



Annual Report 2014

Research and engagement highlights
from the Melbourne Social Equity Institute

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Designed and edited by Gary Dickson.

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“The law, in its majestic equality, forbids the rich as well as the poor to sleep under bridges, to beg in the streets, and to steal bread.”

— Anatole France, *The Red Lily*, 1894

Letter from the Director

The past year has been a busy one. Some of the highlights include the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the University and major disability service provider Scope Victoria; the completion of a report on reducing seclusion and restraint in the mental health sector for the National Mental Health Commission; the establishment of the Institute's Doctoral Academy and the co-ordination of a lecture series for asylum seekers and refugees.

Since June 2012, the Institute has seed funded 30 projects, most of which have gone on to attract further external funding. In this Report you'll read about some of these projects, ranging from exploring emotional recovery after disasters to the impact of disability on employment and education in Cambodia.

Our inaugural conference, held in February 2014, was a great success in bringing together researchers, policymakers and practitioners from a range of disciplines to engage with our theme: 'Imagining Social Equity'. Presentations explored legal capacity for persons with disabilities, Indigenous issues, equity in education, the settlement needs of refugees and affordable housing. Many connections were made and an agenda developed for further interdisciplinary research projects.

It has been a pleasure working with the members of the Directorate, Reference Group and Advisory Board as well as the theme leaders to consolidate MSEI's place in the Melbourne Research Institute portfolio. Although working across Schools and Faculties, the Institute is hosted by the Melbourne Graduate School of Education and I would like to thank in particular the Dean of MGSE, Professor Field Rickards, for his support and excellent advice throughout the year.

I hope you enjoy reading about the highlights of our work throughout 2014.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bernadette McSherry". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Professor Bernadette McSherry
Foundation Director



About the Melbourne Social Equity Institute

The Melbourne Social Equity Institute (MSEI) supports interdisciplinary research on social equity issues across the full spectrum of social life including health, law, education, housing, work and transport. MSEI brings together researchers from across the University of Melbourne to identify unjust or unfair practices that lead to social inequity and work towards finding ways to ameliorate disadvantage.

MSEI favours co-designing research in partnership with members of communities, service providers, governments and other organisations at every stage of a project. This approach gives a better understanding of the needs of individuals experiencing disadvantage and how best to develop practical methods for addressing those needs.

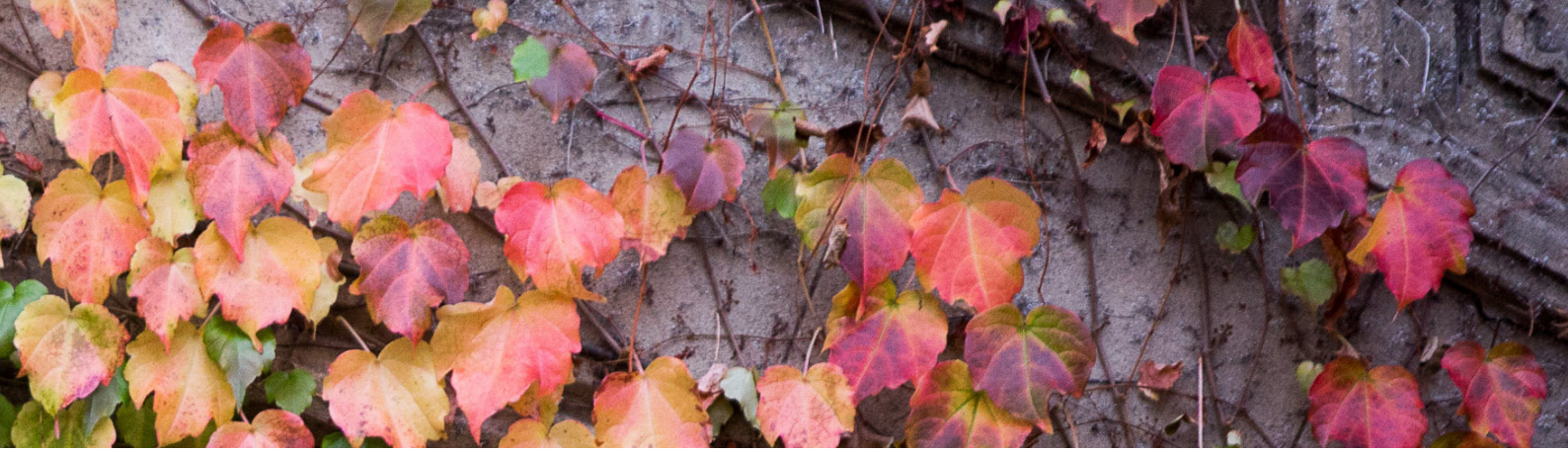
Research is currently linked to four themes:

- Place Matters
- Citizenship and Diversity
- Human Rights
- Social Policy Across the Life Course.

