THE UNIVERSITY OF
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MELBOURNE
SOCIAL EQUITY
INSTITUTE

Annual Report 2015

Research and engagement highlights
from the Melbourne Social Equity Institute

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Letter from the Director

In 2015, the Melbourne Social Equity Institute underwent a review of its first three years in operation. The review was conducted by a panel of three senior members of the University and one eminent person from the community.

It was very gratifying to be informed by the panel that MSEI has made a significant contribution to fostering interdisciplinary research that addresses important societal issues and that it has established itself as an important element in the University's research agenda.

As MSEI now prepares its agenda for future research directions, it is timely to take stock of some of the key interdisciplinary research projects supported by MSEI in 2015.

Six projects were seed funded following a peer-review selection process. Three other projects were co-funded with the University's Hallmark Disability Research Initiative. MSEI also helped develop the Melbourne Research Alliance to End Violence Against Women and their Children. This draws together researchers from a range of disciplines to work on projects which will strengthen the evidence-base for prevention and intervention strategies and programmes.

MSEI welcomed a number of new graduate students into its Doctoral Academy and awarded four stipends to postdoctoral researchers to free up their time to concentrate on developing research publications.

As always, it has been a pleasure working with the members of the directorate, reference group and advisory board as well as the MSEI theme leaders. A special thank you to Kelly Hutchinson who filled in for MSEI Executive Officer, Charlene Edwards, during her maternity leave.

Last but not least, in June, MSEI moved into its new premises at 201 Grattan Street. Decorated with artwork from the University's Cunningham Dax Art Collection, this venue provides a well set out and welcoming space for the directorate to share with its visitors, researchers and colleagues.

I hope you enjoy reading about MSEI's work throughout 2015.

Bernadette McSherry

Professor Bernadette McSherry
Foundation Director

◄ Professor Bernadette McSherry, Foundation Director of the Melbourne Social Equity Institute, with Toby the social equity dog. Picture: Lliam Murphy

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.

Research is currently linked to four themes: Place Matters; Citizenship and Diversity; Human Rights; and Social Policy Across the Life Course.

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

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 methods for addressing those needs.

MSEI is staffed by a small directorate who co-ordinate research and engagement activities. In 2015 the directorate were:

Professor Bernadette McSherry
Foundation Director

Professor Julie McLeod
Deputy Director

Charlene Edwards
Executive Officer

Kelly Hutchinson
Acting Executive Officer (January - June)

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. Members of 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 is the chair. As well as the directorate and theme leaders, the following researchers make up the reference group:

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

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

Associate Professor Sara Wills, Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences

Advisory Board

The advisory board is made up of leaders in the business 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, Restaurateur, Assistant Editor, Sultana's Dream and former Senior Policy Analyst, Australian Communications and Media Authority

Robin Banks, Anti-Discrimination Commissioner, Equal Opportunity Tasmania

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

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

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

Michael Traill AM, Executive Director, Social Ventures Australia

Research 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 health 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 economic and social rights, as well as the rights of children. 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 focusses 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.

Research Projects

'A novel cure: the health and well-being outcomes of creative practices in ageing'
Led by Dr Victoria Palmer, General Practice, with the School of Culture
and Communication, Medical Research Unit, Department of Anatomy and
Neurosciences and Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health

'Citizens at work: an investigation of the work of giving and getting welfare'
Led by Prof Shelley Mallett, School of Political and Social Sciences, with
Melbourne Graduate School of Education and Melbourne School of Population
and Global Health

'Creating a digital platform for capturing children's and adolescents' views of
contemporary Australian childhood from the ground up'
Led by Dr Sarah Wise, Department of Social Work, with the Melbourne
Graduate School of Education, Department of Paediatrics, the Melbourne Law
School, Melbourne School of Population and Global Health, Department of
Mathematics and Statistics and eScholarship Research Centre

'Routes to the past: exploring the identity and well-being of care leavers
through genealogical lifestory work'
Led by Prof Cathy Humphreys, Department of Social Work, with the School of
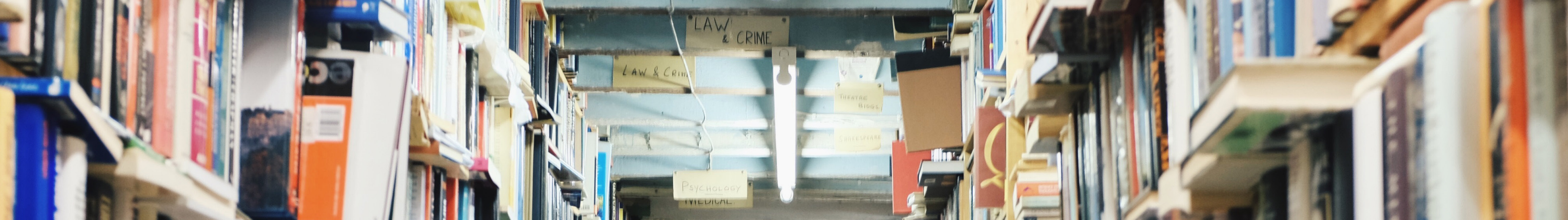Historical and Philosophical Studies and the eScholarship Research Centre

