

Early Career Research Network

INAUGURAL CONFERENCE

Research and Graduate Studies Office



12 November 2007

Council Chamber
John Scott Meeting House
La Trobe University
Bundoora

Conference Welcome

Our Early Career Researchers are a very special part of our university community with the potential to become our future research leaders. Academics generally aspire to make a significant contribution to their research area as it is personally a rewarding experience. It also fulfils the responsibility to contribute to the research capabilities and reputation of the university. Of course academics have equally important responsibilities in teaching and administration and it is not always easy, especially early in one's career, to ensure that time is available to develop one's research. An added pressure is the difficulty of obtaining external funding that in many disciplines is essential to carry out research.

The Early Career Researcher Network is one initiative to support ECRs as they develop their research careers and today's conference provides an opportunity for you to learn about their research interests and to explore opportunities for multidisciplinary collaborations. I encourage you all to use the morning tea break to network and discuss ideas and possible collaborations with each other.

Of course university support of Early Career Researchers extends beyond the ECR Network and for those of us attending who are not ECRs, it worth being reminded that support and mentoring of ECRs is an essential contribution which we can make to their development.

Professor Peter Dyson
Director
Research & Innovation

Program

Time Session

9.30am	Arrival and registration	Foyer, John Scott Meeting House
10am	Welcome Address	Prof Peter Dyson, Director, Research & Innovation

***Session 1 Session Chair –Prof Peter Murphy,
Assoc Dean Research, Faculty of Law & Management***

10.15 – 10.30am	1. Rethinking Homework in Contemporary Australia: A Feminist Sociocultural Analysis	Dr Kirsten Hutchison, Educational Studies
10.30 – 10.45am	2. Examination of proteins in single skeletal muscle fibres by Western blotting	Dr Robyn Murphy, Zoology
10.45 – 11am	3. Writing Amy Robsart	Dr Catherine Padmore, English
11am – 11.15am	4. The Australian Synchrotron - Exciting opportunities for research and industry	Dr Peter Kappen, Physics
11.15 – 11.30am	5. Surviving an Ice Age: the zooarchaeology of late Pleistocene southwest Tasmania	Dr Jillian Garvey, Archaeology

Morning Tea

11.30am – 12pm

***Session 2 Session Chair –Assoc Prof Paul Pigram
Assoc Dean Research, Faculty of Science, Technology & Engineering***

11.45 - 12pm	6. Enhancing mathematics learning of 'at-risk' grade 5-6 students in regional Victorian Primary Schools	Dr Dona Martin, Education
12pm – 12.15pm	7. A framework for building health policy capacity	Deborah Gleeson, Public Health
12.15 – 12.30pm	8. 'Disabled but able': exploring health with rural Victorians living with a disability	Erin Hokin, Public Health
12.30 – 12.45pm	9. Images of torture, images of terror: Post 9/11 and the escalation of screen violence	Dr Gabrielle Murray, Cinema Studies
12.45 – 1pm	10. On the wait list for a Community Aged Care Package (CACP): Impact/Outcomes for proposed recipients of CACP and their carers after twelve months	Delwyne Stephens, Public Health

Closing Remarks	Ms Marian Obenchain, Director, Research & Graduate Studies Office
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Title: *Rethinking Homework in Contemporary Australia:
A Feminist Sociocultural Analysis*

Abstract:

This research offers new perspectives on the practice of homework in Australia through the development of ethnographically-based case studies. It argues that homework is a form of pedagogical work that mediates home-school relations and generates classed and gendered emotional labour.

The research offers an in-depth examination of the micro-practices of homework, as they shape learners' dispositions and identities across socioeconomically diverse communities. It analyses anxieties about educational success and failure and provides an account of the class and gender differentiated practices enacted in homes and schools. In foregrounding the significance of the politics of emotion, the study repositions the emotional dimensions of parental pedagogical labour as central to the achievement of homework. While homework remains emblematic of contemporary imperatives for success in education, the study provides new insights into its inherently paradoxical nature: carrying the promise of academic success, but producing uncertain outcomes; capable of interrupting but also cementing social (dis) advantage.