Each theme has an academic leader who is committed to achieving real change in his or her field.

Intersecting with each of these research themes are key sections of the population, such as people with disabilities, Indigenous people, children, asylum seekers and migrants, where inequity can be particularly prevalent.

Part of MSEI's role is to facilitate cross-Faculty communication and support interdisciplinary work through seed grants, networking opportunities and training workshops for innovative methodologies.



Directorate

Professor Bernadette McSherry
Foundation Director

Professor Julie McLeod
Deputy Director

Charlene Edwards
Executive Officer

Kathleen Patterson
Project Co-ordinator

Gary Dickson
Marketing, Communications and Events



Reference Group

The reference group is comprised of academics with demonstrated strengths in social equity research from across the University. The group act as champions of MSEI and its research as well as providing input on matters of management and strategic focus. Professor Bernadette McSherry, director of MSEI, is the chair. As well as the directorate and theme leaders, the following researchers make up the reference group:

Dr John Furler, General Practice, Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences

Associate Professor Louise Harms, Department of Social Work

Professor Guyonne Kalb, Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research

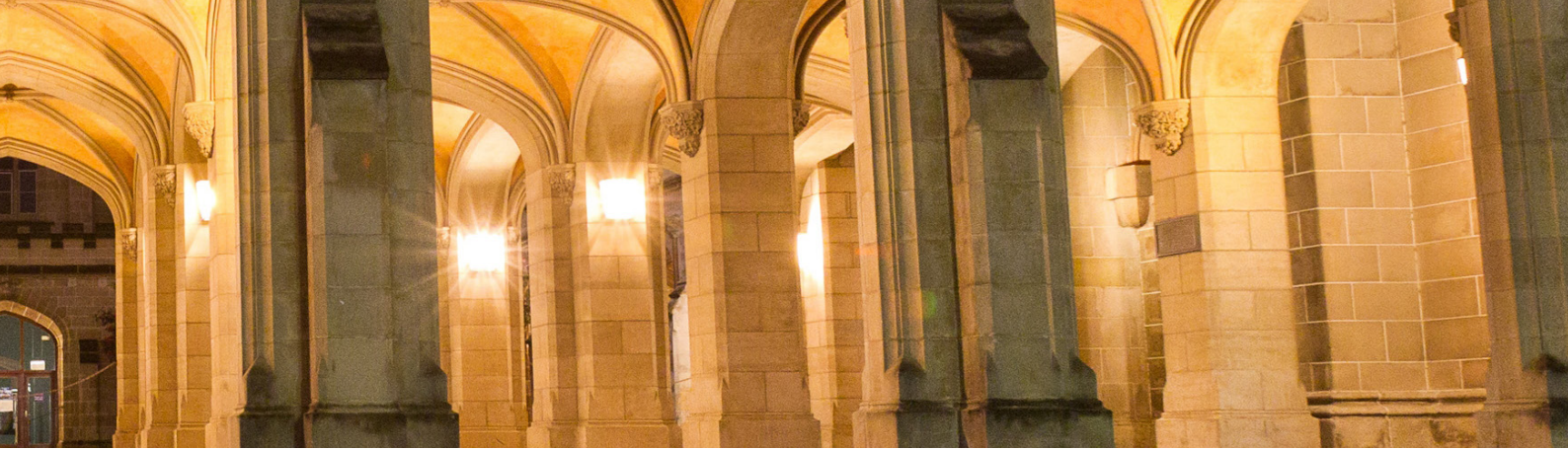
Professor Katrina Skewes-McFerran, Melbourne Conservatorium of Music

Professor Fazal Rizvi, Melbourne Graduate School of Education

Professor Helen Sullivan, Melbourne School of Government

Professor Ian Williamson, Melbourne Business School

Dr Sara Wills, Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Faculty of Arts.



Advisory Board

The advisory board is made up of leaders in the business and community sectors and provides strategic guidance to ensure that research supported by MSEI is highly relevant and aligned with important, contemporary social issues. The advisory board also increases MSEI's opportunities to disseminate research and to engage with like-minded organisations with the aim of making societies fairer. The advisory board is made up of:

Jan Owen AM (Chair), CEO, Foundation for Young Australians

Durkhanai Ayubi, Senior Policy Analyst, Australian Communications and Media Authority and Assistant Editor, Sultana's Dream

Robin Banks, Anti-Discrimination Commissioner (Tasmania)

Michael Black AC QC, former Chief Justice of the Federal Court of Australia

Hugh Evans, Co-founder and CEO, Global Poverty Project

Roz Hansen, former Chair, Ministerial Advisory Committee for the Metropolitan Planning Strategy

Michael Traill AM, Executive Director, Social Ventures Australia.



