



RAPPORTEUR



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Newsletter of the School of Social Work and Social Policy – Faculty of Health Sciences

Launch of New Degrees

In 2006 two new undergraduate programs were introduced into the School: a four year double degree, **Bachelor of Social Work/ Bachelor of Human Services** and a three year **Bachelor of Human Services**. These new programs were instigated in response to student feedback, changes to patterns of client need and policy and funding arrangements for human service programs, and issues raised during the accreditation of the School by the Australian Association of Social Workers. The redesigned curriculum includes the introduction of a Faculty wide Interdisciplinary Professional Practice Unit. It also increases credit points allocated to the field education units to more accurately reflect the student workload of these units.

The new degrees expand the choices available to undergraduates in the School which now include:

- Bachelor of Social Work/Bachelor of Human Services – 4 years
- Bachelor of Human Services – 3 years
- Bachelor of Social Work (Advanced Standing) – 2 years

Students undertaking the Bachelor of Human Services also have the option to transfer, at the end of successfully completing year 2, to the Bachelor of Social Work (Advanced Standing). In 2006 the School has approximately 700 undergraduate students across its 4 campuses and over 40 postgraduates.

At Albury-Wodonga the first unit in the Postgraduate Certificate in Complex Community Care, **Supervision in Community Care** was introduced. Developed and taught by Dr Judith Gibbs in response to needs identified in research conducted by Upper Hume Primary Care Partnership in collaboration with Dr Guinever Threlkeld. The unit attracted an enrolment of 26 students drawn from the local region and elsewhere in the state. An evaluation confirmed students' high level of satisfaction with the unit and its combination of theoretical and experiential learning.



10 years of Social Work at Bendigo

In 2006 the Social Work program at Bendigo celebrates its first 10 years. It was established as a response to persistent demands spanning a decade, from both agencies and prospective students. It was originally a cooperative program between the Graduate School of Social Work Bundoora Campus and the School of Arts Bendigo Campus. The first staff were employed in January 1996, followed in March 1996 by the first cohort of 25 students.

The commitment to face to face, accessible courses has been maintained by structuring a two day timetable, and use of block mode of teaching. Small class sizes have made possible the replacement of a traditional lecture/tutorial delivery mode with interactive seminars that are part of the unique Bendigo identity.

The hurdle of limited qualified field educators for the field education program has been overcome by agencies providing task supervisors complemented by external supervision from School staff. A strong local social work academy has been built and thus the capacity of the School to contribute to research in the region and beyond.

The strength of the Bendigo program has been close collaboration with the field, and an ongoing cooperative relationship within the School of Social Work and Social Policy. These relationships have enabled Bendigo to draw and build on a wealth of academic and administrative resources whilst delivering accessible higher education in a regional area. There is still more to achieve, and Bendigo looks forward to continuing to work alongside others to achieve quality social work education for people who live in rural Victoria.

Converting your BSW to BSW Honours

Are you a La Trobe BSW graduate interested in doing a PhD or professional doctorate but don't have an Honours degree?

If you completed your La Trobe BSW within the last 10 years and want to establish eligibility for doing a PhD, you may be able to 'convert' your BSW to a BSW (Honours) degree by enrolling in the School's one-year Honours Advanced Standing Program. This entails attending the Honours Seminar in Semester 1 and 2, completing an honours thesis proposal and, under supervision, completing a research project, writing it up as an honours thesis and submitting it for examination. For further information, please contact:

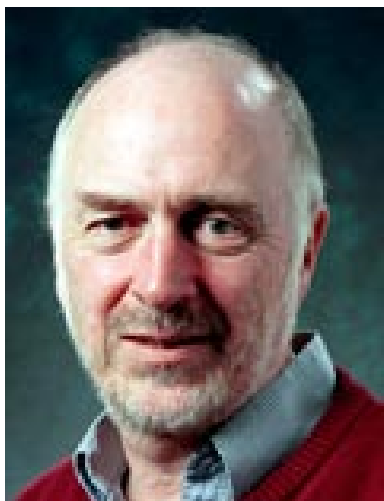
Allan Borowski at the Bundoora campus
A.Borowski@latrobe.edu.au

