

# CHASE – Centre for Health through Action on Social Exclusion

*Taking Stock, September 2012*



## Contents

**CHASE Research.....page 2**

### Project Updates

A good place to raise a family.....page 2

Supporting resilience.....page 2

Young adults returning home.....page 3

Promoting health and well-being in social work education.....page 3

Health equity, social justice and human rights.....page 4

### Recently Completed PhDs

The violence of gender: Australian policy responses to violence.....page 4

Development of a retention model for child protection workers.....page 5

Staking a claim: analysing interventionist discourses of men's family violence.....page 5

Embodied choreography and performance of gender.....page 6

The politics of solidarity with indigenous struggles in southeast Australia.....page 6

### CHASE News

New staff member: Hayley Mc Kenzie.....page 7

CHASE symposium.....page 7

Promotion: Professor Beth Crisp.....page 8

**CHASE staff and contact details .....page 8**

## CHASE

CHASE brings together a group of 28 Deakin staff, located mainly in the School of Health and Social Development, across both Burwood and Waterfront campuses. 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. Our purpose is thus 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.

In this issue we provide updates on some of our projects and feature five PhDs awarded since the start of 2012.

## SAVE THE DATE

CHASE symposium: Tuesday February 12th 2013  
10am – 3pm  
Deakin City Campus (550 Burke Street, Melbourne)

See page 7 for outline program

## CHASE RESEARCH

Our current research is carried out in four different areas:

- Social diversity and improving the health and wellbeing of marginalised/ disadvantaged/ excluded groups
- Gender, families and reproductive health
- Disability
- Aboriginal health

Work in these areas is necessarily interconnected.

Underlying all CHASE's work is an active concern with: the development of mixed methodologies; the application of systems thinking; multidisciplinary approaches; systematic approaches to reviewing and synthesising the research literature; and with issues of knowledge transfer and practice development. Current CHASE research is funded by ARC, NHMRC, government departments, VicHealth and other external agencies. In this issue of our report, we focus on just some of the projects underway and recently completed. We also include the abstracts of five of the PhDs that have been successfully awarded so far this year.

## PROJECT UPDATES

### A good place to raise a family

This project is led by CHASE members Dr Fiona Andrews and Associate Professor Julia Shelley.

As previously reported this 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. Firstly, some of the early research that formed the basis for our current project was presented at the Healthy Cities Conference in Geelong in May, and has been accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed book arising from the conference. This pilot study of inner and outer suburban families found that amongst the women interviewed, none had followed the traditional life-cycle model of residential location. It also identified differences in the ways women expected and experienced social connectedness in their communities, and their differences in attitudes towards transport, open space and safety based on residential location.

Secondly, qualitative data analysis for stage two of the project which involved in depth interviews with parents of

preschool aged children in the City of Wyndham and City of Maribyrnong was completed in June. Findings were presented to the Integrated Planning Group at Wyndham City Council and at the 12th Australian Institute for Family Studies conference in Melbourne in July. Good feedback on the findings was received on both occasions. The conference paper also resulted in media interest with a piece published in *The Age*

(<http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/community-ties-that-bind-thrive-in-inner-city-20120724-22nic.html>) and an interview on SBS radio. Analysis of the quantitative data from stage two of the project is underway and we will be working to publish the qualitative and quantitative data as soon possible.

Finally, we have commenced 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 amongst parents in less-established communities. Sadly Stephanie Rich left us to take up a full-time position at Women's Health West but we are pleased to have Rebecca Stockdale join us who will be conducting the interviews for stage three.

### 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. 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 is being 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 has been funded by the Australian Research Council (ARC). It provides an excellent opportunity to investigate the phenomenon of resilience in depth in the context of significant periods of transition for children and young people.

The study as a whole is following three different groups of children and young people through key transitions: from preschool into primary school; from primary into secondary school; and into the post-compulsory period. 2012 is the final year of data collection on the study, and we are in the process of beginning a major program of publications to disseminate our findings.

One paper from the early childhood team within the study has examined preschool teachers' strategies for supporting resilience in early childhood. Four distinct types of strategies were identified: building the children's supportive relationships with adults; helping children develop self-regulation; promoting children's social-emotional learning; and providing a positive preschool environment. This paper is now published in *Professional Voice*, and a copy of the full issue in which the paper appears can be downloaded from:

<http://www.aevic.asn.au/292740.html>

## Young adults returning home: how do Australian families experience this transition?

Families are continuing to play important roles in the lives of young adults, who are trying to balance challenging transitions in life, love and work. The parental home, in particular, appears to be acting as a supportive base, with young adults living there for longer periods, including as a result of a return home.

