



## School of Health and Social Development

Bachelor of Health Sciences (Honours)  
Bachelor of Public Health and Health Promotion (Honours)

### Honours Project Proposals for 2015

#### List of projects

Asylum seekers in the media: representations and the sick role _____	3
Food Aid Providers – A regional perspective _____	4
The influence of Big Food: analysis of lobbying and other corporate political activity of the food industry in Australia _____	5
The Staying Fit weight loss program: is program dose associated with weight loss? _____	6
Exploring the 'fit' - how does the current NDIS policy fit with the needs and goals of people with psychosocial disability? _____	7
The role of a non-traditional sport in encouraging sport participation in boys _____	8
Parents' views of their child's physical competence _____	9
How do children with Autism respond to and enjoy playing sports exergames? _____	10
Mapping tool for population level obesity prevention responses _____	11
Australian policy-makers survey: perceptions of the obesity epidemic, drivers and actions required _____	13
Supermarket interventions for healthy eating – developing an evidence base for action _____	15
Preventing violence against women and children _____	16
Influences on young Khmer women's body image _____	17
Exploring the policy context of women's reproductive decision making _____	19
Asylum seeker/refugee women's experiences of reproductive health policy _____	20
Friendship influence on obesity related behaviour in early adolescence: a cohort study _____	21
Exploring the links between health (both for individuals and their families), nature (including companion animals) and/or sustainability – various projects _____	22
Health Promotion and Sustainability: Programme Evaluation Project _____	23

Sexual health information needs and priorities of international students _____	25
How do people with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) self-manage their symptoms? _____	27
Men’s health services in Geelong- a provider’s perspective _____	28
Monitoring the internet for performance and image enhancing drugs available to Australia _____	29
Enhancing knowledge of performance and image enhancing drugs: The role of online communities _____	30
Evaluating the effectiveness of Paediatric HealthPathways _____	31
Facilitated Community Fracture Care: An analysis of a novel supported management programme within HealthPathways _____	32
Exploration of Greater Geelong Maternal and Child Health Centre data _____	34
What can workplaces do to increase physical activity amongst workers? _____	36
Childless women’s experiences of social exclusion _____	38
University students attitudes towards childlessness in Australia _____	39
Countering the social exclusion of women without children in Australia: an examination of the role and value of online communities _____	40
Changes in women’s friendship networks during their 20s and 30s _____	41
Cost and outcomes Analysis of Deakin smoke-free initiative (DSFI) _____	42
Qualitative evaluation of Deakin smoke-free initiative (DSFI) _____	44
Is gender important in community-onset MRSA infections? _____	45
Leading, Educating, Advocating for Disability: Reflections on a capacity building project for people with disability and parents – interview analysis _____	46
Leading, Educating, Advocating for Disability: Reflections on a capacity building project for people with disability and parents – questionnaire analysis _____	48
Cost and benefit analysis of self-report compared to measured surveys on obesity in youth _____	50
Dietary habits, obesity and perceived quality of life among Victorian primary school children _____	51
Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) and the NDIS: how is it working? _____	52

**Project ID:** 2015-100

**Project title:** Asylum seekers in the media: representations and the sick role

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**Project description:**

Refugees and asylum seekers are frequently represented by the Australian media as ‘threats’ or ‘risks’ to Australia’s ‘way of life’ and to the safety and security of Australia. While there have been a number of analyses of the representation of refugees and asylum seekers in the Australian print media, there has been no analysis of asylum seekers attention given to understanding the representations of asylum seekers through the lens of the sick role. The aim of this research is to investigate how the media use and reinforce the sick role in their representation of asylum seekers.

**Methodological approach:**

The student will be expected to collect data from media sources which could include television, newspaper or radio. The student will be expected to identify a time period for the collection of articles. Articles could be collected from state based or national media sources. The student will then be expected to undertake thematic and/or content analysis of the media articles, relating to issues surrounding the arrival of asylum seekers, particularly those who arrive by boat.

**Necessary skills / knowledge:**

The student will be expected to have some knowledge/interest in issues surrounding asylum seeking and refugee issues.

**Project ID:** 2015-101

**Project title:** Food Aid Providers – A regional perspective

**Supervisors:**

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**Project description:**

Recent changes to the Australian welfare system, including changes to the way that Australia approaches asylum seekers and a decrease in family payments, has resulted in an increase in the number of people who face food insecurity. In 2013, it is estimated that two million Australians were in need of food aid, an increase of nine percent since 2012 (Foodbank Australia, 2012). A survey conducted in 2012 found that four percent of Australians access emergency food supplies, while eight percent often or sometimes ran out of food and were unable to afford more (Lockie and Pietsch, 2012). This increasing need for food has resulted in increasing demand. Of the two million people across Australia who are in need of food aid, over 65,000 people each month are unable to be assisted – almost half of these are children. The 2012-2013 financial year, saw most agencies registering an increasing demand for food aid (Foodbank Australia, 2012). This project is interested in how food aid agencies in regional Victoria are dealing with the increased demand. Understanding who is seeking food aid, if they are receiving the food aid that they need, and what their experiences of food aid are will give us a greater understanding of domestic food aid provisions within regional Victoria. A previous study has undertaken a review of the food aid providers in metropolitan Melbourne, as such this would be adding to that body of work to give us greater insight into food aid provision in Victoria.

**Methodological approach:**

The first phase of data collection would be a desktop review of all providers of food aid in Victoria. This review will investigate the varying models of food aid in operation in Victoria, and the methods used to review and evaluate these providers. The search will target websites of organisations associated with food aid, food pantries and food banks. It is expected that this search will allow for the creation of a database of food aid providers in Victoria, and depending on the information available, some indication of the main cliental of each provider. A survey will then be conducted with these providers, which will be the same that was used for metropolitan Melbourne services.

**Necessary skills / knowledge:**

The student will be expected to have some knowledge/interest in issues surrounding food aid provision.

**Project ID:** 2015-102

**Project title:** The influence of Big Food: analysis of lobbying and other corporate political activity of the food industry in Australia

**Supervisors:**

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**Project description:**

The commercial determinants of health are increasingly recognised as major drivers of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) globally. Transnational food and beverage companies ('Big Food'), in particular, contribute substantially to unhealthy food environments – a major driver of NCDs. Big Food have also been accused of undermining public health efforts through their power and influence over political processes. Their practices in exerting political influence (referred to as corporate political activity, CPA) have been likened to the tactics used by the tobacco, alcohol and other industries to influence policy and public opinion. This project aims to investigate and understand the CPA of selected large food companies in Australia. The research forms part of the private sector module of INFORMAS – a global network that aims to monitor food environments globally.

**Methodological approach:**

We have already collected a database of practices of the largest food companies in Australia, sourced from different publicly available sources, including material from food company websites and social media accounts, government websites, food industry partners and associated groups, universities, professional organisations, and other sources (e.g., sport clubs websites, public relations company websites). This project will analyse the existing data for selected companies, using a framework for analysing CPA for other industries (e.g., tobacco and alcohol). The project will also collect additional data as required, using an established protocol developed for INFORMAS. The analysis will be conducted to assess the extent to which the practices identified pose a risk to public health. There is scope for the project to attract media attention and is likely to lead to a journal article / conference presentation.

**Necessary skills / knowledge:**

The student will be expected to have an interest in food policy, obesity prevention and corporate social responsibility. As this is an emerging area of research, the student needs to be comfortable in being flexible and adaptive. The student will form part of a broader team, at Deakin and internationally, that is aiming to expose the practices of the food industry and increase their accountability for NCD prevention. If desired, this project could lead on to a PhD in this area.

**Project ID:** 2015-103

**Project title:** The Staying Fit weight loss program: is program dose associated with weight loss?

**Supervisors:**

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**Project description:**

A randomized controlled trial of an online obesity intervention designed for adolescents was conducted between 2010-2013. In total 194 overweight or obese adolescents were randomized to either the Staying fit online program or usual care. Staying fit requires participants to complete twelve online sessions, with a new session being offered each week. Usual care consisted of being given a pack with information on healthy nutrition and physical activity and helpful websites. All study participants had their height, weight, waist circumference and bioelectrical body impedance measured at baseline, 3-months (post-program), 6-months and 12-months.

The intervention was successful, in that the intervention group had lower BMI z-scores at 12-months compared with the control group. However, within the intervention group the number of sessions completed and the time spent on each session varied. The aim of this project would be to investigate the relationship between program dose and weight loss success and to determine if any individual factors were related to completion of the program.

**Methodological approach:**

The primary data for this project has been collected but this project will require the student to clean the data and conduct the analyses. This will be the first study to actually investigate the different components of the intervention and how they relate to the outcomes.

**Necessary skills / knowledge:**

This project should appeal to a student with an interest in public health, especially obesity prevention and a strong interest in statistical analysis. All analyses will be conducted using STATA software, therefore some experience with STATA would be an advantage.

**Project ID:** 2015-104

**Project title:** Exploring the 'fit' - how does the current NDIS policy fit with the needs and goals of people with psychosocial disability?