Jennifer Lehmann at the Bendigo campus
J.Lehmann@latrobe.edu.au

Guin Threlkeld at the Albury-Wodonga campus
G.Threlkeld@latrobe.edu.au



Bill Healy Retires



Associate Professor Bill Healy will retire at the end of 2006 after 25 years in the School of Social Work and Social Policy, and a social work career that spans 41 years. During which time his unwavering commitment to advocacy and social change in the field of mental health has had a significant impact on hundreds of students, community based services and the development of

knowledge in this field. Bill's academic career clearly illustrates the combination of research, teaching and community service that lie at the heart of all universities. Bill was a founding member of Mental Health Action, the first collaborative organisation involving professionals and consumers of mental health services in Victoria. He was chair of the Mental Health Legal Centre from 1990–1995, and has been chair of the Richmond Fellowship since 1997. More recently he was appointed as a community member of the Mental Health Review Board. He was Head of School from 1996 - 2000, overseeing the introduction of the four year degree in 1998. In 2001 he was appointed Associate Professor of Mental Health, which was a joint appointment between the School and Northwest Mental Health. Since 1990 Bill has published over 26 articles, book chapters, government and agency based reports. His article, 'Elements in the Development of a Radical Australian Social Work' published in *Australian Social Work* in 1993, which has totally disappeared from all copies held at LaTrobe was an important contribution to the debate about radical social work in Australia. Bill has sustained important international research partnerships with leading social work academics in the UK, US, Canada and Israel.

Many people have gained enormously from Bill's contribution to mental health and social work education over the past 40 years.

Mark Furlong writes; *It was in the 1980's that I had the benefit of Bill's influence and two particular examples stay with me more than 20 years later. First, in the early 1980's Bill was asked to give a talk to mental health social workers on the topic of 'burn-out,' which was then, as it is now, a strong concern for workers. Bill titled his talk 'Five false solutions to burn-out' and I recall he took particular care in this talk to re-define 'burn-out' from an issue of individual workers supposedly not coping to that of its presence amongst workers being a signal of structural difficulties in work place design. This was, and still is, a highly prized lesson.*

Secondly, in 1988 Bill co-wrote a paper, with Jackie Springall from Child Protection, titled 'The forgotten field worker, a challenge for social work education.' This paper examined the oft experienced dis-connect between the field, in this case that of child protection, and the University. At the time this paper

resonated with my experience as a (mental health) worker and, having later moved into a University teaching position, this theme has remained with me as a constructive reminder of the inevitable tension with which we educators must continue to engage.

Helen Cleak recalls another significant area of Bills expertise, when she writes; *Bill is well known for his love of red wine and when he was Head of School, he and I had a system where we would exchange our best, 'low-priced' wine to try and comment on. Whenever he travelled to Albury/Woodonga to teach or for meetings he would invariably stop at one of the wineries at Rutherglen to try and buy his favourites-a Cofield's sparking burgundy was his favourite. Age has probably slowed down this indulgence a little.*

David Sykes, PhD, Office of the Public Advocate writes; *I first met Bill during my undergraduate years and I was impressed by his genuine concern for the welfare others whether that be clients, students, or indeed staff. He had a certain calmness about him which I always found reassuring. When I returned to study some years later it was these same qualities which gave me significant support and reassurance on the long and lonely road that is thesis writing. In many ways I learnt as much from the discussions we had during my supervision sessions as I did from the research itself. My thesis had the particular challenge of requiring me to delve into the unfamiliar territory of philosophical writings and Bill was always the lifeline in this sea of dense writing which at times seemed to threaten to swallow me up!!!. Bill's insight and perhaps as importantly his capacity to promote insight and reflection in others made my experience a particularly rich and rewarding one. Bill also exercised a high level of patience in editing my clumsy prose. I found Bill to be a great mentor and outstanding supervisor with a great sense of humour. I feel privileged to have had Bill as a teacher, supervisor and friend. I wish him well in retirement.*

Allan Borowski recounts; *his first experience of Bill Healy was as a young social work student at Melbourne University in the early 1970s when Bill, who then worked at Parkville Psychiatric Unit, I believe, gave a few guest lectures on social work practice in the mental health field. The students were in awe of Bill because of his commitment and passion about work in this field of practice and his obvious knowledge and competence. In many ways, Bill has remained an important role model for Allan since that time.*

Post Graduate Scholarships

As part of ongoing research relationships between Berry St Victoria and Melbourne City Mission the School is seeking applicants for two postgraduate scholarships -

**The Robin Clark Take Two Berry St Victoria Scholarship
Melbourne City Mission Scholarship.**

Both provide a generous tax free stipend for three years full time study. Interested applicants should contact the Director of Postgraduate Programs, Associate Professor Margarita Frederico.