It is thus becoming increasingly important to uncover how families experience this transition, particularly as most of the research into returning home has relied on data from the 1980s and 1990s to identify common reasons for the move home. Previous research has also focused on predicting the factors associated with a young adult's likelihood of returning and the possibility parents will be satisfied with the arrangement.

This doctoral study aims to explore how Australian families experience the return of a young adult to the parental home after they have previously moved out. Interviews are being undertaken with parents and young adults aged 18 to 35 who share the family home after a return.

To date, 10 families have taken part. This includes 10 young adults, aged 22 to 29, and for each young adult, at least one of their parents. Preliminary findings, presented at the Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference in late-July, suggest that young adults return home in response to challenging circumstances. For example, the young adults returned due to job loss, relationship breakdowns, emotional burnouts and ending of other long-term commitments.

The parents interviewed were aware that their children were experiencing changes in their circumstances and therefore recognized that moving home was going to be the "most sensible" option. Parents were quite accepting of their children's return home and were willing to make

adjustments, particularly because they understood it to be a relatively short-term arrangement.

The parents and young adults all admitted that they got along well with each other, which meant they were quite capable of living together as they had before the young adults had left home. The families also identified a range of strategies that enabled the living arrangement to work for them. These included maintaining open channels of communication, being considerate and willing to negotiate, giving each other space and maintaining interests that give them time outside the home.

Exploring families' experiences of home returning in this way has begun to offer greater insight into this transition. In doing so, the study has the potential to not only fill a gap in the academic literature but also facilitate greater recognition of home returning as a phenomenon in its own right. Young adults returning home is, at least anecdotally, on the increase. This, together with the media interest in the research post-Conference, suggests the results of the study are of interest to contemporary Australian society.

For those interested, examples of the media coverage include A Current Affair:

(<http://aca.ninemsn.com.au/article.aspx?id=8509860>)

and The Age newspaper

(<http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/stigma-out-the-door-as-more-kids-boomerang-20120729-236ip.html>).

Anyone wanting to discuss this research further can contact Elyse Warner on (03) 92517215 or [ewarne@deakin.edu.au](mailto:ewarne@deakin.edu.au).

## Promoting health and well-being in social work education

Social work educators can play an important part in ensuring that the promotion of health and well-being is firmly on the social work agenda for service users, as well as for students and educators. Nevertheless, this has not been a priority within social work education and presents a challenge which requires some re-thinking in terms of curriculum content, pedagogy, and how social workers respond to social problems. Furthermore, if the promotion of health and well-being is not considered a priority for social workers, this raises important questions about the role and relevance of social work in health, and thus poses challenges to social work education, both now and in the future.

To address these important issues Professor Beth Crisp and Associate Professor Liz Beddoe (from the University of Auckland) have edited a book containing contributions written by social work educators from Australia, America,

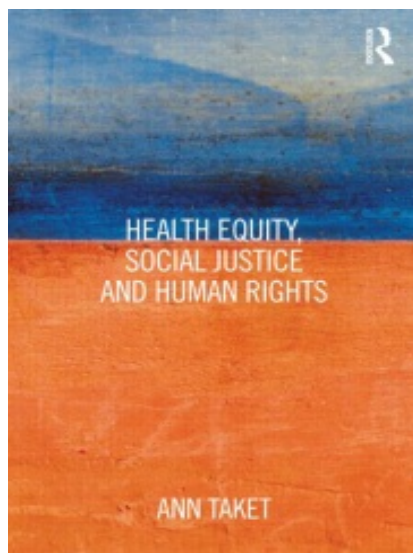
Canada, New Zealand and the UK. They reflect on how best to prepare students to put health and well-being to the forefront of practice, drawing on research on quality of life, subjective well-being, student well-being, community participation and social connectedness, religion and spirituality, mindful practices, trauma and health inequalities.

The book is an extended version of a special issue of *Social Work Education*, and will be available in November 2012, published by Routledge, see:

<http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415527989/>

## Health equity, social justice and human rights

April 2012 saw the publication of a new book: *'Health Equity, Social Justice and Human Rights'* authored by Professor Ann Taket, with chapters contributed by Brad Crammond (Monash University) and four Deakin School of Health and Social Development masters graduates, Michaela Adamowitsch, Melika Chiswell, Arjun Singh and Carmel Treacy. The book was written to explore how a human rights framework can provide an excellent foundation for advocacy on health inequities and a value-based alternative to views of health as a commodity.