**Supervisors:**

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**Project description:**

The new NDIS includes people with psychosocial disability, and policy and program in relation to this is emerging currently. It is not yet clear whether the needs of this group will be well addressed through NDIS policy and practice. This project aims to analyse the 'fit' between the current NDIS policy and what is known about the needs and goals of people with psychosocial disability who may receive funding and supports via this source. A major aim of the study is to guide further policy development and advocacy towards this.

**Methodological approach:**

Several existing data sets are available that identify the needs and goals of people with psychosocial disability. This data may be available for secondary analysis and matched to an analysis of current NDIS policy. Alternatively, or additionally, further data collection from people with psychosocial disability or key stakeholders could be undertaken. Focus and methods for this project are to be further refined through consultation with our partner MIND.

**Necessary skills / knowledge:**

The student will require:

- An interest in policy design and analysis
- An interest in psychosocial disability
- Ability to liaise with an industry partner
- Interest in acquiring skills in quantitative data analysis (SPSS) and qualitative thematic data analysis

**Additional details:**

External Agency involved: MIND Australia

Project to be conducted in Melbourne and Geelong – it is possible that further data collection may be required from stakeholders in Geelong

Some travel to MIND Heidelberg and to Geelong may be required

Potential student already in discussion with supervisors

**Project ID:** 2015-105

**Project title:** The role of a non-traditional sport in encouraging sport participation in boys

**Supervisors:**

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**Project description:**

The supervisory team is led by Dr Barnett, whose expertise is in the connection between children's skill ability and their physical activity participation. Dr Hanna has extensive experience in qualitative research and the focus of Helen Brown's research is sport participation in children and adolescents.

This project is focused on lacrosse. Dr Barnett's anecdotal experience is that many boys are attracted and keep in the sport because it is a less popular sport that is keen for membership and fosters players, and because of this the opportunities are greater than for more popular traditional sports. We are keen to understand whether this is accurate, as understanding what can attract, motivate and retain adolescents in sport is important for achieving physical activity recommendations.

**Methodological approach:**

This qualitative project aims to recruit boys from pre-adolescence to mid adolescence (i.e. aged 9-14) and their parents, and interview them about their experience in lacrosse. The interview with the adolescents will focus on motivation towards lacrosse, perceptions of their club and perceptions of themselves in relation to sport and physical activity. The separate interview with the parents will focus on their perception of their child's interest in lacrosse, their own opinions about lacrosse, and how they perceive their son in relation to sport and physical activity.

**Necessary skills / knowledge:**

An interest in what determines adolescent sport and physical activity participation. An ability to talk with adolescents and their parents.

**Additional details:**

Lacrosse clubs will be approached for their participation and potentially also Lacrosse Victoria.

**Project ID:** 2015-106

**Project title:** Parents' views of their child's physical competence

**Supervisors:**

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**Project description:**

This exciting project further capitalises on existing work led by Dr Barnett in the area of children's movement skill ability. Family level factors may be particularly important in children's movement skill development. Parents' perceptions of their child's movement skill competence may have an important influence on children's actual skill. Parental beliefs about the child and their competence may also influence the level of encouragement and the provision of experiences the child is exposed to, in turn affecting children's motivation and engagement. For these reasons we developed a survey for parents to report on their perceptions of their child's movement skill competence.

The project will be to test this survey in a group of parents of young children for reliability. The student can also assess the children in their perceived competence using a child version of the same instrument. The potential research question/s are: 1) How reliable is a parent survey to assess parental report of their young children's perceived physical competence? 2) Does parent perception of their child's skill reflect their child's perceptions?

**Methodological approach:**

This project will generate unique data and as such there is potential to write this research up into a peer reviewed publication. It can be categorised as a Reliability and Validation study although the second research question is a cross sectional analysis. It will involve recruiting parents (at least 30) with children in the target age group (aged 4 to 8 years), and asking parents to complete the written survey twice, one week apart, on their perception of their child's physical competence. The quantitative analysis is not complex.

**Necessary skills / knowledge:**

The student will need to be Burwood based. The student will need a car and a current drivers license or the ability to get to the schools through public transport.

**Project ID:** 2015-107

**Project title:** How do children with Autism respond to and enjoy playing sports exergames?

**Supervisors:**

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**Project description:**

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a complex neurodevelopmental disorder affecting 1 in 100 children. Along with distressing ASD core symptoms, affected children have significant motor impairment. Fundamental movement skill (FMS) ability (e.g., to run, jump, catch) is important for participation in sports and active games and the subsequent health benefits. Yet in the ASD population there are no evidence-based motor skill interventions. Identifying novel effective strategies for promoting FMS in children with ASD is therefore important. 'Exergames' are video games which require replication of virtual sport skills (e.g. striking in 'tennis').

The larger aim of this project is to investigate whether exergames can develop the actual and perceived FMS of children with ASD, but firstly we need to see how acceptable and feasible this approach is.. This exciting project further capitalizes on existing work led by a Collaboration across the Centre for Mental Health and Well-being (CMHWP), Centre for Physical Activity and Nutrition Research (C-PAN) and the School of Health and Social Development (HSD), in the context of Deakin's Memorandum of Understanding with Irabina (Victoria's largest ASD Intervention Centre).

**Methodological approach:**

This project will generate unique data and as such there is potential to write this research up into a peer reviewed publication. This particular project can be categorised as a feasibility study. It will involve recruiting a small number of children with ASD and seeing whether a sports exergame program using the Kinect console is acceptable and feasible. The student will be able to collect qualitative information from both parents and children as to their enjoyment and perceptions.

**Necessary skills / knowledge:**

The student will need to be able to access Melbourne for data collection. The student will need a car and a current drivers license or the ability to get to where the children are situated (might be in an early intervention centre or in family homes) through public transport.

**Project ID:** 2015-108

**Project title:** Mapping tool for population level obesity prevention responses

**Supervisors:**

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**Project description:**

Research Question: What is the best method of capturing data for an interactive GIS mapping tool that aims to systematically identify and compare the activity of community-based obesity prevention responses in Australia?

**Aims:**

- 1) To develop a tool for the systematic identification of population level obesity responses across Australia.
- 2) To facilitate the critical comparison of population level obesity prevention responses across Australia.
- 3) To undertake a critical appraisal of population level obesity prevention responses against certain characteristics, eg geographic location, and implementation strategies through the use of an identified framework, eg RE-AIM or Best Practice Principles.

Rationale: An interactive mapping tool that enables the systematic collection, comparison and investigation of population level obesity prevention responses has the potential to increase awareness of appropriate responses, enhance collaborations and resource sharing, and facilitate information exchange through the building and strengthening of networks.

**Methodological approach:**

This study utilises mostly qualitative methodology. It will explore the definition of population level (community-based) obesity prevention responses through a literature review, and develop a tool (based on existing tools) to assist with the systematic identification of these obesity responses. It will then pilot test this tool on five sites within Australia. Specific methodological steps involve:

- 1) Literature review to define “population level obesity prevention response” (also referred to as “community-wide / community-based obesity prevention initiatives”)
- 2) Conducting a web search for similar mapping tools eg: UK Obesity Learning Centre PANI Tool and the World Obesity Federation Atlas. The student will then conduct a critical appraisal of these tools for relevance to Australian.
- 3) The development of a preferred tool for use in the identification, comparison and mapping of community-based obesity prevention responses (based on 2).
- 4) Pilot testing of the tool with five community-based obesity responses in Australia and reporting on this pilot test.
- 5) Formulation of recommendations for the improvement of the CO-OPS Map of initiatives based on the pilot test and literature review.

**Necessary skills / knowledge:**

Literature searching

Literature review writing

Excel

An interest in learning about GIS mapping (beginner level)

**Additional details:**

This project will be based at the CO-OPS Collaboration at the Waterfront Campus, Geelong

**Project ID:** 2015-109

**Project title:** Australian policy-makers survey: perceptions of the obesity epidemic, drivers and actions required

**Supervisors:**

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Harriet Koorts	h.koorts@deakin.edu.au	Geelong Waterfront campus

**Project description:**

What do Australian policy makers understand about the extent, implications, and existing evidence of the drivers and solutions to obesity in Australia?

**Aims:**

- 1) To develop a survey to explore the level of understanding of Australian policy-makers within government and NGOs regarding obesity prevention in Australia (statistics, drivers and actions required, where responsibility lies)
- 2) To conduct telephone interviews using the survey with pre-identified key policy makers or advisors in each state and territory in Australia. (It is anticipated there will be approximately five interviews per state or territory)
- 3) To gain a collective understanding and identify knowledge gaps of policymakers regarding the prevalence of obesity in Australia and the extent to which policy is being used to address the issue

**Rationale:** An exploration of the extent to which policy-makers understand the challenges, implications, costs and current evidence of effective obesity interventions in Australian may provide insights into knowledge gaps (if they exist) to improve the knowledge to action cycle.