Name: Kirsten Hutchison

Title: Lecturer

School: Educational Studies

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Other: areas of academic interest include gender, education, sociology of education, home-school relations, educational reform, professional learning, comparative research, equity and social justice.

Title: *Examination of proteins in single skeletal muscle fibres by Western blotting*

Abstract:

One of the aims of muscle physiology research is to examine the functional relevance of particular proteins present in skeletal muscle. Skeletal muscle is made up of a number of different fibre types, with the broad classification being fast-twitch (or type II) and slow-twitch (or type I) fibres. There are many proteins that have differential expressions between the fibre types and so being able to measure protein expression in individual fibres presents an unambiguous way to measure specific proteins in muscle samples, which is particularly important for heterogeneous human muscle samples.

Conventional methods for analysing proteins in skeletal muscle often involve using homogenates of these mixed fibre type muscle samples. For proteins with a fibre specific expression, relevant findings might be obscured by the presence of fibres with different responses to a given intervention. The current work demonstrates the ability to examine skeletal muscle at the level of individual fibres. Furthermore, the ability to measure individual components of muscle fibres is demonstrated, allowing a novel approach for identifying the presence of proteins providing clear-cut answers to localisation of proteins.

Name: Robyn Murphy

Title: NHMRC Research Fellow **School:** Life Sciences, Dept of Zoology

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Other: areas of academic interest include neuromuscular disorders, mechanisms of muscular fatigue, Ca²⁺-dependent proteases (calpains), creatine and ion channels.

Title: *Writing Amy Robsart*

Abstract:

This project involves developing a fiction manuscript that explores the life of Amy Robsart (1532-1560), wife of Robert Dudley. The manuscript is currently a first draft: Over the next year I will develop this to a second draft suitable for submission to the publisher of my first novel (Allen and Unwin).

Amy died young and in mysterious circumstances at Cumnor near Oxford. She had not seen her husband, favourite of Elizabeth I and rumoured to be the Queen's lover, for over a year. Gossips whispered that Amy had been murdered to allow marriage between Elizabeth and Robert. Others whispered suicide.

I have been intrigued by Amy's situation and by what she might have been feeling before her death. Few archival sources allow access to her thoughts (only two of her letters survive), so I am using carefully researched fiction to reconstruct her experience imaginatively.

The project focuses on the final nine months of Amy's life and aims to draw readers into her experience, exploring Amy's relationship with Dudley and speculations about her death. Through the novel I hope to bring Amy's story to life for contemporary readers.

Name: Catherine Padmore

Title: Lecturer

School: Communication, Arts & Critical
Enquiry, English Program

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Other: Shortlisted for The Australian/Vogel Literary Award 2001 and Commended in the 2005 Commonwealth Writers' Prize Best First Book (South-East Asia and South Pacific Region).

Website: <http://www.catherinepadmore.com>

Areas of academic interest include fiction writing (including technical and discursive elements); women's writing; feminist theories; and migration stories (particularly the relationship between place, ideas of belonging and the body).

Title: *The Australian Synchrotron - Exciting opportunities for research and industry*

Abstract:

A synchrotron is a large-scale machine that produces intense beams of light. This light is millions of times brighter than the sun, it covers a wide range of the electromagnetic spectrum, and it can be collimated to fine beams almost like a laser. Synchrotron light is a versatile tool to investigate physical and chemical properties of many materials. It opens unique possibilities to answer fundamental and applied research questions, and to improve and develop products in industry.

The synchrotron community spans a global network, and the recently opened Australian Synchrotron strengthens Australia's links with this network. The Australian Synchrotron is located in Melbourne's south-east (Clayton). Its proximity to La Trobe is of great advantage for synchrotron work at this university.

In this presentation, examples of synchrotron research at La Trobe will be highlighted, including industry relevant applications.

Name: Peter Kappen

Title: Postdoctoral Fellow

School: Centre for Materials & Surface Science & Dept of Physics

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Other: Beamline Scientist at the Hamburg Synchrotron Radiation Laboratory (HASYLAB), Germany (2002-2003)

Areas of academic interest include Synchrotron Sciences (in particular environmental research, materials characterisation, and detector development), industry interaction and industry related research (interdisciplinary work and project management).