School Community Partnerships

The School of Social Work and Social Policy aims to contribute to social change in the interests of people and communities who are vulnerable, exploited or excluded from the social and economic opportunities available to other members of society. One way in which the School realises its aims is through a complex web of partnerships with community organisations, the profession, and other researchers. Such partnerships permeate the School's teaching, research and community service activities. They are central to the School's capacity to undertake and disseminate research on policy and practice, and ensuring graduates are equipped to work in evolving and complex organisations that form modern welfare systems.

Involvement in Non Government Organisations

A number of staff play active roles as Board or committee members of various non government organisations, these include, the Richmond Fellowship, Jesuit Social Services, the Rural Housing Network, and the Ronald Henderson Research Foundation . Di Cox, for example is the chair of the Castlemaine District Community Health Centre. Guin Threlkeld is vice chair of the Upper Hume Community Health Service. Currently UHCHS and the School are preparing for the establishment of a scholarship to be funded by UHCHS to provide support to a final year social work student resident in the agency's catchment area and undertaking a placement in the agency.

Martin Ryan undertakes bereavement counselling in a voluntary capacity as a Practitioner Associate at the Bereavement Counselling and Support Service of the Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement based at McCulloch House, Monash Medical Centre at Clayton. This involves one session per week seeing two bereaved clients per session. This has included a recent three-month term in the Counselling Service at the State Coroner's Office at the Coroner's Court. Martin's involvement has been important for his teaching, as well as giving him the opportunity to engage in some direct work with clients, and has also opened up the possibility to for a student to undertake an honours research study at the Service.

Staff involvement in community organisations can provide opportunities for student placements, facilitate involvement of practitioners in undergraduate teaching and often lead to research partnerships. An example of an extremely productive relationship in 2005 was between Fieldwork staff and students at Bundoora and annecto in the Western region.

annecto is a service provider in disability and aged care fields in the inner western, northern and eastern suburbs of Melbourne. The School has had links with annecto for several years initially around research. In 2004 annecto offered placements to two students and expressed interest in a 'standing arrangement' about placements. Accordingly annecto and the School agreed to a placements partnership where regular placement offers are made and regular professional development opportunities and invitations to university events are exchanged. annecto appointed a Students Coordinator which provided a central contact for placements and also fostered development of placement opportunities such as innovative projects that students could work on for the benefit of the agency and it's community. annecto has provided seven social work student placements in the last 2 years, with more planned for this September. Five of these placements involved projects in community development, the Western Disability Network, and consumer feedback procedures; two placements involved direct practice & project work in aged care.

David House is a program of annecto's that began many years ago as a parentrun disability support & activity program. Many of the David House community are now elderly. The Service Development Manager is Annie Grant, a social worker. Annie offered a pair of students a placement project to confirm and document the suspected services gap for this group. They made a case for new project funding, and this was successful. "I believe that ...[our] compelling argument to the Department was strengthened by an excellent survey and report completed by two of your social work students on placement with me last year, needless to say we are hoping to get two more this year!" stated Annie.

Brotherhood of St Laurence

The School has strong links with the Brotherhood of St Laurence. Alison McClelland is on the Board and the School is able to draw on a strong pool of social workers with an interest in community and policy development to act as guest lecturers. For example, in Semester 1, Mark Daniels from the Brotherhood's Community Enterprise was a guest speaker in the third year Communities subject. An honours student was able to base her research on a collaborative study with the Brotherhood's employment programs for people with disabilities. The impending joint, School, Brotherhood of St Laurence, appointment of an Associate Professor on Aging and Social Policy will add strength to the School's Aging and Disability research group and increase the capacity of the Brotherhood to provide policy commentary and analysis in the area of aged policy with a particular focus on socially excluded older people.

Research Partnerships

Berry St Take Two

The research and practice partnership with Berry Street Child and Family Service places the School in the forefront of developments in therapeutic intervention with children and families. David Green is a member of the Berry Street Board, whilst Margarita, Frederico, Maureen Long and Patricia McNamara are involved in collaborative research projects with various Berry Street programs. The largest of these is the Take Two Project which is a consortium of Berry Street Victoria, Austin CAMHS, School of Social Work and Social Policy La Trobe University and Mindful Centre of training and research in developmental health. Take Two is a developmental therapeutic service for children and young people who have suffered trauma, disrupted attachments and other adverse consequences as a result of abuse and neglect.