**Methodological approach:**

Although this study is based on qualitative methodology an understanding of mixed methodologies is an advantage. This study incorporates a literature review, survey design (based on existing surveys and related literature), administering of the survey to approximately 40 participants via telephone interviews. This will be followed by an analysis of the survey data which will then be compared and contrasted with the data obtained from the literature review to provide a collective understanding and identify potential knowledge gaps.

Specific steps are likely to include:

1. Literature review - to describe the obesity epidemic within Australia and its health and economic impacts; national, state and local obesity prevention policies and targets currently in place; and evidence-based best practice obesity prevention policy responses.
2. Survey design (based on the EASO obesity policymakers survey 2014) and related literature.
3. Telephone interviews to capture attitudes and perceptions of stakeholders (policy makers and advisors)- (which will be pre-identified by the supervisors).
4. Report – to describe the policymakers interviewed; their understanding of the extent of obesity in Australia; their perceptions of who is responsible/the drivers of obesity/ what should be done to prevent it; their attitudes to the use of policy for prevention.

**Necessary skills / knowledge:**

Literature searching

Literature review and report writing

Telephone interviewing skills

Qualitative data collection and analysis

Basic understanding of statistical data (no statistical calculations will be required, eg p values)

**Additional details:**

This project will be based at the CO-OPS Collaboration at the Waterfront Campus, Geelong

**Project ID:** 2015-110

**Project title:** Supermarket interventions for healthy eating – developing an evidence base for action

**Supervisors:**

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**Project description:**

One of the most neglected, yet significant, environments for improving population eating behaviours is the supermarket. In Australia, 63% of all food spending occurs in supermarkets, with the two dominant supermarket chains, having a 68% market share. Public health supermarket interventions have almost solely focused on increasing purchases of fruits and vegetables, with very little attention given to unhealthy foods.

Our previous research has demonstrated that it is unhealthy foods that supermarkets promote most heavily both in-store and in advertising materials.

This project will firstly assess the available evidence (both peer-reviewed and grey literature) for novel interventions targeting both healthy and unhealthy foods. Following on from this literature review, an audit of current marketing strategies within supermarkets for both healthy and unhealthy foods will be undertaken. Finally, the perceptions of consumers relating to the most promising intervention ideas will be sought in consumer focus groups.

This project will provide sorely needed evidence upon which to base effective supermarket interventions and is likely to result in at least one and hopefully two, peer-reviewed publications in respected international public health journals. Ultimately, our program of work is aimed at providing evidence to support the creation of healthier food environments in Australia and globally.

**Methodological approach:**

The project will involve an extensive literature review and information synthesis; supermarket audits (we have successfully undertaken >100 of these previously) and conduct of focus group discussions. Data from supermarket audits will be analysed by the student using reasonably simple statistical analysis methods. Ethical approval will be sought for the conduct of focus groups (no ethical approval is required for supermarket audits as these do not involve human subjects).

**Necessary skills / knowledge:**

Interest in and knowledge of public health nutrition and interventions that affect population eating behaviours is a pre-requisite. Attention to detail, highly developed writing skills and a systematic approach to reviewing literature are also highly regarded. Basic knowledge of statistics is required, however we can provide instruction in the use of specific statistical analysis packages (SPSS or Stata).

**Project ID:** 2015-111

**Project title:** Preventing violence against women and children

**Supervisors:**

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**Project description:**

The Victorian Department of Justice has funded a number of projects across the state to develop and implement strategies for the prevention of violence against women. Prof Ann Taket is leading a program of work that is concerned with evaluating various components of three of these: in Hume Region, the Great South Coast (GSC) Region; and Eastern Metropolitan Region (EMR). There are exciting opportunities for projects to be undertaken by honours students, as part of the evaluation of these strategies. The potential research questions can all be phrased in terms of improving our understanding of what works in violence prevention. There will be a chance to do work in connection with any one of a number of specific programs that are being implemented (various training and education programs, a theatre-based program for bystander engagement (*You the Man*), and programs for news parents, gender equity programs in workplaces). The specific project that a student undertakes can be tailored to their particular interests and skills. As well as giving students the chance to do a real piece of analysis in partnership with external agencies, there is a good prospect of going on to produce a peer-reviewed published paper based on the work.

**Methodological approach:**

The evaluations are based around mixed methods designs, and there is scope for students to work on projects that are qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods. Data collection methods involved in the work include:

- Surveys (including both open and closed questions)
- Interviews (face to face or telephone)
- Analysis of routinely collected data

Possibilities exist for students to be involved in data collection, and/or to carry out a particular analysis of data collected by or provided to the evaluation team.

**Necessary skills / knowledge:**

Interest in, and preferably also knowledge of, violence prevention.

**Additional details:**

Projects will be conducted in:

Great South Coast Region, Hume Region and / or Eastern Metropolitan Region

The lead Agency in each of the three regions is: Warrnambool City Council, Women's Health Goulburn North East, Whitehorse Community Health Services. They will be involved in terms of facilitating access to data and resources as necessary. For some possible projects, one of the other agencies involved in one of the regions might also be involved.

**Project ID:** 2015-112

**Project title:** Influences on young Khmer women's body image

**Supervisors:**

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**Project description:**

Research aim: To explore influences on body-image for young English speaking Cambodian females living in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Research question: What are the influences on body-image for young English Speaking Cambodian females living in Phnom Penh?

Draft objectives:

- To explore the influence of media, particularly the beauty and sporting industry on women's body image
- To explore the influence of traditional Cambodian culture and beliefs on women's body image
- To explore the influence of Westernisation and development in Phnom Penh on women's body image

Rationale:

Through fieldwork in Phnom Penh, Cambodia I have seen how development and Westernisation is impacting on young women. These women strive to fit in and are a target for the growing consumer society. There are advertising billboards, magazines and other media promoting skin whitening creams, cosmetic surgery, thin body types and the latest fashion. The young women who are English speaking and living in the more wealthy areas appear particularly exposed to this and may be at risk of negative body-image. Researching this topic with the perspective of post-colonial feminism and the political and cultural background of Cambodia will provide interesting and unique health information about this population group.

**Methodological approach:**

Data collection:

Qualitative design. In-depth interviews will be undertaken to investigate background information and influences on body-image.

Sample:

- English Speaking, Cambodian born, females aged 18-25, living in Phnom Penh
- Approximately 6-10 participants
- Convenience sampling, recruiting participants from recreational locations this cohort spend time at including nightclubs, gym and shopping mall

**Necessary skills / knowledge:**

- Interest in body-image, mental health and media influences on health
- Cultural sensitivity and knowledge

**Additional details:**

Recruitment will occur in-person in Phnom Penh with participants working, living or socializing in Boeung Keng Kang and Riverfront as these appear to be more Westernised and attract the target population. Data may be collected in outdoor space along the Riverfront area as there is space for privacy and it is easily accessible for participants. Inducive for relaxed conversation.

Potential student already in discussion with supervisors, resources required to be covered by student/project funds

**Project ID:** 2015-113

**Project title:** Exploring the policy context of women's reproductive decision making

**Supervisors:**

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**Project description:**

Women's reproductive health includes their right of choice about if and when they will bear children. The choices that women make are done so within the broader policy environment. Australian research has explored fertility rates and policy with a specific focus on the economic aspects including: cash payments and tax measures designed to modify income or provide basic income support; and assistance with the costs of child care, maternity and paternity leave. However, there has been little exploration of social policy on women reproductive choices and the consequences of these choices beyond the economic. As such, greater policy analysis is needed to explore the political environment for women's reproductive health, including how this is represented in policy and the silences or discourages that may exist.

**Methodological approach:**

This project will involve a policy analysis of the current policy, acts and guidelines that impact on women's reproductive choices and consequences. A policy analysis framework will be used, with the focus either being on all relevant policies at a state level, or a specific aspect of reproductive health and looking at Australia wide policies.

**Necessary skills / knowledge:**

The student will require an interest in women's reproductive health: have good attention to detail; an ability to work as part of a research team; and an excellent ability to communicate with a variety of groups.

**Project ID:** 2015-114

**Project title:** Asylum seeker/refugee women's experiences of reproductive health policy

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Burwood campus

**Project description:**

One of the most basic human rights is the right to health, which expressly includes reproductive health. For women this includes the right of choice about if and when they will bear children. Women's ability to exercise their reproductive rights, and the choices they make, have consequences for their health and that of their children. The choices women make and the consequences of those choices are subject to broad macro-level forces of the social policy environment. There are a myriad of policies; health, welfare, education and housing policy, among others, that may influence women's reproductive choices and consequences. However, the impact of many policies on women's childbearing aspirations, pregnancy and health as mothers remains unexplored. As such, this project will specifically focus on asylum seeker/refugee women in the south eastern suburbs of Melbourne, and explore how they experience reproductive health policy.

**Methodological approach:**

This qualitative project will involve the recruitment of a diverse sample of asylum seeker/refugee women to participate in an in-depth interview about their experience of Australian reproductive health policy, their choices and the consequences.

**Necessary skills / knowledge:**

The student will require an interest in women's reproductive health: have good attention to detail; an ability to work as part of a research team; an excellent ability to communicate with a variety of groups; and a good understanding of qualitative research methods.