Themes and Leaders

Place Matters

Led by Professor Carolyn Whitzman

This theme examines how spatial access to public goods affects social equity. In order to create the best chances for individual and community wellbeing, a healthy community needs affordable housing, access to employment, transport and education, open space and more.

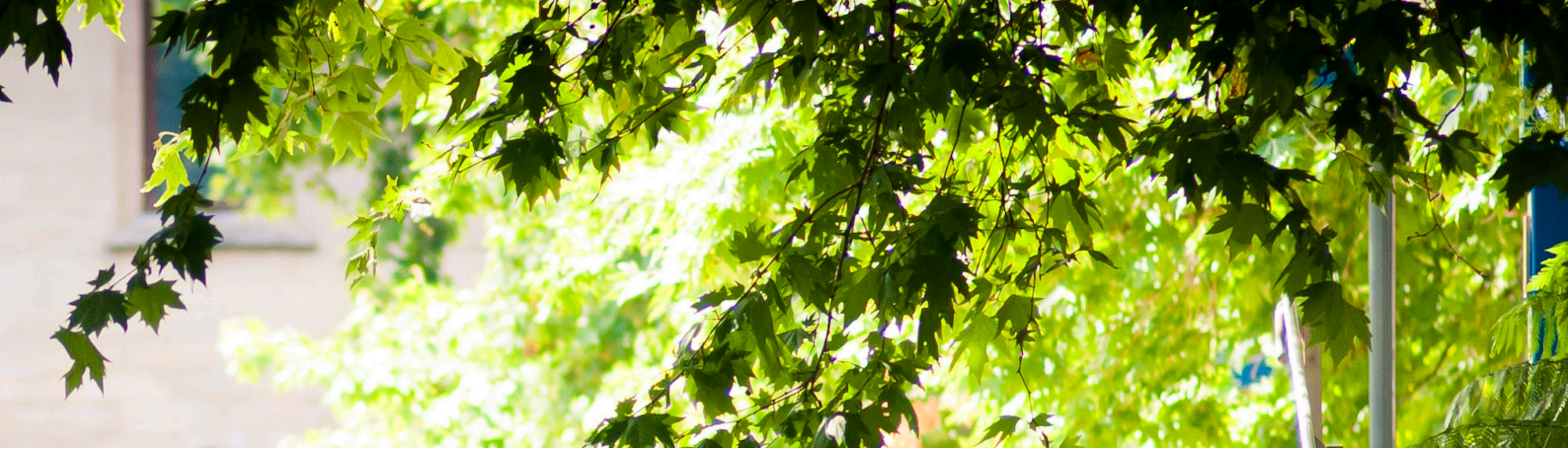
Professor Whitzman's passion for social justice began when she was a community activist for affordable housing in Montreal. From 1989 to 1999, she worked for the City of Toronto on healthy city initiatives, including an integrated local government policy to prevent violence, which led to an international reputation in this field. She is an urban planner in the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning.

Citizenship and Diversity

Led by Associate Professor Deborah Warr

The Citizenship and Diversity theme examines issues of cultural identity, social diversity, community, migration and legal pluralism. This theme aims to foster research to understand processes contributing to socio-economic and cultural exclusion, marginalisation and disenfranchisement.

Associate Professor Warr is a sociologist and Deputy Unit Head at the McCaughey VicHealth Community Wellbeing Unit. Her research has explored processes of social capital, locational disadvantage, effective community-based initiatives that address the social determinants of health and the experiences of migrant background populations.



Human Rights

Led by Professor John Tobin

In contemporary discussions about justice, the discourses of human rights and social equity are common. This can mask enduring dilemmas about the meanings of equity, rights and the relations between them. Are both concepts utopian, or do they offer a vision by which to navigate scarce resources and political realism?

Professor Tobin researches and teaches human rights law in the Melbourne Law School. His special interest is in children's rights, economic and social rights. He is currently working on an Australian Research Council Discovery Project with Professor Philip Alston (New York University) titled 'Children's Rights: From Theory to Practice'.

Social Policy Across the Life Course

Led by Associate Professor Helen Dickinson

This theme examines the impact of governmental action on the lives of individuals and their communities. It tries to assess the impact of policy interventions across the life course in order to develop a broader and deeper understanding of the interconnections.

Associate Professor Helen Dickinson is a teacher and researcher in the Melbourne School of Government. Her research focuses on collaboration and leadership in public services and priority setting and decision making in resource allocation. She co-edits the Australian Journal of Public Administration and the Journal of Health Organization and Management.

Seed-funded Research Projects

These projects were funded in 2013 and commenced work in 2014.