Other passions include exploring the fusion of creative and performing arts with (synchrotron) sciences, directed at communicating with a general or informed public.

Title: *Surviving an Ice Age: the zooarchaeology of late Pleistocene southwest Tasmania*

Abstract:

The late Pleistocene caves of southwest Tasmania contain rich faunal and stone archaeological assemblages dated between 35,000 and 13,000 years ago, spanning the Last Glacial Maximum (LGM). Vertebrate remains, dominated by the Bennett's wallaby (*Macropus rufogriseus*) and to a minor degree the common wombat (*Vombatus ursinus*), constitute most of the >950,000 zooarchaeology collection. The focus of my research thus far has been a taphonomic analysis of the 269,000 bones from Kutikina Cave (19,770-14,840 BP). The distribution of wallaby body parts and elements from Kutikina indicate humans frequently selected the hindlimbs and feet, with these bones split to expose the marrow cavity.

To understand human seasonal occupation and use of the landscape, a pioneering study using skeletochronology allows the season and age-of-death of Bennett's wallaby to be determined. Results indicate humans visited lowland caves during the colder months (autumn-winter) and upland caves during the warmer seasons (spring-summer). However, while more is known about human seasonal movements across the landscape the driving force behind these decisions has not been addressed. New research will investigate the economic anatomy of the Bennett's wallaby, including utility indices, bone density and analysis of bone marrow and meat, providing important nutritional information that can be compared to the zooarchaeological record.

Name: Jillian Garvey

Title: Postdoctoral Fellow **School:** Archaeology Program
Historical and European Studies

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Other: areas of academic interest include prehistoric human hunting and subsistence strategies, as well as environmental and ecological reconstruction of faunal communities.

Title: *Enhancing mathematics learning of 'at-risk' grade 5-6 students in regional Victorian Primary Schools*

Abstract:

This study targets 'at risk', disengaged middle years students at regional Victorian primary schools by having in-service teachers work with university researchers to establish a collaborative networking community that focuses on understanding the processes of incorporating accessible pedagogically-based research in mathematics education with their everyday classroom practices.

This study will identify and address the needs of mathematically 'at-risk' students at grade 5-6 level in three local, rural primary schools providing outcomes that could be applied in like contexts. National research on 'middle years' schooling (grades 5-9) and regional education indicates that this is a key time to address a significant disengagement from mathematics and that there is a lack of support for the professional development of teachers in regional areas.

Intervention processes will target the teachers as they collaboratively review, select, trial and reflect on focused teaching episodes and as they begin to value themselves as researchers.

Name: Dona Martin

Title: Lecturer

School: Education

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Other: Co-authors include Diane Itter (d.itter@latrobe.edu.au) and Rosie Rosengren (r.rosengren@latrobe.edu.au).

Areas of academic interest include improving pre-service teacher education in mathematics, working with in-service teachers to conduct research on mathematical topics relevant to their school/their area of interest and encouraging adults to return to education.

Title: *A framework for building health policy capacity*

Abstract:

In recent years there has been increasing interest in improving the quality of policy through building the policy capacity of public sector institutions. To date, however, there has been little empirical research on which to base capacity building interventions, particularly in the health sector. This paper presents preliminary findings from a study of health policy capacity in a large health and human services agency, the Victorian Department of Human Services (DHS).

In-depth interviews were conducted with policy practitioners from four policy-oriented units within DHS to explore the policy process and the organisational and practitioner factors contributing policy capacity. A thematic analysis was undertaken using a conceptual framework of eight domains of policy capacity based on a review of the literature.

The paper will discuss propositions for building capacity in each of the eight domains: information and evidence, workforce capacity, relationships with stakeholders, intergovernmental and cross-portfolio collaboration, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, management of the policy process, and organisational culture. In each of these areas there are costs, risks and tensions associated with building policy capacity. Negotiating these considerations involves articulating a long range vision and a broad strategic path to achieving it and building a culture of policy thinking that engages administrators and politicians.

Name: Deborah Gleeson

Title: PhD Scholar **School:** Public Health

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Other: LTU Postgraduate Research Scholarship holder.