**Additional details:**

This project will be done in conjunction with Womens Health in the South East (WHISE). The interviews will be conducted with women in south east Melbourne.

**Project ID:** 2015-115

**Project title:** Friendship influence on obesity related behaviour in early adolescence: a cohort study

**Supervisors:**

Prof Steven Allender

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Jenny Marks

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**Project description:**

Obesity prevalence and related risk behavior increase from childhood to adolescence, coinciding with late primary to early secondary school in Victorian children. A cohort of students attending a cluster of schools within regional Victoria have participated in a longitudinal study over a year period as they transitioned from primary to secondary school, age (10-13) to age (11-14). This Honours project is the second phase of the longitudinal study when students are in their early years of secondary school.

The aim of this project is to understand the influence of friends on obesity risk behavior in early adolescence. This information will provide valuable insight for intervention within this age group for the prevention of obesity and later chronic disease risk.

The potential research question is:

*What is the influence of friendships on obesity related behaviour in a cohort of early adolescents? How can friendship influence be used for the prevention of obesity related behaviour in this cohort?*

**Methodological approach:**

This project is a longitudinal study following a cohort of 127 students who will be attending years 6-8 in 2015. Behavioural and friendship (social network) data will be collected by student questionnaire. Behaviours of interest include physical activity, screen time and dietary intake. The social network component of the questionnaire is in the format for students to list the friends they hang around with the most. Anthropometric measurements (height, weight and waist circumference) will also be collected. Data analysis will be undertaken using statistical software for both the behavioural and social network data, leading to the recommendation of evidence-based obesity prevention.

**Necessary skills / knowledge:**

The student requires good writing, communication and time management skills and a willingness to work within a team environment. Through the project the student will develop data collection and quantitative data analysis skills.

**Additional details:**

Data will be collected from a cluster of schools within one local government area of Western Victoria. The student will be required to regularly travel to schools over the data collection period. At least one other person will be required to assist with data collection (this will depend upon the number of students to be measured per school per day). The WHO CC will recruit and train personnel for data collection and cover travel costs.

**Project ID:** 2015-116

**Project title:** Exploring the links between health (both for individuals and their families), nature (including companion animals) and/or sustainability – various projects

**Supervisors:**

Dr Claire Henderson-Wilson      claire.henderson-wilson@deakin.edu.au      Burwood campus

Dr Justin Lawson                      justin.lawson@deakin.edu.au                      Burwood campus

**Project description:**

TBC – we would like to work with interested student/s to develop a project that explores links between health (both for individuals and their families), nature (including companion animals) and/or sustainability. Possible topics could include:

- exploring the health, educational and sustainability benefits of implementing a community garden on campus at Deakin University, Burwood (this would extend pilot data collected as part of a scoping study conducted by the supervisors)
- exploring the health and wellbeing benefits of companion animals (this could be for a particular family type or group of individuals, i.e. students)
- investigating individuals' lifestyle choices that impact on the environment, with a focus on a spiritual perspective.

**Methodological approach:**

TBC – we would work with interested student/s to develop the methodological approach but it could be either a mixed methods approach:

- quantitative data collection from participants via surveys to collect baseline measures of their attitudes and behaviours;
- qualitative interviews of a sub-sample to explore further attitudes and behaviours;
- site visits;
- focus groups.

OR could be purely qualitative in nature whereby in-depth interviews (either in person or on phone/skype) or focus groups are conducted with a sample of relevant participants.

**Necessary skills / knowledge:**

Applicants should be familiar with some qualitative research methods and statistical analyses. Other skills required include: project management skills, effective communication skills and time management skills. By completing this project, the student will acquire knowledge/skills in research design and conduct, literature searching and reviewing, project management, independent learning and presenting research findings.

**Project ID:** 2015-117

**Project title:** Health Promotion and Sustainability: Programme Evaluation Project

**Supervisors:**

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**Project description:**

Climate change and increasing environmental degradation pose serious risks to human health and exacerbate existing health inequities. Health promotion professionals have important roles in protecting health from environmental threats as well as in actively promoting climate change mitigation and adaptation within their day-to-day community level practice. However to date, efforts to integrate environmental actions into health promotion practice have been limited by insufficient evidence for good practice and practical tools to guide program planning and evaluation in this area.

This research project will contribute to this burgeoning field of research at the nexus of health promotion and sustainability with a focus on the progressive work undertaken by two agencies in the south east metropolitan region of Victoria. The project will build on preliminary case study data collected from one or both of these agencies which describes the nature and scope of the health and sustainability programs they are running e.g. Community Gardens and Men's Shed programmes (See Patrick, Capetola and Noy 2011). This phase of the research, and subsequently the Honours research project, will involve a more detailed documentation of the effectiveness of these health and sustainability programmes in the form of evaluation research.

The overarching research questions will include:

1. What evaluation indicators can be used in these health promotion programs to assess health, equity and sustainability processes, impacts and outcomes?
2. How effective are these types of community level health promotion programs in simultaneously addressing health, sustainability and equity imperatives?

**Methodological approach:**

There are opportunities for both qualitative and quantitative data methodological approaches in the proposed project. Qualitative methods could involve in-depth interviews and focus groups with clients, staff and partners of the case study programme(s). Quantitative data collection could involve use of online surveys to canvass the perceived health, equity and sustainability impacts of the case study programmes. Document analysis and environmental auditing may also form part of the overall research design. Established partnerships with the Health Promotion Managers at the agencies will facilitate the research process. Ethics approval has been obtained for this research project however; students will have the opportunity to redevelop the research instruments and lead major amendments to the ethics application.

**Necessary skills / knowledge:**

This project would student a student interested in an in-field research experience and programme evaluation. Ideally the student will have a good understanding of the relationship between health, climate change and sustainability, but this is not essential as knowledge will be obtained through the research process. Training and support will be provided in conducting surveys, interviewing/focus groups and quantitative/qualitative approaches to data analysis. For a qualitative approach however, it is important that the student is confident in communicating with people and for a quantitative approach it is important that the student has a reasonable understanding of biostatistics. In addition, students will need occasionally to be able to travel independently to the south eastern metropolitan region of Victoria to undertake the research project.

**Additional details:**

This project will form part of a Monash Health-Deakin University ethics approved research program developed in partnership with two Health Services in the south eastern metropolitan region of Victoria. However, the recruitment of participants, data collection, presentation of results and monitoring will be the responsibility of the student and project supervisors at Deakin University.

The project will be located in the South East Metropolitan region of Victoria e.g. Kooweerup, Dandenong.

**Project ID:** 2015-118

**Project title:** Sexual health information needs and priorities of international students

**Supervisors:**

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Geelong and Burwood campus

Dr Georgia Babatsikos

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Off campus

**Project description:**

Unplanned pregnancies and STIs among international students in Australia are emergent issues of concern but there has been little research or intervention in this area to date. In 2010, we commenced a partnership with the Deakin Division of Student Life and BUPA to undertake research and develop interventions to address unplanned pregnancies and STIs among international students. The first phase of this research gathered health and social service providers' perspectives on the issues. The second phase of research explored students' perspectives and experiences regarding unplanned pregnancies and STIs. Now the research is at the phase of intervention development. To inform good practice in the design and delivery of health promotion programs to address this topic, more needs to be understood about which specific sexual health topics international students would like to receive information and support about, and importantly, what are the most appropriate and effective ways to deliver the information and engage students in programs about this sensitive and often culturally-taboo topic.

Therefore, the **aim** of this research project is to develop understanding about the sexual and reproductive health information priorities of international students. The specific **objectives** of the project are:

- To identify the range of specific topics related to sexual and reproductive health that international students would like to receive information about.
- To develop understanding about culturally appropriate and acceptable ways to disseminate and communicate information about sexual and reproductive health to international students.

This information will be used to plan and deliver interventions to specifically address this issue.

**Methodological approach:**

The project will use qualitative methods to collect information from participants. Participants will be recruited from among the international student cohort. Data collection methods may include focus group discussions and/or individual interviews. The student researcher may also consider using culturally appropriate, participatory techniques during focus groups, such as nominal group techniques.

**Necessary skills / knowledge:**

A knowledge of health promotion principles and approaches. Completion of the B. PHHP or B. Health Sc with the *health promotion major* would be advantageous and highly recommended.

**Additional details:**

The student may be required to print advertising and recruitment materials (leaflets/posters) which they would have to self-fund. The student will have to travel to the university campus (and potentially other accessible campuses) in order to carry out data collection. This would be self-funded and organised by the student. The student will undertake their own transcription so there will be no additional costs associated with that.

**Project ID:** 2015-119

**Project title:** How do people with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) self-manage their symptoms?

**Supervisors:**

Dr Matthew Dunn

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Burwood and Geelong campuses

Dr Sharlene Kaye

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National Drug and Alcohol  
Research Centre, UNSW

**Project description:**

ADHD is a mental disorder which is characterized by either significant difficulties of inattention or hyperactivity and impulsiveness or a combination of the two. There are a range of treatment methods for ADHD such as behavioural modifications, life-style changes, counseling and medication. Not every option will work for every person, and people report different treatment preferences. This study will aim to understand why those with ADHD prefer certain treatment options over others, and in particular, what they do to manage their ADHD symptoms.