The book demystifies systems set up for the protection and promotion of human rights globally, regionally and nationally. It explores the use and usefulness of rights-based approaches as an important part of the tool-box available to health and welfare professionals and community members working in a variety of settings to improve health and reduce health inequities. Global in its scope, *'Health Equity, Social Justice and Human Rights'*

presents examples from all regions of the world to illustrate the successful use of human rights approaches in fields such as HIV/AIDS, improving accessibility to essential drugs, reproductive health, women's health, and improving the health of marginalised and disadvantaged groups.

Understanding human rights and their interrelationships with health and health equity is essential for public health and health promotion practitioners, as well as being important for a wide range of other health and social welfare professionals. The book aims to provide a useful resource for students, practitioners and researchers concerned with combating health inequalities and promoting social justice, and forms the basis for a masters level unit taught by Professor Ann Taket at Deakin.

Further details at:

<http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415613750/>

## RECENTLY COMPLETED PHDS

### *Catherine Seymour: The violence of gender: Australian policy responses to violence*

Lead supervisor – Professor Bob Pease

The thesis engages in critical policy analysis in order to examine the ways in which certain representations of violence are problematised in and through social policy. Underpinned by an understanding of policy as discourse based on the recognition that social, or policy, problems are created in and through discourse, particular attention is directed towards the ways in which discourses of violence rely upon and reproduce particular constructions of gender. Policy analysis is used to interrogate the presuppositions about gender and violence which shape the political/policy agenda, thereby limiting "what is talked about as possible or desirable, or as impossible or undesirable" (Bacchi, 2000, p. 49).

Focusing on the key federal policy areas of violence against women and children, health, and education, the thesis highlights the extent to which discourses of gender and violence overlap and interrelate in policy constructions of violence and the implications that this has for Australian government responses to 'violence'. The extent to which (policy) constructions of violence reflect, embed and reinforce gender(ed) discourses represents a key finding. The thesis further highlights the ways in which the naming of some violence(s) as 'problem violences' enable other violences to be represented as 'understandable' or unremarkable and, therefore, unproblematic. Gender, difference and identity, whilst key contexts for the construction, explanation, and experience of violence, are

largely unacknowledged and undertheorised in current Australian policy approaches to 'problem violence'. Dominant discourses of violence, gender and power thus enable violence to be represented as the problem of (gendered, classed, raced) 'others', providing a crucial means by which certain groups and behaviours are responsabilised and targeted for intervention. Discourses, then, also produce subjectivity/ies and it is in this sense that violence can be understood as the 'site at which genders are produced' (Shepherd, 2007, p. 249): the violence of gender.

### **Leanne Johnson: *Development of a retention model for child protection workers***

Lead supervisor – Professor Beth Crisp

The focus of the thesis was to develop a model of retention for Child Protection workers in an Australian public organisation. An organisational analysis which included a determination of the organisation's social structure was firstly undertaken to gain a contextual view. Then an inductive approach was taken using two qualitative studies in the form of semi-structured interviews to develop a retention model, followed by a quantitative staff questionnaire which was used to test the model. Participants interviewed included workers who were employed as Child Protection workers at the time they were interviewed as well as Child Protection workers who had left the organisation but had continued working in the area of welfare. Management perceptions on retention and turnover were ascertained by interview to gain a more complete view of issues in this Australian public organisation.

Results of testing the retention model using binary logistic regression indicated that not thinking about leaving was associated with higher odds that a worker would have the intention to stay. There was also a trend, in that the odds were increased that a worker would have an intention to stay if they rated the effectiveness of their induction process in helping them to start in Child Protection higher. However, if a Child Protection worker had not thought about leaving, if the general effects on the workers and their families of working in the area of Child Protection were low or if their career was rated as less important (i.e., when compared with other Child protection workers who had completed the questionnaire) there was a higher likelihood that the worker would stay in Child Protection. There was also a trend that if a worker was more satisfied they were more likely to stay. It was concluded that these factors identified using multivariate statistics were the group level factors (i.e., for Child Protection) that influenced a Child

Protection worker's choice to stay. At an individual worker level however, each person had a unique set of factors that influenced their choice to stay. Best Practice principles for retention were also developed.

Implications of the research were that in order to retain workers, management needed to understand the group level or general factors that influenced the retention of Child Protection workers and, through the relationship with their workers, identify and address if possible individual, or worker specific, retention factors.

### **Pete French: *Staking a claim: analysing interventionist discourses of men's family violence***

Lead supervisor – Professor Bob Pease

The thesis presents a critical discourse analysis of the frameworks of behaviour change groupwork intervention as a response to the behaviour of men who perpetrate violence and abuse within the family.