'Building a set of cultural and ethical protocols around utilising theatre and
performance to raise awareness of HIV, and particularly PrEP'
Led by Dr Alyson Campbell, School of Performing Arts, with the Wilin Centre
for Indigenous Arts and Cultural Development and the Doherty Institute for
Infection and Immunity

'Who cares?: the invisibility of migrant women in domestic work in Melbourne'
Led by A/Prof Nana Oishi, Asia Institute, with the Victorian Immigration and
Refugee Women's Coalition and Australia for UNHCR

'What's making a difference?: comparative and cross-cultural investigation of
gender equity policies and school-based programs'
Led by Prof Julie McLeod, Melbourne Graduate School of Education, with the
Gender and Women's Health Unit

▶ Researcher Professor Louise Harms launching resources to encourage post-traumatic
growth following natural disasters. Picture: Richard Timbury

Externally-funded Project

'Unfitness to plead and indefinite detention of persons with cognitive impairments: addressing the legal barriers and creating appropriate alternative supports in the community'
Led by Prof Bernadette McSherry, Melbourne Social Equity Institute, with Onemda VicHealth Koori Health Group, Disability Research Initiative, North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency, Intellectual Disability Rights Service, Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service

This aim of this project is to develop practical and legal solutions to the problem of people with cognitive disabilities, including Indigenous people with cognitive disabilities, being found "unfit to plead" and subjected to indefinite detention in Australia.

Externally-funded Consultancy

In June 2015 Professor Bernadette McSherry was appointed by the Victorian Minister for Corrections, the Hon Wade Noonan MP, to an expert review panel alongside former Supreme Court Justice David Harper and retired forensic psychiatrist Professor Paul Mullen. The panel reviewed the current post-sentence detention and supervision scheme for sex offenders who offend against adult victims and delivered its report to the Minister in November.

Visiting Fellows

Professor Lisa Waddington
European Disability Forum Chair in European Disability Law, Maastricht University (Netherlands)

Associate Professor Stefan Sjöström
Department of Social Work, Umeå University (Sweden)

Professor Peter Blanck
Chairman, Burton Blatt Institute, Syracuse University (United States)

Professor Gerard Quinn
Director, Centre for Disability Law and Policy, National University of Ireland Galway (Ireland)

Associate Professor Savitri Taylor
La Trobe Law School, La Trobe University (Australia)

Disability Research Initiative

In 2013 a cross-University forum was held by MSEI to understand the scope of rights and social model-based disability research underway and the best way to support that work. The result was the establishment of the Disability Research Initiative (DRI), led by Professor Keith McVilly (School of Social and Political Sciences). Its academic convenor is Dr Anna Arstein-Kerslake (Melbourne Law School).

In 2015 the DRI held a seed-funding round which was financially supported by the MSEI. The DRI and MSEI have co-hosted several well-attended international and local events, authored public submissions and instigated important external partnerships.

Public events co-hosted included lecture on media representations of people with disability, legal discrimination against people with disability and the unique situation of women with psychosocial disabilities who have experienced domestic violence.

www.disabilityresearch.unimelb.edu.au

Projects

'Topographical community accessibility modelling for people with mobility impairments'
Led by Dr Marcus White, Melbourne School of Design

'Choice, control and the NDIS'
Led by A/Prof Helen Dickinson, Melbourne School of Government, with Melbourne Law School and Melbourne School of Population and Global Health

'Empathy and portrayals of mental illness in Australian visual culture'
Led by Prof Barbara Creed, School of Culture and Communication, with Centre for Mental Health and General Practice.

▶ *Not titled (plane),* Robert Brown, 2013. Arts Project Australia is a Melbourne-based studio and gallery supporting artists with an intellectual disability as they develop their art practice.

Melbourne Research Alliance to End Violence Against Women and Their Children

The Melbourne Research Alliance to End Violence Against Women and their Children (MAEVe) was established in 2015 to draw together research and evaluation capacity across the University, in partnership with community, industry and government agencies, to respond to this pressing challenge.