‘Strengthening the Victorian Aboriginal community’s response to methamphetamine use’

Led by Prof Kerry Arabena, Onemda VicHealth Koori Health Unit, with the Centre for Health and Society, Melbourne Law School and Youth Research Centre

‘Poverty, family chronic-stress and children’s development’

Led by Dr Francisco Azpitarte, Melbourne Institute of Applied Economics and Social Research, with the School of Social and Political Science and the Melbourne School of Psychological Sciences

‘Reconceptualising and supporting disaster recovery as growth: informed by people affected by the Black Saturday bushfires’

Led by A/Prof Louise Harms, Department of Social Work, with the Melbourne Medical School, Victorian College of the Arts and Computing and Information Systems

‘The bounce project: peer support training for young people leaving out of home care, to improve social inclusion, mental health and wellbeing’

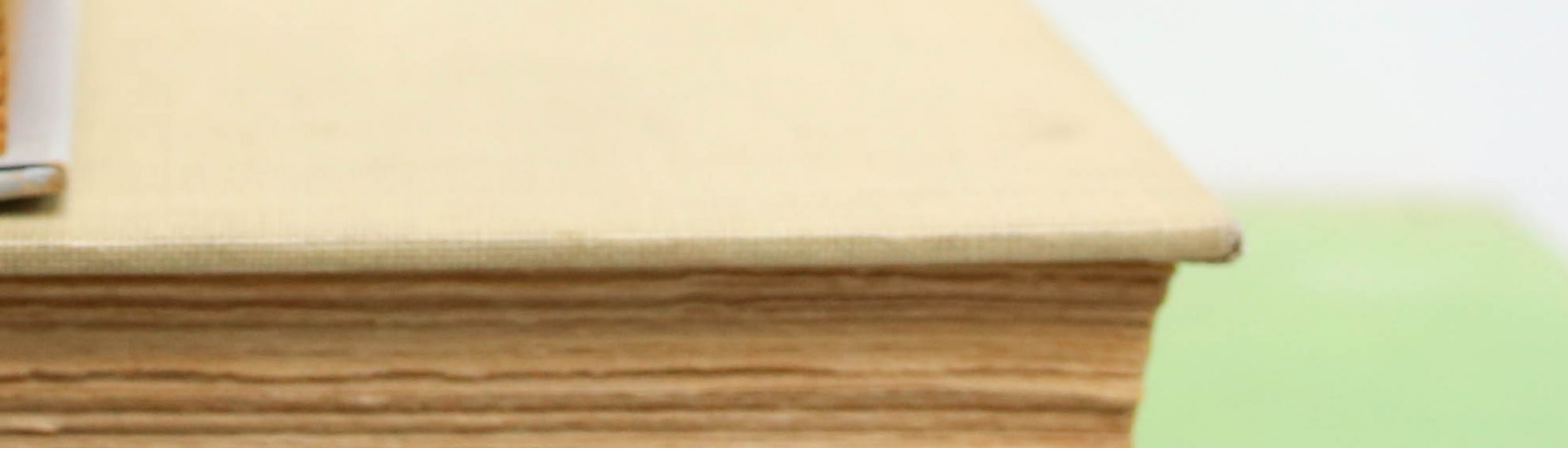
Led by Prof Helen Herrman, Centre for Youth Mental Health, with the Melbourne Graduate School of Education, Department of Social Work and Department of Psychiatry

‘Enabling pluralism: eliminating educational inequity in languages provision in Victorian schools’

Led by Prof John Hajek, School of Languages and Linguistics, with the Melbourne Graduate School of Education

‘Getting in touch: language and digital inclusion in Australian Indigenous communities’

Led by A/Prof Rachel Nordlinger, Research Unit for Indigenous Language, with Computing and Information Systems



‘Violence prevention and respectful relationships education in early childhood’
Led by Dr Kylie Smith, Youth Research Centre with the Department of Social work and General Practice

‘Impact and sustainability of creative social enterprises’
Led by Dr Anthony White, School of Culture and Communication, with the Department of Management and Marketing

Commissioned Research Projects

‘Supporting outreach, recruitment and retention of students from refugee backgrounds’
Led by Dr Karen Block, Jack Brockhoff Child Health and Wellbeing, with the Melbourne Graduate School of Education and the Youth Research Centre

‘Sharing this Place: a systematic review of three Faculties within the University of Melbourne to identify and establish their opportunities for engagement with future and current Indigenous Australia students’
Led by Dr Mark McMillan, Melbourne Law School, with the Faculty of Arts and the Melbourne Graduate School of Education

‘Disability and poverty in Cambodia’
Led by Prof Barbara McPake, Nossal Institute for Global Health, with the Faculty of Business and Economics

‘Understanding elder abuse: definitions, evidence and interventions’
Led by A/Prof Briony Dow, National Ageing Research Institute

‘Asylum seekers: policy and public attitudes’
Led by A/Prof Margaret Simons, Centre for Advancing Journalism, with the School of Psychological Sciences, Victorian College of the Arts and the Melbourne Law School.