Research into this sector has resulted in conflicting intervention strategies and findings. Practitioners are pitted against considerable ambiguities and points of contention, and are aligned and segregated through different vocabularies and articulatory practices. This thesis considers the foundational axioms, nomenclature and rhetorical positioning put forward by advocates of this method of intervention. This includes theoretical understandings of the context of men's violence and abuse within the family, the claimed ambitions of intervention, the state's input into regulation of the sector, and the ongoing debate concerning the evaluation and effectiveness of this response to men's behaviour.

The research presents a critical textual analysis of discourse augmented by empirical data gathered from one-to-one semi-structured interviews with key sector players such as program managers and facilitators of men's behaviour change programs. Critique of publically available agency advertising also supplements this analysis. This thesis is informed by a poststructuralist feminist theoretical framework to analyse the various ways in which agents, in an arena that is "redolent with issues of ownership, jockeying for power and competitive debate", attempt to establish jurisdiction over their expression of authenticity within the sector. This includes a claim to operate within a feminist analysis, a professional claim to scientific knowledge and expertise, and the development of standards for professional practice.

## Jack Migdalek: *Embodied choreography and performance of gender*

Lead supervisor – Dr Maria Pallotti-Chiarolli

Norms of fitting embodied behaviour for males and females, as promoted in Australian public arenas of popular culture and the everyday, disempower and marginalise those not inclined to embody in gendernormative and heteronormative ways.



### *Viewing and Doing Gender*

The thesis engages with concepts of embodiment as meaning the manner of physical deportment in which a physical practice is performed, and with concepts of gender as social constructions of femininity and masculinity. It investigates the demands and implications of dominant norms of gender embodiment for those whose embodied inclinations do not fit comfortably with such dichotomous models. It interrogates gender inequitable machinations of education and performance arts disciplines by which educators and arts practitioners train, teach, choreograph, and direct those with whom they work, and theorises ways of broadening personal and social notions of possible, aesthetic, and acceptable embodiment for all persons, regardless of biological sex or sexual orientation.

This research is grounded in two major qualitative methods of enquiry. First, through an autoethnographic lens, it focuses on the impacts that social constructions of masculinity have on me, both as a person in the everyday and as a performance arts practitioner/educator. Through writing, illustration, choreography, and performance, as well as interviews with 3 members of my family, I analyse the delicacy of the relationship between social control/surveillance and personal agency over my embodiment of gender. Second, through empirical ethnographic fieldwork with some 400 high school students and 160 educators and performance arts practitioners, I

utilise a combination of performance, discussion, practical workshop, and avenues for anonymous response to explore the potential of the performance arts in challenging inequitable notions of gender embodiment.

My findings demonstrate that inherent ideologies in dominant discourses regarding the execution and display of feminine and masculine embodiment continue to work, overtly and covertly, as definitive and restrictive barriers to the realm of possibilities of embodied gender expression and appreciation in the everyday and in the performance arts. This thesis recommends drawing individuals' attention to embodied gender inequities and enculturation processes, not ordinarily critiqued within mainstream society, as a key toward safeguarding the well-being of those whose embodied performance inclination is at odds with prescribed norms of behaviour. Performance arts arenas are powerful sites in which such deconstructive work can occur, both cognitively and practically. However, as this thesis explores and illustrates, performance arts practitioners/educators need to first scrutinise existing and hidden inequities regarding the embodiment of gender within their own habitus, perspectives, taste, and practices.

## Clare Land: *The politics of solidarity with indigenous struggles in southeast Australia*

Lead supervisor – Professor Bob Pease

The thesis explores relationships between Indigenous people and non-Indigenous activists contributing to Indigenous struggles in southeast Australia. It is grounded in qualitative, reflexive interviews with Indigenous people active in the political community of land rights, sovereignty and community control in southeast Australia, and non-Indigenous people who were nominated as being reflective about the issues at stake in the research. The research set out to explore the recurring tensions observed in relationships between Indigenous people and non-Indigenous activists in the context of struggles for land rights, sovereignty and community control. The thesis is guided by the questions, what are the dynamics that make Indigenous non-Indigenous relationships in the solidarity context challenging, and how might non-Indigenous people work to improve these relationships?

The thesis is divided into three parts: the first part, comprising three chapters, establishes the historical context, the conceptual framework and the methodology for the study. The second part comprises two chapters which together set out the politics of solidarity with Indigenous struggles in southeast Australia. The third part of the thesis comprises three chapters which are concerned with

relational aspects of the project of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people working together.

The thesis highlights the political significance of the kinds of challenges Indigenous people have made about the nature and form of non-Indigenous support for Indigenous struggles. The thesis establishes the importance of critical self-reflection by non-Indigenous people, arguing that alongside public political action, this is key to the politics of solidarity with Indigenous struggles. Further, it argues for the importance of non-Indigenous people interrogating and reconstructing a sense of our/their interests, as part of developing a moral and political framework for supporting Indigenous struggles. It highlights the importance of non-Indigenous people's honest reckoning with complicity.