La Trobe has responsibility for research and evaluation of the program. The first evaluation report 'Reflections on Complexity: Understanding the World of Take Two Clients' was published in December 2005 and is available from the School.

The Take Two research is utilising an innovative research approach - Research Circles. These draw together multiple stakeholders in the service system who are committed to discussing issues related to children and young people who have suffered abuse and neglect.



They are being established in each region Take Two operates as well as two state-wide circles. One is being conducted in partnership with the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) and the other is the Secure Welfare research circle. The research circles are action focused as well as reflective and information gathering. The use of research circles is built on an understanding that for troubled and traumatised children support needs to come from the wider socio ecological system if the young person is able to recover and continue to develop on a more positive trajectory. Research circles build upon the participants knowledge and experience and focus upon the needs of children and how best to work together towards their recovery.

Department of Human Services

David Green with Professor Judith Brett from Politics at Latrobe, are partners in an ARC funded Linkage project with the Department of Human Services, Hume region and the Office of the Public Advocate which is examining the management of risk in human service organisations. Chris Bigby, with Richard Broome, Katie Holmes, Lee-Ann Monk, Corrine Manning and Chris Dew are partners with the Department of Human Services in an ARC Linkage project that is researching the history of Kew Children's Cottages, the oldest and largest institution for people with intellectual disabilities in Victoria. The outcomes of this project will be a scholarly history, a volume of oral history and an accessible multi media exhibition portraying experiences and memories of the institutional.



Partnerships with Philanthropic Trusts

'Making Life Good in the Community' is an evaluation of the outcomes for residents following the closure of Kew Cottages, which is funded by DHS and being undertaken by Chris Bigby and Tim Clement at LaTrobe in collaboration with Kelley Johnson from RMIT. The project will employ a part time researcher with intellectual disability and was successful in gaining funding from the Helen McPherson Smith Trust to employ a mentor to support this role. Allan Borowski has received funds from the The Gandel Charitable Trust, the Helen McPherson Smith Trust and the Victoria Law Foundation to evaluate the new Children's Koori Court of Victoria.

Funding from the Myer Foundation, since 1998 has enabled the School to continue to organise overseas placements for a limited number of social work students. In particular, the Asian Pacific region has been targeted as it offers students the opportunity to experience another culture and perspective, to develop knowledge and skills to work in developing countries and to bring back this learning and use it in working in Australia's multicultural society. Between 1997 and 2005, a total of 35 students have undertaken overseas placements. For example, while placed at CFSI in Manila students have been involved in a street children project, a youth mentoring program and other capacity building programs with the local urban community.

A recent evaluation to ascertain the kinds of learning that occurred during overseas placements and how such experiences contribute to the social work practice of new graduates indicated that the overseas placement program had increased student's cultural sensitivity and understanding of some of the key issues around social development in an international context. The evaluation from the perspective of the major supervising agency indicated that the work of the students played critical roles and provided essential services within the agency, such as helping to mobilize and support large operations to the benefit of their clients and their community development programs.

Contributions to the Profession

Various members of staff are active in professional associations or hold formal positions on statutory bodies. For example, Bill Healy is a community member of the Mental Health Review Board, Chris Bigby is a community member of the Intellectual Disability Review Panel and David Green is the Alternate Chair of the DHS Complex Care Panel, all of which are coincidentally located on the same floor of a city building.

Carmel Laragy is convenor of the Australian Association of Social Workers Practice Standards Working group, which has published several important articles on professional standards in the last two years. Helen Cleak is a committee member of the International Continuing Education committee of the AASW. Staff also make a significant contribution to the profession and the dissemination of research findings through their involvement with professional journals. Jennifer Lehmann is joint editor of Children Australia, with retired staff member and PhD student Lloyd Owen, Martin Ryan is the co-editor of Advances in Social Work & Welfare Education, and Chris Bigby is joint editor of Australian Social Work with Mel Gray from Newcastle University. In addition many staff members including John Mc Cormack, Maureen Long, Mark Furlong, Allan Borowski, Noel Renouf and Patricia McNamara review articles for a range of peer reviewed journals.