**Methodological approach:**

This project can either be a quantitative study (using online survey techniques) or a qualitative study (using face to face or telephone interviews). There is room to move to suit the interest and the skills of the student.

**Necessary skills / knowledge:**

Any student with an interest in public health, health promotion, or psychology will find this project of interest. If the student seeks to use a quantitative approach, then good quantitative knowledge/skills will be of benefit; likewise, if the study seeks to use a qualitative approach, then good qualitative knowledge/skills will be of benefit.

**Additional details:**

Dr Dunn is based at the Burwood campus but does travel to the Geelong Waterfront campus while Dr Kaye is based in Sydney, NSW. There is no requirement for the student to be based on-campus though the student should be able to meet once a week for a supervisory meeting, at either the Waterfront or Burwood campuses. There may be scope for these meetings to be conducted online using Skype or other technologies.

**Project ID:** 2015-120

**Project title:** Men's health services in Geelong- a provider's perspective

**Supervisors:**

Dr Matthew Dunn

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Burwood and Geelong campuses

**Project description:**

Most epidemiological indicators show a lower health status in men compared with women in Australia. Improving the health of men has been identified as a significant public health issue by the Australian, Victorian and local governments. Service providers play a critical role in providing healthcare solutions to men to address their health needs, yet health service consumption is generally lower among males than females. Service providers are at the forefront of locally delivered health services, and research evaluating general health service delivery has revealed that a more coordinated approach to service provision can improve the effectiveness of service delivery. While literature has identified limitations in health services addressing men's health, few studies have investigated whether health service providers are able to deal with men's health issues appropriately. The proposed study will investigate the perceptions and opinions of men's health service providers about men's health needs, their experiences of working in the field of men's health, and the strengths and limitations of existing services provided.

**Methodological approach:**

This project will involve qualitative interviews with GPs in the Geelong area. These can be done either in person or by phone.

**Necessary skills / knowledge:**

A student with an interest in either health care provision, the health care system, health promotion, or male health would be suited for this project. Alternatively, a student who is interested in conducting a project within the Geelong area would be suited to this project.

**Additional details:**

The student may be required to travel to Geelong for in-person interviews.

Dr Dunn is based at the Burwood campus but does travel to the Geelong Waterfront campus. There is no requirement for the student to be based on-campus though the student should be able to meet once a week for a supervisory meeting, at either the Waterfront or Burwood campuses. There may be scope for these meetings to be conducted online using Skype or other technologies.

Barwon Health will play a supporting role in the project.

**Project ID:** 2015-121

**Project title:** Monitoring the internet for performance and image enhancing drugs available to Australia

**Supervisors:**

Dr Matthew Dunn

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Burwood and Geelong campuses

**Project description:**

Performance and image enhancing drugs (PIEDs) are increasingly available via the Internet. There is no information about the products that are available to Australia via the Internet. This study aims to apply Internet monitoring to determine the availability of PIEDs to Australian consumers.

**Methodological approach:**

This project will use established Internet monitoring methodology and adapt it to PIEDs. This will involve piloting the methodology, and then systematically searching and recording estimates over an established timeframe.

**Necessary skills / knowledge:**

A student with an interest in substance use broadly or PIED use, such as steroids, more specifically and/or with an interest in the Internet and its role in public health would be suited to this project. As this project will involve much work using the Internet, having a good home Internet connection is essential.

**Project ID:** 2015-122

**Project title:** Enhancing knowledge of performance and image enhancing drugs: The role of online communities

**Supervisors:**

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Burwood and Geelong campuses

Dr Fiona McKay

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Burwood campus

**Project description:**

Peer education and knowledge sharing has been important within the performance and image enhancing drug community, and the Internet has become an important tool to enable this communication and allow members of this community to interact. There has been no research to date which has examined how members in this community interact and the type of information which is shared. Therefore, the aim of this project is to analyse online forum postings with regards to how members of this community facilitate knowledge sharing to prevent harmful substance use.

**Methodological approach:**

This project will take an ethnographic approach. Ethnography is designed to explore cultural phenomena where the researcher observes society from the point of view of the subject of the study. An ethnography is a means to represent graphically and in writing the culture of a group. Data will be collected by downloading online forum posts and analyzing these qualitatively. A period of time may be spent viewing, but not engaging with, the interactions of this community through their online posts.

**Necessary skills / knowledge:**

A student with an interest in substance use broadly or PIED use, such as steroids, more specifically and/or with an interest in cyber-support and/or a student with an interest in qualitative methods including ethnography. As this project will involve much work using the Internet, having a good home Internet connection is essential.

**Project ID:** 2015-123

**Project title:** Evaluating the effectiveness of Paediatric HealthPathways

**Supervisors:**

Dr Matthew Dunn	m.dunn@deakin.edu.au	Burwood and Geelong campuses
Dave Fuller	davidf@barwonhealth.org.au	Paediatrician, University Hospital, Geelong
Dr Jane Opie	Barwon Medical Local	medicaladvisor@barwonml.com.au

**Project description:**

HealthPathways is a program initiated by Barwon Medicare Local in partnership with Barwon Health which provides condition-based guidelines via a website to support General Practitioners in the assessment, management and referral of patients. Paediatrics was one of the first clinical streams the HealthPathways program developed to assist in addressing the long waits for Paediatrician assessment for non-urgent clients.

The Paediatric HealthPathways are based on common paediatric presentations and aim to increase GP competence, reduce inappropriate referral to a specialist, improve pre-referral work-up and enhance accuracy of referral information so that accurate triage can occur. The Paediatric HealthPathways also outline how to access local services that can assist in patient management whilst waiting for specialist opinion.

The aim of the study is to measure the utilization of and adherence to paediatric HealthPathways by GPs. Utilisation is studied by examining website analytics and surveying GP satisfaction with the paediatric HealthPathways. The hypothesis is that locally agreed condition based guidelines (HealthPathways) increases GP knowledge, reduces inappropriate referral, improves accuracy of referral information and completeness of pre-referral work-up.

**Methodological approach:**

The first phase of the project is to examine paediatric referral appropriateness and accuracy prior to the introduction of paediatric HealthPathways in August 2013 and compare this with referral appropriateness and accuracy after the introduction of the 15 clinical pathways.

Preliminary data on referral accuracy pre-HealthPathways is available from Barwon Medicare Local.

Further data collection post the HealthPathways intervention will be undertaken to analyse a subset of post-implementation GP to Paediatrician referrals.

Qualitative data will be collected via survey to General Practitioners on relevance and usefulness of paediatric pathways.

**Necessary skills / knowledge:**

A student with an interest in the health care system would be suitable for this project. Other desirable skills include an ability to construct and maintain basic data base tools; simple statistical methodology skills; ability to communicate with health care professionals and patients; writing skills to assist in preparing documentation for Ethics Committee application and subsequent publications.

This project is primarily based in Geelong; however, an interested student in Burwood could still undertake the project but understand that some travel to Geelong would be required.

**Project ID:** 2015-124

**Project title:** Facilitated Community Fracture Care: An analysis of a novel supported management programme within HealthPathways

**Supervisors:**

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Prof Richard Page	richardpage@geelongortho.com.au	School Of Medicine, Waurn Ponds
Dr Jeff Urquhart	JEFFUR@BarwonHealth.org.au	University Hospital Geelong and Barwon Medicare Local

**Project description:**

Access to public hospital outpatient fracture clinics is a finite resource and under increasing pressure as the regional population increases. There has been a gradual diminution in the ability to care for simple fractures in the community for a variety of reasons.

The incorporation of Health Pathways and the development of region specific management tools provides the platform to enhance the capacity for this care in a primary practice setting. The flow on will enable a reduction in hospital burden and improve patient satisfaction. The patients will have their primary assessment in the current fracture clinic framework and those with suitable identified fractures will be referred to their General Practice with resource guidelines, including a mechanism to return to fracture clinic if there are complications.

The aim of this study is to measure the uptake and satisfaction of a supported hand over of care to primary practitioners, as well as pathway failure and return of care to a tertiary setting.

The underlying hypothesis is that supported and resourced management of simple fractures can be undertaken in General Practice, with a flow on reduction in growth of fracture clinic care in the hospital setting.

**Methodological approach:**

The first phase of the project is quantitative to assess fracture clinic demand in the preceding 12 months prior to the commencement of the HealthPathways Fracture Clinic Trial.

On commencement of the trial quantitative data on patient numbers, demographics, fracture diagnoses referral rates and sources will be collected.

Qualitative data from patients and practitioners at each end of the model of care regarding satisfaction and collection of safety and quality outcome data on re-presentation, readmission or intervention rates (Change of care / late surgery, other complications)

Finally an assessment of overall burden of fractures in the Barwon region and intervention rates of complex fractures. This is to be compared to simple fractures manageable in the community, with a temporal analysis on changes in types of care over the study period, and an analysis of barriers to up to of the proposed model.