Rhonda Abotomey (left) and Associate Professor Louise Harms. Photo: Peter Casamento.

Feature Project: Supporting Disaster Recovery as Growth

After the Black Saturday bushfires, support services focused on local communities, particularly on those experiencing post-traumatic stress and other adjustment difficulties.

Rhonda Abotomey lost her brother, sister-in-law and nephew in the Gippsland fires. She was left to organise funerals, participate in the Royal Commission and judicial investigations.

“It has gone on for years,” she says.

She started writing in response to her trauma. Her words, poetry, and bushfire recovery initiative *Seeds of Compassion Day* have been included in the Melbourne Museum Black Saturday Bushfire collection.

“All of a sudden at my kitchen table the words just started flowing, and I have been writing poetry ever since.”

This type of response is known as post-traumatic growth, and a project led by Associate Professor Louise Harms is examining it. Ms Abotomey is a researcher on the project.

“Post-traumatic growth recognises that people commonly report that trauma has also been positively transformative – of their sense of self, relationships with others, appreciation of life, new opportunities and spiritual growth,” Associate Professor Harms said.

“The project seeks to advance practical and theoretical understandings of disaster-affected people’s trauma response experiences.”

For Ms Abotomey, growth accompanies the stress of a traumatic event. She says it is important to create a safe space to voice the positives that a person may unexpectedly experience.

“Post-traumatic growth is a light to be spoken about, shared, celebrated and promoted in an otherwise dark and difficult space.”

Interview conducted by Katherine Smith for Voice.



Postgraduate Students

Jaz Dawson

'From the Convention to the courts: sexual orientation-based refugee law in Australia'

A/Prof Michelle Foster, Melbourne Law School and

Dr Lauren Rosewarne, School of Social and Political Sciences

Liz Gill-Atkinson

'How do women with disability in the Philippines understand and experience participatory research practice?'

Dr Cathy Vaughan, Gender and Women's Health Unit and

Prof Marilys Guillemin, Centre for Health Equity

Kelly Hutchinson

'Improving outcomes: digital social innovation and public policy'

Prof Helen Sullivan, Melbourne School of Government and

Dr Sarah Bice, Melbourne School of Government

Lauren Kosta

'Parenting after a disaster: experiences since Black Saturday'

A/Prof Louise Harms, Department of Social Work,

A/Prof Lisa Gibbs, Melbourne School of Population and Global Health and

Dr David Rose, Department of Social Work

Katie Lamb

'Embedding the voices of children and young people in the development of programs for violent fathers'

Prof Cathy Humphreys, Department of Social Work

Kelvin Lau

'Understanding emotional distress and help-seeking in young people from a migrant background in Australia using photo-elicitation interviews'

Dr Victoria Palmer, General Practice



Gemma McKibbin

'Sexually abusive behaviour by young people: supporting Victoria's prevention response'

Prof Cathy Humphreys, Department of Social Work and
Dr Bridget Hamilton, School of Nursing

Melissa Murphy

'Linking in and grooving out: The use of music to address social connectedness for young people with disability transitioning between school and adult services'

Prof Katrina Skewes-McFerran, National Music Therapy Research Unit and
Dr Nick Hagiliassis, Scope Victoria

Naomi Pfitzner

'Engaging new fathers: learning from *Baby Makes 3*'

Prof Kelsey Hegarty, General Practice and
Prof Cathy Humphreys, Department of Social Work

Alicia Yon

'Enabling social justice: an integrated local planning approach to addressing the disability-gender violence nexus'

Prof Carolyn Whitzman, Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning and
Dr Cathy Vaughan, Gender and Women's Health Unit



Doctoral Academy

In 2014 MSEI launched a doctoral academy. PhD students from across the University who are looking at issues of social equity were invited to join the group. In the academy students were supported through peer-learning, mentoring from experienced academics, methodological workshops, developing skills including talking to media and working in partnership with community organisations. Members of the academy have competitive access to a small pool of money intended to enhance students' research activities.

Members of the first group came from across the University and worked on projects as varied as mental health and resilience among migrants, participatory practice in museums and intercultural dialogue and the impact of public rental housing policy on low income households in Malaysia.

Members of the 2014 academy produced a working paper collection titled *'Researching for Social Change: Ethics, Methodologies and Responsibility'*. The collection explores the relationships between participants and researchers, political influences on social change and the place and spatial dimensions of engagement.

The collection was edited by Cherry Hense, Gemma McKibbin, Caroline Phillips and Sophie Rudolph, with help from MSEI's deputy director Professor Julie McLeod.