School Research Conference

In late 2005 the School's conference showcased the breadth of research being undertaken in the School by staff, post graduate and honours students. A highlight of the conference was the presentation by Dr Sue Hodgkin of findings from PhD study '**Duty Bound: Gender and Social Capital**', which explored the differences between men and women in social, civic and community participation. Her research examined the daily life of women as they juggle work, caring for children and the gendered nature of expectations about what they should be contributing to the community. Her findings challenged the assumption made in the social capital literature that it is natural for women to find satisfaction participating as mothers, suggesting that this type of participation was associated with feelings of exploitation and low personal agency. Di Cox presented a paper, '**Rural Australians Want to Determine their Own Futures': But can they? A Critical Analysis of the Influence of Place Politics on Rural Policy in the Late 1990s**', based on her recently completed MSW thesis. This paper traced the evolution of a bottom up rural development movement in Australia in the 1990s. Dr. Patricia McNamara presented '**Assessing Sensitive Outcomes in Child and Family**

Centres: Interim Report on the Melbourne Component of a Cross-National Study. Her paper reported on the Melbourne component of the pilot for a cross-national study examining community-based centres that provide interventions that are preventive of problems and promotive of positive outcomes for children and adolescents. In Melbourne, the research is based at Berry Street Victoria and aims to identify the 'steps along the way' to outcomes in community based child and family interventions.

Other presentations were:

Prof Allan Borowski and Dr John McCormack; **'The Politics of Ageing in the 2004 Federal Election'**

Dr Deborah Walsh, **'Silent Suffering: The Level, Extent and Nature of Interpersonal Violence During Pregnancy: A Study of 400 Australian Women'**

Margaret Cooper, PhD student, **'The Experience of Ageing for People with Long-Term Physical Impairment'**

Dr Christine .Bigby, Assoc Prof Margarita Frederico, Brian Cooper **'Known by No One? The Nature of Informal Relationships Five Years after a Move From Institutional to Community Living.'**

Assoc Prof Martin Ryan, Ms Cathy Dowden, Assoc Prof Bill Healy and Dr Noel Renouf **'Watching the Experts: Findings from a Study of Expertise in Mental Health Social Work'**

Ms Kathy Mendis, MSW Research, **'Feminist Research and Sensitive Topics – Are They Compatible? Interviewing Child Victims of Family Violence about their Subsequent Mothering'**

Ms Patsy Frawley, PhD student, **'Participation by People with an Intellectual Disability in Shaping Disability and Social Policy: A Review of the Literature'**

Ms Sally Sobels, PhD student, **'Do Socio-cultural Learning Theories assist in Understanding Rural Allied Health Practitioners Professional Practice Development?'**

Ms Grace Brown, **'Education of Social Workers for Rural Practice'**

Ms Linda Tunstall, BSW Honours student, **'Family Members' Experiences of Victorian Crisis Assessment and Treatment (CAT) Services'**

Dr Tim Clement, Dr Chris Bigby & Dr Kelley Johnson (RMIT), **'Making Life Good in the Community'**

Dr Carmel Laragy, **'What is Social Work's Place in the New World of Consumerism?'**

Mr Brian K Cooper, PhD student, **'The Effects of Relocation on the Independence, Integration and Satisfaction of People with an Intellectual Disability'**

Assoc Prof Margarita Frederico, Ms Annette Jackson, Ms Carly Black, Assoc Prof Martin Ryan, Berry Street Victoria Take Two and School of Social Work and Social Policy (Bundoora) and Prof Shane Thomas, School of Public Health, **'Understanding Children and Young People who have been Traumatized by Abuse and Neglect'**

International Visitors

Two IAS Distinguished Fellows have been hosted by the School during the last 12 months. The first was **Professor Shula Ramon**, Professor of Inter-professional Health and Social Studies at Anglia Polytechnic University, Cambridge, UK. Since 1997 Prof Ramon has managed four projects in which mental health service users were trained and participated as researchers, and has supervised and supported another four such postgraduate dissertations and PhD. She is the editor of *Users Researching Health and Social care: An Empowering Agenda* (2003, Venture Press, Birmingham) and her most recent book is: *'Mental Health at the Crossroad: The Promise of the Psychosocial Approach'*, published in August 2005, by Ashgate Publishing (Aldershot, UK), in which Associate Prof. Healy and Dr. Renouf from LaTrobe University have a chapter on Australian mental health social policy.

As part of her visit Professor Ramon gave a seminar on **Consumer/User Participation in Social Work Education and Research**. Consumers' active participation in education and research is a major challenge. Genuine partnership with client's calls for an active part to be taken up by all partners, and for the recognition of strengths in the service consumer which entails a move away from the traditional portrayal of the user as a bundle of weaknesses. In the seminar Prof. Ramon looked at the recent systematic attempt in British social work education to engage and involve service users and their informal carers in the teaching of the new three year degree in social work, in place since September 2003.