MAEVe strives to make a difference to the lives of women, families and communities by addressing and preventing violence against women through interdisciplinary and intra-institutional collaboration.

MAEVe is led by Professor Kelsey Hegarty (General Practice) and Professor Cathy Humphreys (Social Work). Violeta Politoff, formerly a researcher at the Melbourne Law School, VicHealth and Domestic Violence Victoria, co-ordinates MAEVe under the auspices of MSEI.

The MAEVe steering committee brings together expertise from across the University and from key community organisations. Academic champions have been identified in the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences, the Faculty of Arts, the Murdoch Children's Research Institute, the Melbourne Graduate School of Education and the Melbourne Law School.

Since the March 2015 launch, MAEVe members have been actively contributing to research, policy, and the public conversation around violence against women and their children.

Professor Kelsey Hegarty and Professor Cathy Humphreys submitted fifteen briefing papers to the Royal Commission into Family Violence, and MAEVe steering committee members gave evidence to the Commission. Professor Humphreys was a panellist on a special edition of Q&A on domestic violence.

In 2015 MAEVe was commissioned by the Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) to compile a world-first index of family violence. The index assesses in particular the effectiveness of strategies in preventing and eliminating violence.

www.maeve.unimelb.edu.au

▶ Artwork by Gav Barbey, a Melbourne-based artist.

Postgraduate Students

Aviva Beecher-Kelk
'Sustainability vs profitability: locating stakeholders of Australian disability services in the individual support package model'
Prof Lynette Joubert, Department of Social Work and
A/Prof Helen Dickinson, Melbourne School of Government

Jaz Dawson
'From the Convention to the courts: sexual orientation-based refugee law in Australia'
A/Prof Michelle Foster, Melbourne Law School and
A/Prof Sarah Maddison, 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

Thomas Harré
'Human trafficking for forced labour: a socio-legal analysis of labour abuse of migrant workers in South-East Asian fisheries'
Prof Susan Kneebone, Melbourne Law School and
Prof Bernadette McSherry, Melbourne Social Equity Institute

Kelly Hutchinson
'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'
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

Dr 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

Samantha Mannix
'Gender equity, social transformations and education: curriculum, schools and the prevention of gender-based violence'
Prof Julie McLeod, Melbourne Graduate School of Education and
Dr Cathy Vaughan, Gender and Women's Health Unit

Gemma McKibbin
'Sexually abusive behaviour by young people: supporting Victoria's prevention response'
Prof Cathy Humphreys, Department of Social Work and
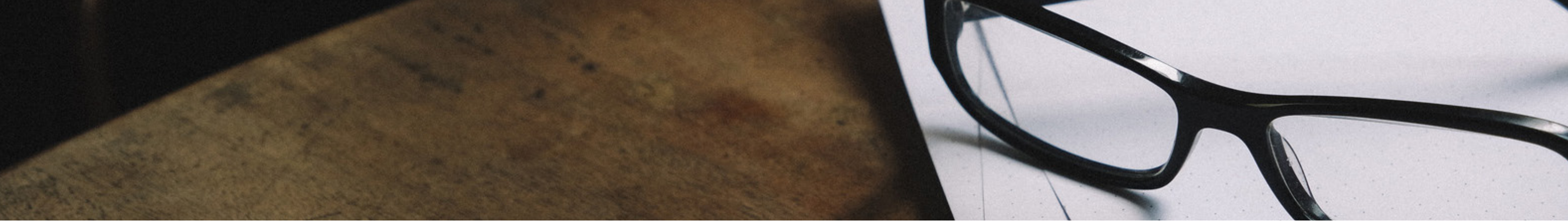Dr Bridget Hamilton, School of Nursing

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'
A/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

Postgraduate Students

Amita Tuteja
'Reproductive health and contraceptive needs of migrants from Burma:
practitioner and patient perspectives in the Australian context'
A/Prof Meredith Temple-Smith, General Practice,
A/Prof Lena Sanci, General Practice and
Dr Lester Mascarenhas, General Practice

Kay Wilson
'Mental health law: abolish or reform?'
Prof Dianne Otto, Melbourne Law School and
Prof Bernadette McSherry, Melbourne Social Equity Institute

Alicia Yon
'Enabling sociospatial 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

Throughout 2015 the MSEI continued to support doctoral students at the University working on issues of social equity through its doctoral academy.

The academy was launched in 2014 and is led by Professor Julie McLeod. Students are supported through peer-learning, mentoring from experienced academics and skill development including writing for media and working in partnership with community organisations.