The cover image, *'Untitled Red'*, is featured at the top of this page and was created and photographed by academy member Caroline Phillips.

Researching for Social Change is available for free on MSEI's website.



Select Publications

MSEI, its related researchers and seed-funded projects had 82 publications in 2014. A select few are indicated below.

Cox S M., Drew S., Guillemin M., Howell C., Warr D., Waycott J. (2014) *Guidelines for Ethical Visual Research Methods*. Melbourne: University of Melbourne

McLeod J. (2014) 'Gender and Education', in *Encyclopedia of Educational Theory and Philosophy* vol 1, pp. 347-350

McSherry B. (2014) *Managing Fear: The Law and Ethics of Preventive Detention and Risk Assessment*. New York: Routledge

Melbourne Social Equity Institute, *Seclusion and Restraint Report*, Prepared for the National Mental Health Commission (August 2014). Available from: <http://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/our-work/national-seclusion-and-restraint-project/our-position-paper-a-case-for-change.aspx>

Tobin J. (2014) 'To Prohibit or Permit: What is the (Human) Rights Response to Practice of International Commercial Surrogacy?' in *International and Comparative Law Quarterly* vol 63, pp. 317-352

Vaughan C., White N., Keogh L., Tobin J., Bayly C., Ha B. (2014) *Listening to North Yarra Communities About Female Genital Cutting: A Community-based Research Project to Generate Evidence to Inform Health Promotion and Clinical Practice*. Melbourne: University of Melbourne

Ftanou M., Williamson M., Machlin A., Warr D., Christo J., Castan L., Harris M., Bassilios B., and Pirkis J. (2014), 'Evaluating the Better Access Initiative: What do Consumers Have to Say?' in *Australian Social Work* vol 67, pp 162-178.

Whitzman C., Gleeson B., and Sheko A. (Eds.,) (2014) *Melbourne: What Next? A Discussion on Creating a Better Future for Melbourne*. Melbourne: University of Melbourne

Partnerships

Key to MSEI's mission is engaging with organisations, communities and individuals in order to co-design research. This leads to a thorough understanding of the complex situations and systems that lead to inequity.

In 2014 a partnership was formalised between the University of Melbourne and Scope Victoria. Jointly the partners will strive to improve the lives of individuals with disabilities through research and programs that empower them.

MSEI is represented on the University partnership steering committees of the Brotherhood of St Laurence, The Smith Family and the Department of Health (North and West Metro Region) and Human Services (North).

Alongside formal partnerships MSEI has informal relationships with a number of organisations.

A new relationship with Arts Access Victoria and the City of Melbourne saw MSEI co-host the Beyond Access symposium looking at disability and social inclusion through arts practice.

The Asylum Seeker Resource Centre and Foundation House provided essential advice on the Lecture Series for Asylum Seekers.

MSEI has also been engaging with organisations with a focus on ageing research, including the National Ageing Research Institute and the Council of the Ageing.





Research Initiatives

In mid-2013, together with the three other research institutes, MSEI held a forum to understand the scope of research into issues of disability that was underway at the University. Participants at the forum expressed a desire for more focus on different models of disability research, including social and rights-based approaches, stronger links to disabled persons organisations and, crucially, to include people with disabilities in the research projects.

The Hallmark Disability Research Initiative emerged from the conversations of this session. Hallmark Initiatives, created by Melbourne Research, are designed to support focused research communities to engage in interdisciplinary work and promote collaboration with external partners.

This Initiative is hosted by the Melbourne Law School. Its academic convenor is Dr Anna Arstein-Kerslake, who ensures that research and advocacy is responsive to the needs of the community. It will be led by a professorial fellow jointly appointed between the Faculty of Arts and Scope Victoria, and guided by a steering group of academics, members of disabled persons organisations and people with lived experience of disability.

Dr Arstein-Kerslake also leads the Disability Human Rights Clinic, a subject available to Juris Doctorate students in the Melbourne Law School. Students enrolled undertake projects that analyse and report on rights violations experienced by people with disabilities.

The Initiative, clinic and partnership with Scope Victoria were launched at a public event in October 2014. A professorial fellow will be appointed in 2015.



Events

In 2014 MSEI focused on hosting and supporting events designed to ensure supported research was communicated to a broad audience.

MSEI hosted lectures looking at theoretical models for policy development, the discursive construction of philanthropists as ethical leaders and the changing roles of government and short-term credit lenders in the age of austerity. In some cases significant media attention resulted from these events, as was the case of Professor Alasdair Roberts, who spoke on the way capitalist societies have learned to control and dispel dissent.