**Necessary skills / knowledge:**

A student with an interest in the health care system would be suitable for this project. Other desirable skills include an ability to construct and maintain basic data base tools; simple statistical methodology skills; ability to communicate with health care professionals and patients; writing skills to assist in preparing documentation for Ethics Committee application and subsequent publications.

**Additional details:**

This project is primarily based in Geelong and South West Victoria; however, an interested student in Burwood could still undertake the project but understand that some travel to Geelong would be required.

Project to be conducted in conjunction with University Hospital Geelong and Barwon Health Barwon Medicare Local, Geelong. Admin support to be provided from within Barwon Orthopaedic Research Unit existing resources and funding, within Barwon Health.

**Project ID:** 2015-125

**Project title:** Exploration of Greater Geelong Maternal and Child Health Centre data

**Supervisors:**

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Geelong Waterfront campus

Chad Foulkes

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Geelong Waterfront campus

**Project description:**

This project will explore patterns of obesity among young children in the City of Greater Geelong, using measurements of height and weight, along with socio-demographic data, collected by Maternal and Child Health nurses. Obesity is one of the most important risks to child health in Australia, and if established in early childhood is likely to persist and be damaging to health throughout life.

There are 22 Maternal and Child Health Centres located in Greater Geelong. Nurses routinely collect comprehensive health information during consultations, scheduled at key ages from birth to 3.5 years.

Maternal Health Centre data is a currently underutilised potentially valuable research resource that can provide a basis for increased understanding of:

1. Prevalence and trends of overweight, obesity and underweight
2. Relationships between weight status and demographic and geographic characteristics.

The research questions that will be addressed in this project are:

1. What are the patterns and trends of weight status (overweight, obesity and underweight) among children aged up to 3.5 years in the Geelong area?
2. Are there differences in pre-school health characteristics across geographic locations in the City of Greater Geelong?
3. What are the associations between weight status and social, demographic and other health characteristics of children and families?

It is expected that this research will result in the preparation of at least one manuscript for peer-reviewed publication.

**Methodological approach:**

The methodological approach utilised in this research study will consist of the acquisition, structuring, analysis, modeling and reporting of information. This methodology will include the following:

- Working with Maternal and Child Health and IT staff at the City of Greater Geelong to extract de-identified data from the Maternal and Child Health database.
- Managing, checking and cleaning the data to ensure data quality and accuracy.
- Conducting appropriate quantitative statistical analyses such as with Stata/SPSS
- Potentially interviewing or surveying Maternal and Child Health nurses about related aspects of their practice.
- Writing a report and otherwise appropriately presenting the results of the above analyses and modeling, and discussion of its meaning and implications.

There is potential that this project could lead to a PhD project in a related area for the right candidate.

**Necessary skills / knowledge:**

The student conducting this project will need strong skills in quantitative research, and confidence in conducting basic statistical analysis. The student will be supported to learn additional data management and analysis techniques. An interest in large datasets and population epidemiology is also important.

Data will be collected from a database located within the City of Greater Geelong's central premises. It may be necessary for the student to visit Maternal and Child Health Centres around Greater Geelong to clarify existing data and/ or to obtain supplementary data.

The student would be expected to spend some time (at least once per week) at Deakin's Geelong Waterfront Campus, with the research team at the WHO Collaborating Centre for Obesity Prevention.

**Additional details:**

Some local travel within the City of Greater Geelong offices will be required. This will be funded through existing research grants.

Project will be conducted in conjunction with the City of Greater Geelong. Maternal and Child Health Service (family services) will provide access to the required data and facilitate engagement with nursing staff if required. Healthy Together Geelong will provide access to participating workplaces, form part of the student's supervisory panel, advice on data collection, assist with presentation of results and involved in writing up publications.

Low risk ethics approval will be required. A timetable will be established to ensure timely completion.

**Project ID:** 2015-126

**Project title:** What can workplaces do to increase physical activity amongst workers?

**Supervisors:**

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Chad Foulkes

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**Project description:**

67 workplaces covering >26,500 employees are currently involved in the Victorian Government's Health Promoting Workplaces Achievement Program through Healthy Together Geelong.

50% of respondents to a 2014 survey of these workplaces identified physical activity as a priority area for their workplace.

This research seeks to identify practices that lead to or inhibit physical activity amongst workers through investigating environmental and policy analysis. Outputs of the research may include recommendations for how workplaces can encourage physical activity and suggestions for practical tools to assist workplaces achieve increased levels of physical activity.

Overarching research question:

1. What are the traits of workplaces that successfully encourage physical activity amongst sedentary workers?

Sub-questions:

2. How does office design &/or layout impact on levels of physical activity?
3. What policies and practices do workplaces have in place that support or inhibit physical activity?

It is expected that this research will result in the preparation of a number of articles for publication.

**Methodological approach:**

The methodological approach utilised in this research study will consist of survey development, delivery and analysis; environmental audits; analysing workplaces documentation such as actions plans on physical activity, policies and cultural norms relating to physical activity in the workplace. This methodology will consist of the following stages:

- Developing, delivering and analysing surveys administered to businesses enrolled in the achievement program in Geelong,
- Identifying a range of environmental audit tools to assess building design and office layout of workplaces to promote physical activity,
- Conducting environmental audits in a number of businesses,
- Analysing documentation from workplaces such as actions plans on physical activity, policies,
- Checking for associations between levels of physical activity amongst workers (this data will be provided from another study) in relation to workplace activities to promote physical activity in the workplace
- Writing a report and otherwise appropriately presenting the results of the above analyses and discussion of its meaning and implications.

The project will collect primary data and may involve using data from another study.

**Necessary skills / knowledge:**

The student conducting this project will need some research methods/ statistical knowledge and skills, and a willingness to administer surveys and undertake data collection in workplaces.

**Additional details:**

Project will be conducted in conjunction with Healthy Together Geelong, based at the City of Greater Geelong. They will provide access to participating workplaces, form part of the student's supervisory panel, advice on data collection, assist with presentation of results and involved in writing up publications.

All businesses will be located in the City of Greater Geelong, with the majority located in central Geelong. It will be necessary for the student to visit workplaces.

The student would be expected to spend some time (at least once per week) at Deakin's Geelong Waterfront Campus, with the research team at the WHO Collaborating Centre for Obesity Prevention.

**Project ID:** 2015-127

**Project title:** Childless women's experiences of social exclusion

**Supervisors:**

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**Project description:**

Childlessness is increasing in Australia. Despite this, previous research suggests that childless women are a stigmatised and socially excluded group. However, what is unclear is how and in what aspects of their lives childless women experience social exclusion. Normative cultural discourses have negative social implications for women without children. Pronatalism is a dominant characteristic of our current social and political climate under which childbearing is considered the inevitable and appropriate outcome of adult life - those who choose not to procreate are condemned as abnormal or deviant on a moral basis. Motherhood has come to be understood (and presented) as a fixed, natural, fulfilling practice, which is central to female identity. Due to these prevailing social discourses surrounding motherhood, women who do not mother have become constructed as the morally deviant 'other'. The proposed project aims to explore the ways in which women are socially excluded or included on the basis of their childlessness. This study will focus on women of post-reproductive age (45 to 65 years) and repeat the study *Life in Australia as a woman with no children* conducted in 2014 (women aged 25 to 44 years).

**Methodological approach:**

The project will use a mixed method approach. Participants will be recruited through social networking sites and other public spaces and invited to complete an online survey.

**Necessary skills / knowledge:**

The student will require an interest in childlessness and social ex/inclusion: have good attention to detail; an ability to work as part of a research team; an excellent ability to communicate with a variety of groups; and a basic understanding of both quantitative and qualitative research methods.

**Project ID:** 2015-128

**Project title:** University students attitudes towards childlessness in Australia

**Supervisors:**

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Burwood campus

Julia Shelley

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Burwood campus

**Project description:**

Australia is a pronatalist society which promotes and encourages procreation. Under a pronatalist ideology, childbearing is considered the inevitable and appropriate outcome of adult life. Thus, those who choose not to procreate are condemned as abnormal or morally deviant. Past research suggests that voluntarily childless women are perceived as selfish, self-centred and materialistic, and have experienced being met with shock, pity, criticism and hostility in light of their voluntary childlessness. Despite this, childlessness has increased substantially in Australia over the past 30 years. However, there has been little examination of young (university aged) adults attitudes towards the childless. The aim of the proposed study is to examine university students attitudes towards childlessness.

**Methodological approach:**

The proposed project is a quantitative cross-sectional study. The data will be collected using an online questionnaire (to be developed by the student). Data will be analysed using SPSS.

**Necessary skills / knowledge:**

The student will require an interest in childlessness; have good attention to detail; an ability to work as part of a research team; an excellent ability to communicate with a variety of groups; and a good understanding of questionnaire design; quantitative research methods; and SPSS.