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Professor Jim Mansell, Professor of the Applied Psychology of Learning Disability and Director of the Tizard Centre at the University of Kent, England visited the School during June and July 2006. Prof. Mansell has been involved in the research and development of community-based intellectual disability services in England and Wales since 1970. His research focuses on deinstitutionalisation and community living, the organisation of services and challenging behaviour. He has published widely in the academic and professional literature. As part of his visit an Open Forum was hosted by the Institute for Advanced Study, titled **What Matters Most: Quality of Care in Residential Services for People with Intellectual Disabilities**. Over 50 academics and practitioners heard Prof. Mansell speak about the quality of care in residential services for people with intellectual disabilities. Drawing in his research in the UK and other European countries, Prof Mansell reviewed the way in which quality, and ideas about quality, have changed in recent years and the implications of research for everyone concerned about services for people with intellectual disabilities.



As part of Prof Mansell's visit the School organised a **Roundtable on Intellectual Disability Policy, From Ideology to Reality: Current Issues in Implementation of Intellectual Disability Policy**. The roundtable was attended by 45 senior academics, policy makers, advocates and managers from the non government sector. The roundtable provided the opportunity to explore issues in disability policy, (specifically intellectual disability policy but also the contentious relationship with wider disability policy) and promoted dialogue and exploration of the challenges ahead. Later this year the six papers that provided background reading for the day together with a commentary by Prof. Mansell will be published. These papers covered

- the vision expressed in current policy and its underlying assumptions
- the meaning of community inclusion
- need for services and their supply
- factors supporting or impeding implementation
- organisational strategies for supporting implementation
- resources, regulation and risk

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Staff

Bundoora Campus

Ms Alison McClelland - Associate Professor and Head of School
Dr Allan Borowski - Professor
Dr David Cox - Adjunct Professor
Dr Christine Bigby – Reader & Associate Professor
Ms Margarita Frederico - Associate Professor
Mr Bill Healy – Associate Professor
Dr Martin Ryan – Associate Professor
Dr Helen Cleak - Senior Lecturer
Mr Mark Furlong - Senior Lecturer
Dr John McCormack – Senior Lecturer
Dr Noel Renouf - Adjunct Senior Lecturer
Mr David Green - Lecturer
Dr Carmel Laragy - Lecturer
Ms Maureen Long - Lecturer
Dr Trish McNamara - Lecturer
Ms Cathy Dowden - Student Placement Coordinator
Ms Nicole Mulligan – Fieldwork Placement Officer
Mr Neil McDonald - Administration Manager
Ms Jean Power - Student Administrative Officer
Ms Sally Collins - Administrative Officer
Ms Margaret Green - Administrative Officer

Albury – Wodonga Campus

Dr Guin Threlkeld - Senior Lecturer and School Head of Campus
Dr Judith Gibbs - Lecturer
Dr Sue Hodgkin - Lecturer
Ms Virginia Mansel Lees - Lecturer
Ms Robyn Mortlock - Lecturer
Dr Deborah-Anne Walsh - Lecturer
Ms Nicole Rollinson - Student Placement Coordinator
Ms Alice Glachan - Administrative Officer

Bendigo Campus

Ms Dianne Cox - Senior Lecturer and School Head of Campus
Dr Jennifer Lehmann - Senior Lecturer
Ms Grace Brown - Lecturer
Ms Jan Pascal - Lecturer
Ms Deborah Western - Lecturer
Ms Natasha Long - Student Placement Coordinator
Ms Kathryn Barton - Administrative Officer

Mildura Campus

Ms Paula Bruce - Lecturer

rapport (noun) relationship or communication, especially when useful and harmonious

rapporteur (noun) a person responsible for compiling reports and presenting them

Contact Details

Albury-Wodonga
Phone: 02 6024 9730
Fax: 02 6024 9737
Email: a.glachan@latrobe.edu.au

Bendigo
Phone: 03 5444 7411
Fax: 03 5444 7977
Email: socialwork.bendigo@latrobe.edu.au

Bundoora
Phone: 03 9479 2570
Fax: 03 9479 3590
Email: socialwork.inquiries@latrobe.edu.au

Mildura
Phone: 03 5051 4012
Fax: 03 5022 0043
Email: p.bruce@latrobe.edu.au

Website
www.latrobe.edu.au/socialwork