In September MSEI co-hosted the Millsom Henry-Waring Memorial Lecture. Dr Henry-Waring was a sociologist and black feminist whose work spanned issues of visibility, difference, migration and new technology. She was involved with MSEI in its early stages. Professor Ann Phoenix (University of London), Dr Henry-Waring's PhD supervisor, spoke to topics that reflected her work – intersectionality, family and the narratives constructed by children on the experience of living with poverty and migration. The lecture was co-hosted with the Faculty of Arts.

Training and capacity-building at the University were a big focus. MSEI supported workshops on the ethical frontiers of visual methodologies, the challenges of asylum seeker and refugee research and finding new ways to engage men in health programs and policy.

MSEI also tried to find new ways to showcase its research. The 'New News' festival, held by the Centre for Advancing Journalism at the Wheeler Centre, included a co-hosted session on the ways that Indigenous Australians use social media for political activism and social inclusion.

As part of the engagement work resulting from a seed-funded project, researcher Caroline Phillips hosted a bus tour of sites of feminist artistic importance around Melbourne. The tour was held on International Women's Day in March.

In all MSEI supported 49 events in 2014, with an estimated 4,000 attendees.

Imagining Social Equity

MSEI's inaugural conference 'Imagining Social Equity' was held between February 28 and March 1. Preceding it, on February 27, MSEI held a festival of free events for the Carlton and Footscray communities.

Partnering with La Mama and the Footscray Community Arts Centre MSEI posed the question: 'what does social equity mean to you?'. Featuring break-dancing, storytelling, discussions of art in the community and comedy, this two-site event challenged attendees to think about the role of performance in achieving social justice.

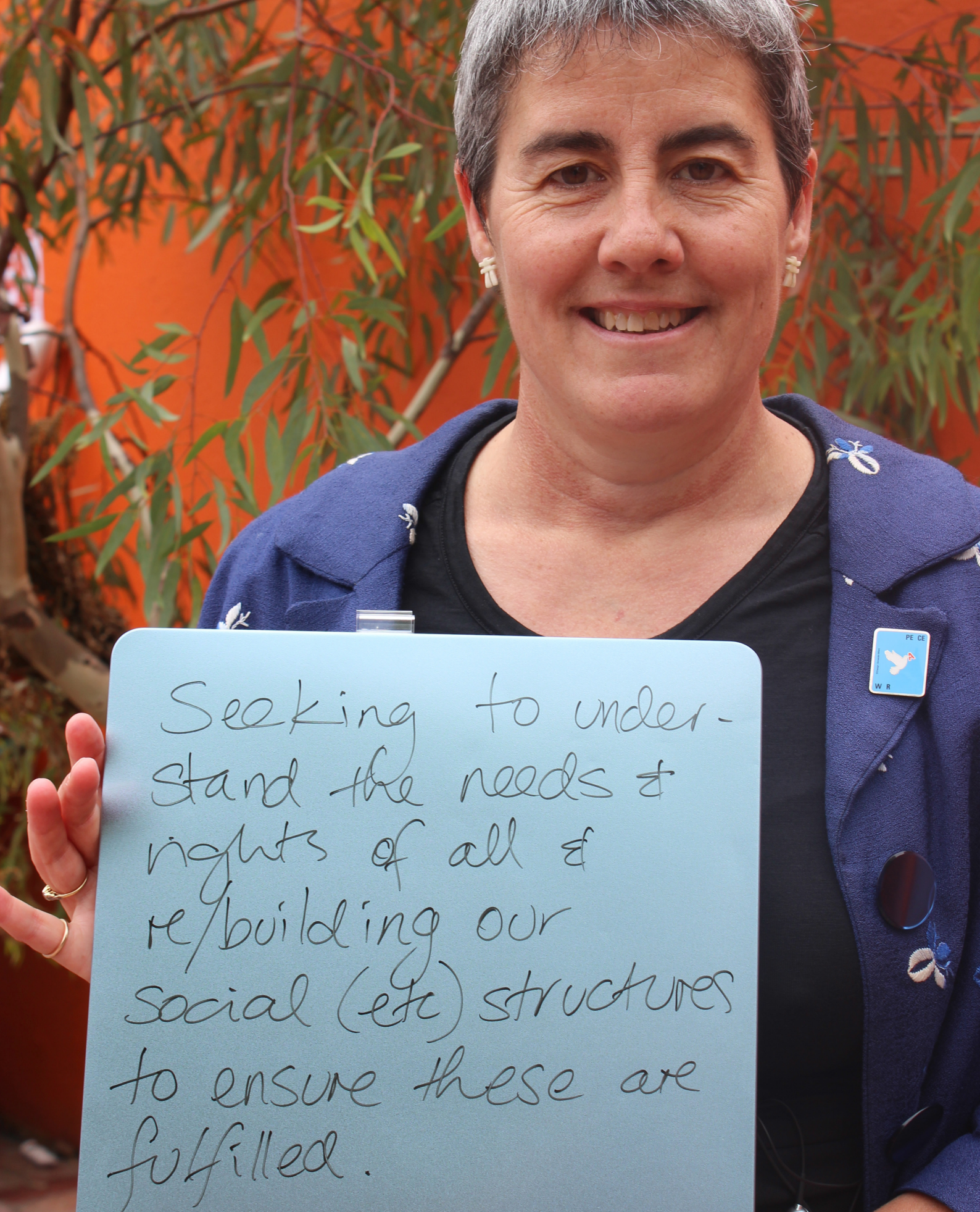
With Museo Italiano – Co.As.It MSEI organised an exhibition looking at migration, feminism and language in art. Featuring Filomena Coppola, Laurene Dietrich and Kate Just, 'Mother Tongue' ran for eight weeks and asked what the loss of a generation of migrants means for cultural memory.