Participants come from across the University and research topics include mental health among tertiary students, psychological resilience in climate change refugees and the relationship between buildings, territorial networks and satisfying human needs in remote settlements.

The 2015 cohort found a common interest in the ethics of conducting research in partnership with community groups and individuals, in particular the practice of commencing, maintaining and respectfully ending relationships.

Members of the 2015 academy are finalising production of a collection of essays reflecting on their experiences working with communities.

Postdoctoral Award

In 2015 the MSEI launched a postdoctoral award scheme. The award recognises the value of accelerating research performance in the immediate post-doctoral phase and encourages early career academics to think ahead to the next research project through connecting with other researchers and building a strong track record.

Four early career researchers received awards in 2015.

Marnie Badham, Centre for Cultural Partnerships
Marnie's research examines artist residency programs as forms of social attachment to place through art-making.

Mojgan Taheri Tafti, Melbourne School of Design
Mojgan's research focuses on the ways in which disaster recovery policies and practices define and identify 'vulnerable' groups; plan for their recovery and implement these plans.

Cathy Vaughan, Melbourne School of Population and Global Health
Cathy's research involves using participatory approaches to engage communities to increase knowledge about the inequities experienced by disadvantaged groups, in particular women with disabilities and migrant refugee women.

Sally Windsor, Melbourne Graduate School of Education
Sally's research examines the aims, philosophy and assumptions on which the Commonwealth Government initiative Teach for Australia is based as well as the implications of this initiative in addressing inequality in schools.

Publication Highlights

The MSEI and its affiliated researchers produced 51 publications in 2015. A select few are highlighted below.

Bayly C., White N., Keogh L., Tobin J., Ha B., Ibrahim M., Sadler L., Murdolo A., Quiazon, R., and Vaughan C. (2015) 'Female genital mutilation/cutting: messages for health services from Victorian communities', *BJOG* vol 122:397

Hense, C., McKibbin, G., McLeod, J., Phillips., C and Rudolph, S. (2015) *Researching for Social Change: Ethics, Methodologies and Responsibility.* Melbourne: University of Melbourne

MacLean, S., Hengsen R., Stephens R. and Arabena K. (2015) *Supporting the Mildura Aboriginal Community's Response to Ice Use*. Melbourne: University of Melbourne

McLeod, J. and Wright K. (eds) (2015) *Rethinking Youth Wellbeing: Critical Perspectives*. Singapore: Springer

McQuilten, G., White, A., Neville, B. and Dembek, K. (2015) *Impact and Sustainability in Art Based Social Enterprises*. Melbourne: University of Melbourne

McSherry, B. and Wilson, K (2015) 'The concept of capacity in mental health law reform: going in the wrong direction?', *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry* vol 40:60-69

Palmer, M., Williams, J. and McPake, B. (2015) *Disability costs and poverty in a low-income country*. Melbourne: University of Melbourne

Warr, D. and Williams, R. (2015) *The shifting terrain of citizenship: a wayfarer's guide.* Melbourne: University of Melbourne

Events

Throughout 2015 MSEI's events focussed on strengthening capacity and networks across the University and beyond in three main areas of strategic importance: the prevention of violence against women; disability; and refugee and asylum seekers.

A research forum early in March brought together researchers, service providers, legal experts and policy-makers who work in the domestic violence sector. The keynote speakers were Jerril Rechter, CEO of VicHealth, who outlined her organisation's significant body of work in this space, and the Hon Fiona Richardson MP, who gave attendees the policy and research priorities for her ministry and the State Government. Using a deliberative dialogue approach attendees then established a research agenda and agreed to coordinate submissions to the Royal Commission into Family Violence.

In May MSEI convened a half-day symposium looking at future research directions for supported decision making involving persons with disabilities. Discussions were led by Prof Peter Blanck, Director of the Burton Blatt Institute at the University of Syracuse and Prof Gerard Quinn, Director of the Centre for Disability Law and Policy at the National University of Ireland, Galway.
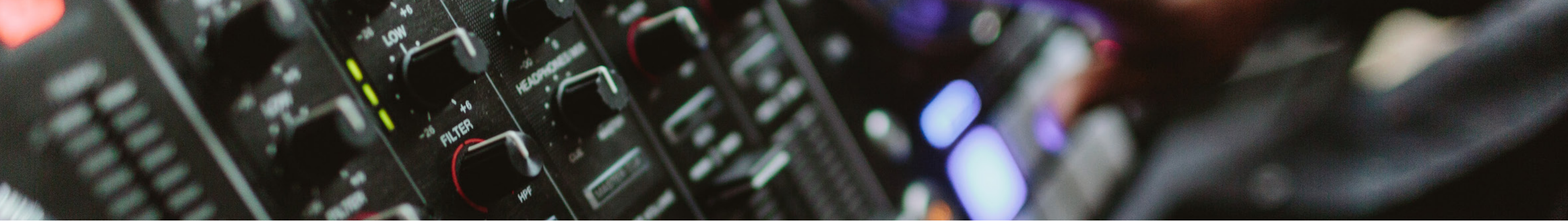
Also in May MSEI co-hosted Prof Gillian Triggs with the Melbourne Refugee Studies Program. Prof Triggs, the President of the Australian Human Rights Commission, gave a seminar on the Forgotten Children report on children in detention, which was preceded by a small invite-only workshop. Links with Prof Triggs and the Australian Human Rights Commission were made and will be valuable for future research.