**Project ID:** 2015-129

**Project title:** Countering the social exclusion of women without children in Australia: an examination of the role and value of online communities

**Supervisors:**

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Burwood campus

Lisa Hanna

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**Project description:**

The number of women who remain childless is increasing in Australia. However, Australia is a pronatalist society which promotes and encourages procreation. As a result women who do not mother are stigmatised and seen as a group from which social distance is desirable. This then raises concerns about women without children's opportunities for social interaction and connectedness. One area which has not yet been explored is online communication technologies. Online communication technologies have the ability to provide a forum by which social supports and networks can be established and maintained. To our knowledge this will be the first study to explore the ways in which online communication technologies are used to socially connect women without children. The proposed project will advance our understanding of the role and benefits of online communication technologies and communities in connecting women without children, and provide important knowledge that can direct health promotion efforts for this underserved group. Specifically the aim of this project is to explore the capacity of online communities to facilitate social inclusion and social connectedness for women without children. The project will answer the following research questions:

1. What online communities exist for women in Australia without children and what are their characteristics?
2. What are the types of experiences and opinions expressed by the contributors to, and participants in, online communities for women without children?
3. Can online communities increase perceived social connectedness and inclusion for women without children in Australia, and if so in what way?

**Methodological approach:**

This qualitative project has three phases of data collection and analysis:

1. Scoping and mapping the range of online communities for women without children in Australia;
2. Thematic analysis of the publicly available content and contributions to a selection of Australian online communities for women without children; and
3. Primary qualitative data collection and analysis via online discussion threads.

**Necessary skills / knowledge:**

The student will require an interest in childlessness; have good attention to detail; an ability to work as part of a research team; an excellent ability to communicate with a variety of groups; and a good understanding of qualitative research methods.

**Project ID:** 2015-130

**Project title:** Changes in women's friendship networks during their 20s and 30s

**Supervisors:**

Assoc Prof Julia Shelley

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Burwood campus

Dr Melissa Graham

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**Project description:**

**Background:** Women's friendship networks are likely to change markedly during their 20s and 30s as they do or do not form long-term relationships, have children, undertake further study etc. This project will investigate the changes that have taken place in the network of one or more groups of friends where at least one woman has a young child and at least one does not have children.

**Rationale:** Understanding the changing nature of women's friendships and their social connectedness is important, for both women who have children and those who do not, as it has implications for women's social, mental and physical health.

**Research question:** How do women's friendship networks change as they become mothers or remain childless?

**Methodological approach:**

This will be a mixed methods study commencing with two women who have been friends for at least five years, with one of them now having a small child (between 2 and 5 years of age) and the other no children. In depth interviews about their friendship networks, the role played by particular people in those networks and changes in their networks over the previous five years (eg who has joined and who has left the network), will be conducted together with a quantitative social network analysis. The women will first be interviewed together, then with each of them separately. If possible, group interviews will then be conducted with subsets of their friendship groups, with the social network analysis extended to include data from these 'alters'.

**Necessary skills / knowledge:**

Students must have an interest in women's health and social wellbeing. The project may involve small amounts of travel, but can be structured so this will be of no, or little out-of-pocket expense for the student. Transcription will be conducted by the student as part of the project.

**Project ID:** 2015-131

**Project title:** Cost and outcomes Analysis of Deakin smoke-free initiative (DSFI)

**Supervisors:**

Jenny Watts

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Dr Matthew Dunn

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Patricia Ritchie

Burwood campus

**Project description:**

This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to be part of an innovative project using health promotion approaches to moving a work and study place to smoke-free. It is a chance to be a part of a real world health initiative creating change across Victoria.

Research question: To undertake cost and effectiveness analysis of DSFI compared to xxxx Univeristy Smoke-free initiative in terms of cost per quitter over 12 months.

- To compare the costs and effects of implementing a health promoting smoke-free initiative using data from Deakin Univeristy and another VIC University (Swinburne, RMIT or Latrobe).
- The number of people who quit over the 12 month period beginning at pre survey (primary outcome)
- Life years saved due to quitting (secondary outcome)
- Time saved from staff taking cigarette breaks
- Reuction of sick pay due to smoking realted illnesses

**Methodological approach:**

Quantitative research

Literature review

Use data from the pre and post survey to establish the number of quitters

Cost effectiveness analysis

Collect cost data from data collected by the DSFI team

Modelling of life years saved

Ethics approval from Deakin University

**Necessary skills / knowledge:**

Quantitative research skills & statistical techniques

Communication skills – written and oral

Interview skills

Data organization

Knowledge of statistics software package (SPSS or Stata)

Knowledge of or interest in health economics recommended

Supervisor will support student to understand economics

**Additional details:**

Project will also involve Swinburne/RMIT/Latrobe/Monash who will provide smoking data and will allow researcher to interview staff and students.

Potential travel costs can be sourced through smoke-free research funding.

**Project ID:** 2015-132

**Project title:** Qualitative evaluation of Deakin smoke-free initiative (DSFI)

**Supervisors:**

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Jenny Watts

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Patricia Ritchie

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**Project description:**

This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to be part of an innovative project using health promotion approaches to moving a work and study place to smoke-free. It is a chance to be a part of a real world health initiative creating change across Victoria.

Research question: To undertake a qualitative evaluation of Deakin Smoke-free Initiative (DSFI).

- The experience of staff and students who quit smoking due to DSFI.
- Explore factors that were influential in decision to quit
- Explore factors influential in decision not to quit
- Explore factors relevant to failed attempts to quit

**Methodological approach:**

Literature review

Use data from the pre and post survey to establish the number of quitters.

Recruitment via Deakin staff and student emails.

10-15 participants

Qualitative interviews

Ethics approval from Deakin University

**Necessary skills / knowledge:**

Qualitative research skills

Communication skills – written and oral

Interview skills

Data organization

**Project ID:** 2015-133

**Project title:** Is gender important in community-onset MRSA infections?

**Supervisors:**

Prof Catherine Bennett

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Kat Bogatyreva

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**Project description:**

The Community onset *Staphylococcus aureus* household cohort (COAH) study is a NHMRC funded longitudinal cohort study of 291 patients and their 446 household contacts with community-onset *Staphylococcus aureus* (*S.aureus*) infections that were identified via clinical specimens referred to a private pathology service (Dorevitch). This is the first of its kind of large scale longitudinal study in the world and this project is an opportunity for an honours student to contribute to the analyses and interpretation of our findings.

We are working with these data to answer a number of important research questions about the relationship between colonising *S.aureus* strains and the risk of colonisation or infection by type of staph strain. We have found different patterns of infection in males and females to those seen in hospitalised cases; we see 50% males with infection in the community, but in hospital the gender ratio for community-onset infections is 60 males : 40 females. We have looked at hospitalisation rates among our 291 cases and found that the rates are in fact higher in males than females. This study would investigate the nature of infections by gender, and the treatment histories and patient outcomes to help us understand the role of gender in community MRSA.

**Methodological approach:**

The research project will involve a review of the existing relevant epidemiological and microbiological literature internationally and an analysis of a subset of the COAH study data. STATA or SPSS will be used to explore gender differences in types, sites and treatment of infections, as well as the strain responsible for the infection, and the history of risk factors for colonisation and infection.

**Necessary skills / knowledge:**

The student will need some background in epidemiology and a good understanding of quantitative research methods and statistical analysis, preferably with skills in STATA or SPSS. Some background knowledge of infectious diseases and microbiology would be an advantage.

The supervising staff members are located at the Burwood Campus so the students should be prepared to meet regularly there. However as the data are already collected, the student may be able to work offsite.

**Additional details:**

This project is carried out in collaboration with Dorevitch Pathology, Melbourne, the Austin Hosp., Melbourne, and the PathWest Lab in the Royal Perth Hospital, Perth.

Full responsibility for oversight of the project and monitoring the student's progress and project scope will be with the supervision team at Burwood which includes the Chief investigator from COAH.

**Project ID:** 2015-134

**Project title:** Leading, Educating, Advocating for Disability: Reflections on a capacity building project for people with disability and parents – interview analysis

**Supervisors:**

Susan Balandin

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Burwood campus

Kevin Murfitt

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Burwood campus

**Project description:**

LEAD Barwon was a project funded by the Victorian Government and implemented by the Committee for Geelong. The project worked with a group of people with a disability, informal carers and family members of people with a disability, to build their capacity to speak about their personal experience of Australia's new National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). The NDIS is the largest economic and social reform in Australia since the introduction of Medicare. The LEAD Barwon project focused on increasing individuals' confidence and ability to communicate publicly. Each LEAD Barwon participant has been involved in a complex change and time in their lives as they became some of the first people to experience the NDIS. They agreed to commit to publicly sharing their journey in order to help ensure the new scheme is the best possible system for all Victorians with a disability, their carers and families. Participants learnt new skills while sharing their needs and knowledge about how the new NDIS worked in their case.

The aim of this project is to explore the experiences of some of the first users of the NDIS which by 2019 will be rolled out across Australia.

At two points over an eight month period, each of the 20 participants were each engaged in in-depth interviews that explored their experiences of using the NDIS and the impact that this new scheme had on their lives.

