yet there are implications in a disciplinary sense; subjecting individuals to the power/knowledge nexus of scientific

reasoning *also* involves relations of power, which is a central problem in child sexual abuse itself.

The 'field of child sexual abuse' is not one stable homogenous field. Developmental (scientific) psychology sits alongside a range of feminist analyses (the work draws particularly on self-identified post-structuralist style of feminist styles of reasoning), contesting this space and its objects. The notion of 'diffractive reading' was adapted to utilise these two traditions that are influential in and formative of the field of child sexual abuse.

The historical origins of psychological measurement are located in the natural sciences, particularly physics. The specific scientific model in question can be named as a classical model, aspiring to *objectivity* and ascribing to an ontological commitment to *causality*. Current research texts on child sexual abuse consistently perform measurements, as well as statistical analyses based on those measurements, and frequently and explicitly confirm commitment to these aspects of classical scientific ontology. The thesis argues that objectivity, as a feature of scientific measurement, produces its object of knowledge while also disciplining the conduct of researchers and counsellors. Objectivity itself is analysed as a constructed and contested practice, and some competing versions of objectivity are outlined in contrast to the classic scientific model on which much psychological measurement is based.

The work used an analytical approach to this question drawing on the field of science studies on the one hand, and the Foucauldian informed disciplinary literature on the other. By understanding psychological measurement as a performative practice, rather than a neutral 'window on the world out there', it becomes less important to establish whether such measurements are strictly scientific. Instead, phenomenon of object construction and subjectification become the focus of analysis.

The research drew upon published research texts, and two small focus groups held with counsellors working in the field of child sexual abuse. These investigations led to the research being troubled by the production of the object of child sexual abuse in the research texts, something shared by focus group members. The thesis reports on the implications for the subjectification of counsellors when engaging with practices of objectivity called for by measurement.

The thesis does not offer any prescriptive conclusions on how research or therapeutic practice ought to be done better, or propose a 'way out' of power relations for researchers and practitioners. Instead, this investigation invites those involved to account as fully as possible for

their entanglement in these taken for granted research and therapeutic practices.

## Georgia Birch: Researching the relationship between physical activity and motherhood in older Somali women

Supervisor: Dr Maria Pallotta-Chiarolli

This thesis explores participation in physical activity by a group of older Somali women living in Melbourne, Australia. First, it describes the methodological challenges faced by a white researcher conducting cross-cultural research; second, it explores how participants' experiences of motherhood and physical activity in Somalia and Australia influence their participation in physical activity. This research contributes data to address the scarcity of knowledge and research on physical activity amongst older African and Muslim women.

The theme of crossing borders – physical, cultural and psychological – arises from the research data. To explore this theme, the research drew on two powerful frameworks: first, Gloria Anzaldúa's (1987) borderlands theoretical framework, which considers how people navigate and live between cultures and in what Homi K. Bhabha calls "the third space" (Rutherford, 1990, p. 209). Anzaldúa (1987) uses the term "mestizas" to refer to women who are in this third space and crossing borders, aware of their interweaving identities within and between two cultures. Secondly, it drew on Valadez and Elsbree's (2005) methodological framework of the "coyote", which explores how researchers work with marginalised communities.

This border zone "coyote" ethnographic methodology reflects the challenges faced by the participants and the researcher as they negotiate two different worlds – the Somali world and the Australian world. The research and interaction with the Somali women became a journey that required meeting on the borderlands and interweaving our cultures and perspectives. As a coyote researcher, my emotions are revealed as I was first, challenged by the dominant culture's judgement of where a white woman should be positioned in relation to "the Other"; and second, I experienced a lack of trust in my capabilities and an unsettling of my own identity. This destabilising and reconstitution of the researcher's identity adds another dimension to the coyote framework (Valadez & Elsbree, 2005).

Through conversations, observations, journaling, photography and art, this research reveals that most participants were active in Somalia, where physical activity was entwined in daily gender, maternal and cultural roles. In

Australia, the women lead a sedentary lifestyle where physical activity is constrained by their perceptions of what exercise means; lack of money, time and a private space to exercise; tiredness and illness; racial abuse and Islamophobia; limited transport and other facilities; and community and dominant cultural perceptions of older Somali women participating in exercise.