In November an invite-only workshop brought together researchers, service providers, disabled peoples organisations as well as experts in business and policy to set a research agenda related to the NDIS rollout and its implications for access to public and private space, transport, services and employment.

In 2015 MSEI also co-hosted the Lecture Series for Asylum Seekers for the second year with Researchers for Asylum Seekers.

In all, MSEI hosted or was involved in 37 events during 2015.

◄ Zia Andeshwar speaks at the certificate presentation ceremony at the conclusion of the 2015 Lecture Series for Asylum Seekers. Picture: Shaan R. Ali

All Being Equal

In 2015 the MSEI launched 'All Being Equal', a fortnightly podcast exploring equity issues with University of Melbourne researchers, visiting academics and community partners. The first season ran June - September and discussed mental health treatment, disability discrimination law, asylum seekers, violence against women and affordable housing.

Each episode in the first season has attracted an average of 200 listens.

The podcast is a way to showcase research in a format that has lasting value and public appeal. In some cases the episodes are planned in advance and timed around report launches or awareness days. In others they are organised quickly, to offer an expert opinion on an issue receiving significant news attention.

First season:

01 Lisa Waddington - Disability Discrimination Law
02 Carolyn Whitzman and Alexander Sheko - Affordable Housing in Melbourne
03 Kelsey Hegarty and Cathy Humphreys - Ending Violence Against Women and Children
04 Stefan Sjöström - Compulsory Treatment in Sweden
05 Anne Hampshire - Encouraging a Love of Maths in Early Childhood
06 Savitri Taylor - Our Legal Obligations to Asylum Seekers
07 Jenny Phillimore - Engaging Communities in Research
08 Louise Harms and Rhonda Abotomey - Exploring Post-traumatic Growth

Media Highlights

The MSEI counted 45 media mentions in 2015, the majority in print (15) and online (17) news outlets. A select few are highlighted below.

'Ticking timebomb: why ice could be the new drug scourge of the outback', Helen Davidson for The Guardian, Friday 27 March

'Housing affordability crisis brought on by government policy failures', Carolyn Whitzman for The Age, Wednesday 10 June

''Going it alone' adds to tertiary students' high mental health risk', Michelle Walter for The Conversation, Wednesday 17 June

'Out of the frying pan and into the fire: the plight of LGBTI refugees', Paula Gerber and Jaz Dawson for The Conversation, Monday 29 June

'Empowering those with disabilities', Chris Weaver for Voice, Monday 10 August

'Melbourne named world's most liveable city, for fifth year running', Clay Lucas for The Age, Wednesday 19 August

'Ice addiction: Let's stop the scare tactics and tell stories of recovery', Sarah MacLean for The Drum, Monday 21 September

'LGBTI Cambodia: A vibrant community with unrecognised rights', Jaz Dawson for Star Observer, Wednesday 23 September

'Is Australia ready to give people with disability real choice and control over services?', Helen Dickinson for The Conversation, Tuesday 24 November

'Compulsory psych treatment in the home is ineffective, costly and violates human rights', Piers Gooding for The Conversation, Friday 18 December

Financial Statement

Income

Balance brought forward		$7,049
Funds from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)		
Core MSEI funding		$945,000
Alliance to End Violence Against Women and their Children		$90,000
Space charges contribution		$30,000
Internal grants		$19,500
External grants		$81,200
Philanthropic donations		$6,563
	Total Income	$1,179,312

Expenditure

Directorate staff salaries		$398,893
Research staff salaries		$170,000
Research project costs		$107,263
Operating expenses		$71,108
Alliance to End Violence Against Women and their Children		$90,000
Seed-funded projects		$214,500
Partnership development		$30,000
PhD student awards		$42,500
Visitors		$20,000
Space charge		$30,000
	Total Expenditure	$1,174,264
	Surplus	$5,048