Broadcaster and comedian Corinne Grant hosted the opening night debate 'Equality: Is it Fair?'. The two teams provoked and entertained with stories of asylum, feminism and, unexpectedly, scat.

The conference was held at the Melbourne Cricket Ground and was attended by 170 academics, practitioners and policymakers. Concurrent sessions looked at inequity arising in disability, education, law, gender and more.

Keynote speakers:

- Professor Kerry Arabena, Director of the Onemda VicHealth Koori Health Unit;
- Professor Claudio Grossman, Chair of the UN Committee against Torture;
- Professor Kathleen Lynch, Head of the University College Dublin School of Social Justice; and
- Professor Dame Sally Macintyre, director of the Institute of Health and Wellbeing, University of Glasgow.



Seeking to understand the needs & rights of all & re/building our social (etc) structures to ensure these are fulfilled.

Tasmanian Anti-Discrimination Commissioner Robin Banks responding to our question 'what does social equity mean to you?'. Photo: Kate O'Hara



Lecture Series for Asylum Seekers

Late in 2014 MSEI was involved in co-ordinating a free lecture series for asylum seekers and refugees living in Melbourne. At the time there were many thousands on visas that prevented them from work or study and it was recognised that this could have a potentially negative impact on mental health and social connectedness.

At its peak over 40 asylum seekers and refugees attended the lectures from diverse backgrounds – east African, Iranian, south Asian communities were well represented.

The lectures were held on Monday nights through October and November and each focused on an area of strength at the University. Topics included human rights, social justice through education, Indigenous history, resilience and wellbeing and the social determinants of health.

Each session was catered for by the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre.

The series was jointly organised with the Researchers for Asylum Seekers (RAS) network, Melbourne Refugee Studies Program and Melbourne Law School. Students enrolled in the Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) course at the Melbourne Graduate School of Education supported the series by reviewing course materials and facilitating discussions between participants of varying English language proficiency.

Funding has been secured to continue the lecture series in 2015.



Future Melbourne Network

The Future Melbourne Network involves people who share a passion for ensuring Melbourne remains a great city. The Network wants Melbourne to be a world-class, green, safe, friendly, socially inclusive and economically successful city for all its citizens.

Founding members of the Future Melbourne Network include Place Matters theme leader Professor Carolyn Whitzman and advisory board member Professor Roz Hansen. Together with the Melbourne Sustainable Society Institute MSEI provided financial and logistical support for the Network in its first year.

In 2014 the Network ran a public seminar series entitled 'Creating a Better Future for Melbourne'. This series focused on five topics for discussion and thought provoking conversations on how to plan for Melbourne's future, including supporting jobs and housing, climate and design, transport and plan implementation.

Seminars were held at Deakin Edge and were all at full capacity. Speakers included the Lord Mayor of Melbourne Robert Doyle, Major Brendan Nottle of the Salvation Army and Director of the Brotherhood of St Laurence Tony Nicholson. Editor of The Age's 'The Zone' column Michael Short hosted each seminar.

Following the seminar series a free eBook was produced with contributions from each speaker including peer-reviewed academic pieces. The eBook, *Melbourne: What's Next?*, has been downloaded over 5,000 times and is available on the Melbourne Sustainable Society Institute website.

Financial Statement

Income

Balance brought forward	\$13,167
Funds from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)	\$900,000
Space charges contribution	\$30,000
External grants (NMHC, ARC, VicHealth, ACU)	\$295,732
Philanthropic donations	\$6,500
Total Income	\$1,245,399

Expenditure

Directorate staff salaries	\$387,902
Research staff salaries	\$176,437
Research allowances	\$30,000
Externally-funded research project costs	\$302,232
Operating expenses	\$31,745
Projects funded	\$190,034
PhD student awards	\$30,000
Post-doctoral awards	\$50,000
Visitors	\$10,000
Space charge	\$30,000
Total Expenditure	\$1,238,350
Surplus	\$7,049



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