Older Somali women are not meeting the National Physical Activity Recommendations for Older Australians (Commonwealth of Australia, 2005), and Western concepts of activity are not transferable or relevant to their lives. This research makes recommendations for policy and programming based on an understanding of the women's culture, religion, economic concerns and gendered familial roles.

For further details contact: [ggbirch@internode.on.net](mailto:ggbirch@internode.on.net)

Anzaldúa, G. (1987). *Borderlands/la frontera: The new mestiza*, Aunt Lute Books, San Francisco.

Pease, B. (2010). *Undoing privilege: unearned advantage in a divided world*, Zed Books, London.

Rutherford, J., (1990). 'The third space: interview with Homi Bhabha' In *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 207-21.

Valadez, G., & Elsbree, A. (2005). 'Queer coyotes: transforming education to be more accepting, affirming, and supportive of queer individuals', *Journal of Latinos and Education*, 4(3):171-92.

## CHASE NEWS

### CHASE partner event: "Coming out" in Italian families – the journey is still a difficult one for many

Tony Mordini, Christina Monti and Maria Pallotta-Chiarolli

On Sunday 28 April 2013, at Trades Hall, Lygon St, Carlton, a group of Italian-Australian GLBTIQ (gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer) individuals and their families (parents, partners and children) came together to talk about their "coming out" experiences. Sponsored by the Australian Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer Multicultural Council (AGMC Inc.; see [www.agmc.org.au](http://www.agmc.org.au)), a CHASE partnership organisation, the event was a great success. Approximately 50 people participated. The event also raised the interest of several ethnic media including "Il Globo" newspaper and SBS Radio.

The Italian-Australian community is one of Australia's largest migrant groups; and like many other migrant groups where there is an intersection of faith and culture, GLBTIQ individuals often face additional difficulties when addressing issues related to their sexual identity.



*Dr Tony Mordini and Dr Maria Pallotta-Chiarolli*

The event was held against the backdrop of the successful AGEDO (Associazione Genitori di Omosessuali) Project, a project undertaken by Italy's equivalent to PFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays). It included a screening of a short film, *Due volte genitori* (with English subtitles; see <http://www.duevoltegenitori.com/>) produced and directed by Italian film-maker, Claudio Cipelletti. Claudio has worked closely with AGEDO and the film highlights the emotions and the transitions many families in Italy have made from their initial difficulties through to the full and unconditional acceptance of their children.

Rita De Santis, the convenor of AGEDO, Claudio Cipelletti himself, and Dr Chiara Bertone, Italy's renowned researcher in GLBTIQ family studies, provided a podcast for the day. The film screening was followed by discussions, entertainment by Elvira and her band, "I Vagabondi" (<http://ivagabondi.com.au/>), with their cheeky twists on traditional Italian songs, and of course afternoon antipasto and dolci!

AGMC Inc. aims to use this event as a catalyst for future events and research with other multicultural groups in Victoria. Academic administrator and researcher, Dr Tony Mordini, a member of the Organising Committee has commented –

"We believe this project has wider scope and reach. The issues raised through these narratives are not exclusive to Italian parents and their children. People of all races, cultures and creeds will resonate with them. Furthermore, this event is important in shaping further research and support interventions. Same-sex attracted individuals and those encountering difficulties related to their sexual and/or gender identity are at much higher risk of suicide and often face significant social and emotional challenges in their lives. The journey of coming out is still a difficult one for many."

For further information about the project please contact Tony Mordini 0412 777 438 / [tony.mordini@gmail.com](mailto:tony.mordini@gmail.com)

## NOW OUT: *Practising Social Inclusion*

Edited by CHASE members Ann Taket, Beth R. Crisp, Melissa Graham, Lisa Hanna, Sophie Goldingay and Linda Wilson.

Published June 2013 by Routledge – 328 pages

<http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415531078/>

Practising Social Inclusion presents what we know about what works, and why, in promoting social inclusion and practising in a socially inclusive way. The book draws on

research carried out in CHASE partnerships as well as the wider research literature.

Contributing to the growing debates on social inclusion, this book moves beyond discussion of who it is that is socially excluded and the processes of exclusion. It draws on research and reflective practice to answer the vital question of how to actually work towards inclusion and includes five sections looking at different arenas for practice: policy; programme design; service delivery; community life; and research.

## CHASE STAFF 2013

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