Co-authors include David Legge, Deirdre O'Neill and Monica Pfeffer.

Areas of academic interest include health policy, public policy, capacity building and the ways in which policy and practice can be strengthened in order to improve population health.

Title: *'Disabled but able': exploring health with rural Victorians living with a disability*

Abstract:

To date there has been limited research on the meaning of health with adults with physical disabilities in Australia. This is alarming, as an accurate understanding of health is essential to the development of appropriately targeted health initiatives and policies. As a result, this qualitative study has been conceptualised to explore the meaning of health for this target group (18 - 25 years of age). It is envisaged that these findings will inform disability advocacy work in the area and ultimately help to shape policy and practice. The study will build on recent Australian (Hokin 2006) and American (Nosek; Hughes; Howland; Young; Mullen & Shelton 2004) studies.

Name: Erin Hokin

Title: PhD Scholar

School: Public Health

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Other: PhD Student Bendigo representative, LARHC Bundoora Link and Post-graduate representative (La Trobe Allied Rural Health Club)

PHSA Bendigo Link, SRC representative and Post-graduate representative (Public Health Student Association)

Title: *Images of Torture, Images of Terror: Post 9/11 and the Escalation of Screen Violence*

Abstract:

In a review in the *New York Magazine* (6th February 2006), the film critic David Edelstein commenting on a perceived upsurge in extreme, prolonged graphic torture, abduction, rape and dismemberment in contemporary cinema, dubbed the phenomenon "torture porn." The label stuck. The box-office success of films like *The Devil's Rejects*, *Saw*, *Wolf Creek* and *Hostel* stunned many critics; most seemed bewildered by young audiences' thirst for such graphic fare. Edelstein's uneasy review suggests that 9/11 and its aftermath, specifically the media releases of images of US and UK military personal torturing prisoners at Abu Ghraib, helped feed the escalation of uninhibited images of explicit violence in contemporary film. This easy linkage of national events and cinematic representation has a long history.

This research projects aims to produce a comprehensive understanding of media representations and public perceptions of screen violence on film, television and the web post 9/11. While public attitudes toward violent imagery are largely historically determined, the nature of the actual relation between social and screen violence remains circumstantial and speculative. The study will analyse critical and public reactions to social violence, specifically images of Abu Ghraib post 9/11 in the context of screen violence debates.

Name: Gabrielle Murray

Title: Lecturer

School: Cinema Studies

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Other: New York University Fellowship (MA), Cinema Studies

Beatrice Fincher Award (MA), Aust. Federation of University Women

Areas of academic interest include film aesthetics and philosophy, screen violence, and theories of cinema experience.

Title: *On the wait list for a Community Aged Care Package (CACP): Impact/Outcomes for proposed recipients of CACP and their carers after twelve months*

Abstract:

The aim of this project is to provide information on outcomes for frail older people approved for a Community Aged Care Package (CACP) and their carers twelve months after the person is placed on a CACP waiting list in the Eastern Health region of Victoria. Community Aged Care Packages are federally funded 'packages' of care for frail aged people who have complex care needs. These packages are provided as part of the Australian Government Policy to assist frail older people to remain in their homes rather than having to move into residential care.

There is limited information on how CACPs impact on the lives of recipients and their carers. There is also limited information on waiting times for CACPs, the rate of refusal of CACPs once clients have been approved and subsequently offered a package, and the reasons for their refusal. This is in spite of the Australian Government's commitment to CACPs, with 30,000+ packages administered nationally at a cost of over 400 million in 2006 / 2007.

This longitudinal study commenced data collection using a range of validated and reliable quantitative measures in February 2007 and will continue until December 2008. Research questions will examine pre and post CACP satisfaction with services, service types, levels of well being, impact of carer on service use, levels of carer strain, respite care use and hospital admission rates.

Name: Delwyne Stephens

Title: PhD Scholar

School:

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Other: A published author of primary and teenage fiction.

Australian Institute of Primary Care scholarship holder.

Areas of academic interest include aged care, community aged care packages, health policy related to frail aged people remaining at home not in a home, research-policy nexus.

Collaboration Ideas:

Further Resources:

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