## CHASE NEWS

### New staff member: Hayley Mc Kenzie

Hayley McKenzie commenced at Deakin University in March 2012 as an Associate Lecturer, and has since moved to an Early Career Development Fellowship. She has



recently completed her PhD at Deakin University with the thesis entitled 'Accepting the unacceptable: Patriarchal hegemony and child support arrangements', which explored how single mothers understood their child support arrangements. The sociological project was framed by a critical feminist epistemology, and drew on the qualitative methods of constructivist grounded theory and situational analysis. Given the grounded theory approach, the thesis progressively built a process model of how low-income payee mothers came to accept what they considered to be unacceptable child support arrangements, a situation that was entrenched due to their reliance on state income

support payments which mandated the collection of child support payments. During her PhD candidature, Hayley also worked as a research fellow on ARC projects exploring the implications of the welfare reform for single parent families in their transition back to work, and the health implications of uncertain child support payments for low-income single parent families. Her research and teaching interests focus on family policy, and exploring the inequities experienced by particular social groups who are reliant on social and institutional policies.

## CHASE symposium

Dr Melissa Graham, our recently appointed CHASZE coordinator, has been talking to key partner organisations who have had a long-term and / or a substantial relationship with CHASE to discuss their views on what type of event they would find useful or beneficial to them as CHASE partners.

Based on these discussions we are planning a symposium to be held Tuesday February 12th 2013, 10am – 3pm, at Deakin City Campus (550 Burke Street, Melbourne).

The **morning program** at the symposium will include:

- introduction to, and overview of, CHASE, vision, philosophy, mission and streams of work
- Celebrating and creating partnerships - who can offer what and what are the benefits of partnerships?
- Learnings for practice - short interactive project presentations by CHASE staff and / or research partners to discuss the practical implications of project findings for practice
- Discussion on strategies for accessing students for shared projects

The **afternoon** will provide an opportunity for participants to engage in one of a number of think tanks/workshops to share research ideas, discuss potential collaborations and plan shared activities. The workshops will be organised according to CHASE's streams of work:

- Social diversity and improving the health and wellbeing of marginalised / disadvantaged / excluded groups
- Gender, families and reproductive health
- Disability
- Aboriginal health

**Places are limited**, so, to reserve a place please contact Dr Melissa Graham via telephone + 61 (0)3 9251 7271 or email [melissa.graham@deakin.edu.au](mailto:melissa.graham@deakin.edu.au)

## Promotion: Professor Beth Crisp

We are delighted to congratulate Beth Crisp on her promotion to Professor, announced in August this year. Professor Beth Crisp leads the Faculty's Social Work teaching programs, and has led the development and delivery of the recently accredited Master of Social Work. A very active CHASE member, she is internationally recognized for her research at the interface of health and human services, with a particular interest in spirituality and social work.



## CHASE STAFF 2012

**Director: Professor Ann Taket**

**Deputy Director: Associate Professor Julia Shelley**

### Other staff

Dr Fiona Andrews

Georgia Babatsikos

Dr Ann Carrington

Teresa Capetola

Professor Beth Crisp

Dr Matthew Dunn

Dr Mark Furlong

Dr Claire Henderson-Wilson

Dr Sophie Goldingay

Dr Melissa Graham

Dr Lisa Hanna

Dr Liz Hoban

Norah Hosken

Greer Lamaro

Hayley McKenzie

Dr Kevin Murfitt

Annemarie Nevill

Sharlene Nipperess

Dr Maria Pallotta-Chiarolli

Rebecca Patrick

Professor Bob Pease

Dr Genevieve Pepin

Professor Karen Stagnitti

Dr Janine Webb

Dr Erin Wilson

Dr Linda Wilson

### Honorary Fellow

Dr Robyn Ramsden



## CHASE contact details

Centre for Health through Action on Social Exclusion (CHASE)  
School of Health and Social Development  
Deakin University  
221 Burwood Highway  
Burwood, Vic 3125 Australia

<http://www.deakin.edu.au/health/chase/>

### Enquiries to:

**Director** – Professor Ann Taket

[ann.taket@deakin.edu.au](mailto:ann.taket@deakin.edu.au)

Ph: +61 3 9244 3798

**Deputy Director** – Associate Professor Julia Shelley

[julia.shelley@deakin.edu.au](mailto:julia.shelley@deakin.edu.au)

Ph: +61 3 9244 6293