The research questions are:

- 1) What were participants' experiences of NDIS in the first year of its trial?
- 2) What do participants perceive as the barriers and enablers to successful use of the NDIS?

**Methodological approach:**

The method will be a content analysis of approximately 40 qualitative interviews – this data is already collected. The analysis will adopt a modified grounded theory approach involving constant comparison within and across interviews but this not a grounded theory study.

This project is unique as it is the first to evaluate the NDIS from a user's perspective. Barwon is one of the first two trial sites for the roll out of the scheme. It is anticipated that this project will have an impact on future development of the NDIS. It is likely to result in a manuscript to be submitted to an international disability journal and a presentation to be submitted to an international conference (IASSID) to be held in Melbourne in 2016.

**Necessary skills / knowledge:**

An interest in disability and successful completion of a major in People, Society and Disability

**Additional details:**

The data analysis can take place in Burwood or Geelong. Any additional data collection will take place in Geelong.

External Agency: LEAD Barwon. LEAD holds the data and the coordinator Kerry Lester – Smith will provide support and relevant information.

If needed, train travel to Geelong will be funded through Disability @ Deakin funding

**Project ID:** 2015-135

**Project title:** Leading, Educating, Advocating for Disability: Reflections on a capacity building project for people with disability and parents – questionnaire analysis

**Supervisors:**

Susan Balandin

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Burwood campus

Linda Wilson

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Burwood campus

**Project description:**

LEAD Barwon was a project funded by the Victorian Government and implemented by the Committee for Geelong. The project worked with a group of people with a disability, informal carers and family members of people with a disability, to build their capacity to speak about their personal experience of Australia's new National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). The LEAD Barwon project focused on increasing individuals' confidence and ability to communicate publicly. Each LEAD Barwon participant has been involved in a complex change and time in their lives as they became some of the first people to experience the NDIS. They agreed to commit to publicly sharing their journey and developing their leadership and advocacy capacity in order to help ensure the new scheme is the best possible system for all Victorians with a disability, their carers and families.

Participants learnt new skills while sharing their needs and knowledge about how the new NDIS worked in their case. Over the longer term, it aimed to help ensure the new scheme is the best possible system for Victorians with a disability, their carers and families. The 20 project participants completed questionnaires on their experiences and thoughts about the project. The aim of this study is explore the participant's experiences, identifying both areas of success and those requiring modification to support a plan to expand the project nationally.

The research questions are:

- 1) What were participants' experiences of the LEAD project?
- 2) How did stakeholders perceive a project like LEAD builds capacity to advocate for themselves and others when using the NDIS?

**Methodological approach:**

The method will be a content analysis of 20 qualitative questionnaires – data is already collected. This project is unique as it is the first to evaluate a program designed specifically to support and inform people using the National Disability Insurance Scheme. There may also be some opportunity to triangulate data with participants' diaries and presentations to various groups. It is anticipated that this project will result in a manuscript to be submitted to an international disability journal and a presentation to be submitted to the Journal of Intellectual and developmental Disability (JIDD).

**Necessary skills / knowledge:**

An interest in disability and successful completion of a major in People, Society and Disability

**Additional details:**

The data analysis can take place in Burwood or Geelong. Any additional data collection will take place in Geelong.

External Agency: LEAD Barwon. LEAD holds the data and the coordinator Kerry Lester – Smith will provide support and relevant information.

If needed, train travel to Geelong will be funded through Disability @ Deakin funding

**Project ID:** 2015-136

**Project title:** Cost and benefit analysis of self-report compared to measured surveys on obesity in youth

**Supervisors:**

Claudia Strugnell	claudia.strugnell@deakin.edu.au	Geelong Waterfront and Burwood
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Anne Magnus	anne.magnus@deakin.edu.au	Geelong Waterfront and Burwood

**Project description:**

This project aims to investigate the differences in obesity prevalence exist based on self-report measurements of height and weight (to calculate BMI) compared to measured height and weight among school children and adolescents. The rationale behind this project is that researchers and politicians alike are always looking for the most cost-effective way to investigate prevalence of specific health conditions in the community. It is believed that there is great advantage in undertaking the resource intensive task of directly measuring children and adolescents in the community, especially for obesity, however, this study will investigate if this is in fact true. This study will provide much needed evidence in this area and inform policy and future research practice.

**Methodological approach:**

This study will use existing (2014) data from a state-based cluster randomized control trial among Victorian children and adolescents. Given that this project uses existing data, students will be expected to be involved in the 2015 data collection rounds to gain the valuable experiences in relation to recruitment of schools and students and data collection and entry. Measurements of children (Grade 4 and Grade 6) and adolescent s(Grade 8 and Grade 10) include anthropometric (height, weight and waist) and self-reported questionnaire data (physical activity, sedentary behavior, diet and perceived quality of life. The candidate will draw on data from over 4,500 Victorian school children with an unprecedented high response rate of approximately >80%.

**Necessary skills / knowledge:**

Interested students should have basic understanding of childhood obesity (this will be developed throughout the year). In addition, the student should not be adverse to gaining detailed experience in statistical analysis.

Data collection occurs across Victoria for 10-weeks during Term 3. However, this can easily suit Geelong or Burwood based students.

**Project ID:** 2015-137

**Project title:** Dietary habits, obesity and perceived quality of life among Victorian primary school children

**Supervisors:**

Lynne Millar	lynne.millar@deakin.edu.au	Geelong Waterfront and Burwood
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**Project description:**

Adolescent literature suggests that there is a link between dietary habits and risk of depression among adolescents. There is mounting evidence from around the globe that consuming a healthy diet is associated with higher levels of well being and there is some evidence that eating an unhealthy diet is related to poorer well being. While the findings are quite robust among adolescents there is a dearth of literature from the younger age group. This study will aim to address this gap by addressing the following research question: Is there a relationship between dietary habits and well being among Victorian primary school children.

**Methodological approach:**

This study will use existing (2014) data from a state-based cluster randomized control trial among Victorian children and adolescents. Given that this project uses existing data, students will be expected to be involved in the 2015 data collection rounds to gain the valuable experiences in relation to recruitment of schools and students and data collection and entry. Measurements of children (Grade 4 and Grade 6) and adolescents (Grade 8 and Grade 10) include anthropometric (height, weight and waist) and self-reported questionnaire data (physical activity, sedentary behavior, diet and perceived quality of life). The candidate will draw on data from over 4,500 Victorian school children with an unprecedented high response rate of approximately >80%.

**Necessary skills / knowledge:**

Interested students should have basic understanding of childhood obesity (this will be developed throughout the year).

Data collection occurs across Victoria for 10-weeks during Term 3. However, this can easily suit Geelong or Burwood based students.

**Project ID:** 2015-138

**Project title:** Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) and the NDIS: how is it working?

**Supervisors:**

Susan Balandin  
TBA

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Burwood campus

**Project description:**

The Barwon area is one of the first trial sites for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) yet little is known about how people with little or no functional speech who use or need augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) are using the scheme. The NDIS represents a major social and economic reform in Australia. Under the scheme, people with disability and their families can choose the services that they require and can set goals and develop plans to participate in communities of their choice. To date there has been some anecdotal criticism that the process is not without difficulties and choice is not easy for those inexperienced in choosing. People with little or no functional speech are at risk in any activity that requires effective communication skills- thus it is important to know how this group experiences the NDIS and the barriers and enablers that they have experienced to developing a satisfactory plan.

The aim of this project is to explore the experiences of people who use AAC and their family members or supporters in developing plans and reaching their goals.

**Methodological approach:**

A maximum of 10 people who use AAC or family members/support personnel will be invited to participate in individual in-depth interviews to discuss their experiences of developing plans and setting goals under the NDIS.

A narrative methodology will be used to analyse the interviews. Each participant will bring his/her own story which will contribute to an overarching story of the barriers and enablers to a successful NDIS experience for people who use or need AAC.

The student will be required to conduct and transcribe the in-depth interviews, analyse the transcripts and develop a discussion based on the results that includes an overarching story with support from Balandin. All participants will be able to review their transcripts and may be asked to participate in a second interview or phone follow up if it is necessary to seek further clarification. Data will be collected and analysed concurrently.

This project is unique as it is the first to evaluate the NDIS with a specific focus on AAC. Barwon is one of the first two trial sites for the roll out of the scheme. It is anticipated that this project will have an impact on future development of the NDIS and on those who support people who use AAC as well as AAC users themselves. It is likely to result in a manuscript to be submitted to an international disability journal and a presentation to be submitted to an international conference (IASSID) to be held in Melbourne in 2016.

**Necessary skills / knowledge:**

An interest in disability with a particular focus on communication and some knowledge of AAC as well as successful completion of a major in People, Society and Disability.

The data analysis can take place in Burwood or Geelong, recruitment is likely to be in the Barwon area. Train travel to Geelong if needed will be funded through Disability @ Deakin funding.

It is likely that there will be a secondary supervisor, possibly from outside Deakin and likely to be a speech pathologist working in the area of AAC.

Potential student already in discussion with supervisors