

**We must live in a society  
that understands the  
successes and mistakes of  
our past in order to create a  
sustainable and socially just  
future for humanity**

## **THS Funded Research Projects November 2014**

**Transforming Human Societies**  
Building a just and sustainable future

---

# THS Funded Research Projects

Transforming Human Societies (THS) is one of the five Research Focus Areas at La Trobe. THS funds innovative research projects across the University that are aligned with the THS strategic plan and will help THS achieve its vision of building a just and sustainable future.

This report provides summary of all projects that have been funded in 2013/14.

---

## Disclaimer

The information contained in this publication is indicative only. While every effort is made to provide full and accurate information at the time of publication, the University does not give any warranties in relation to the accuracy and completeness of the contents. The University reserves the right to make changes without notice at any time in its absolute discretion, including but not limited to varying admission and assessment requirements, and discontinuing or varying courses. To the extent permitted by law, the University does not accept responsibility of liability for any injury, loss, claim or damage arising out of or in any way connected with the use of the information contained in this publication or any error, omission or defect in the information contained in this publication.

La Trobe University is a registered provider under the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS). CRICOS Provider 00115M

# Introduction

Transforming Human Societies (THS) is one of the five Research Focus Areas at La Trobe University. THS was established in 2013 with the aim to foster collaboration among academics, government, industry and community organisations to create innovative and practical models for a number of carefully targeted areas of major social change.

The researchers in THS are working to better understand the causes, impacts and outcomes of transformation in human societies. We want to help communities to understand the mistakes and the successes of the past and to help create a just and sustainable world. THS funds innovative research projects within La Trobe University that confront some of the most pressing challenges facing human societies across the world. The themes that guide our research fall under three major interconnected and intersecting themes:

1. understanding human origins, mobility and insecurity
2. understanding social and cultural change
3. achieving social justice with sustainability.

These themes have allowed us to distribute our research into five research clusters:

1. Human rights, gender and sexuality
2. Indigenous peoples – Australia and International
3. Migration and mobilities
4. Sustainability and social justice
5. Economic and political change

In 2013/14 THS has funded 33 research projects, involving over 60 researchers from various disciplines including history, archaeology, psychology, anthropology, law, economics, management, nursing and sociology. A brief description of these projects is provided in this report.

I, as Director of THS, invite you to take a closer look at our funded projects and if you find interest in any of those projects feel free to contact us. We are seeking to foster partnerships with business, international organisations, state and local government departments, not-for-profit organisations, leading international universities, philanthropic organisations, and indigenous, local, regional, national and international communities that are interested in supporting or taking part in our research. We also want to hear from new or established researchers and potential postgraduate students interested in joining our teams and benefiting from our world-class research facilities and generous scholarship funds.

## **Professor Katie Holmes**

Director, Research Focus Area, Transforming Human Societies

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

La Trobe University, Victoria 3086

T: +61 3 9479 2427

F: +61 3 9479 1942

E: [k.holmes@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:k.holmes@latrobe.edu.au)

[www.latrobe.edu.au/research](http://www.latrobe.edu.au/research)



## Human Rights

### **BREAKING THE BOUNDARIES: WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE 1930-1970**

Lead Investigator: Professor Diane Kirkby

#### **School of Humanities**

This project examines the way the Carnegie and Fulbright programs in the middle decades of the twentieth century were important in facilitating travel, education, career advancement, international networking and transnational connections among women. Award schemes enabled women to pursue their individual goals for liberation, and to construct their political subjectivity and professional identity. The Fulbright program specifically set out to identify and foster academic and intellectual leaders from around the world, and thus widens the pool of talent from which future leaders would be drawn. The Carnegie program drew on existing leaders to build new opportunities. Both created a new cohort of women – trailblazers in their fields – for whom intellectual and cultural leadership became a reality. Through a focus on women's accessing of these awards this interdisciplinary project traces a trajectory of trans-Pacific exchange and the process by which discourses and ideas of equality and economic independence were circulated and communicated. The project will uncover the ways in which participation in these exchange programs in key decades offered women an opportunity to foster their own professional networks, experience a level of professional renewal, and influence their peers in higher education, the professions and the arts.



### **INTERSECTIONS OF DISADVANTAGE? GENDER AND SEXUALITY WITHIN ASIA- PACIFIC COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS**

Lead Investigator: Professor Gary Dowsett

#### **School of Public Health and Human Biosciences**

This project explores the intersection of gender, sexuality and disadvantage in a developing country context. It aims to generate new knowledge on the intersection of gender, sexuality, other structural and social forces, and disadvantage, with major implications for work that seeks to address injustice and inequality. The pilot project employs a three-part qualitative methodology to explore how gender and sexuality are intimately entwined with social inequality and injustice, and how these two concepts underpin intervention development and programming in the Asia-Pacific region. IDS is recognised within the international development field for its Sexuality and Development Programme. The La Trobe team brings together expertise in the areas of international development, gender, sexuality, and prevention of violence against women.



### **UNCERTAIN PARENTAGE? MAPPING LEGAL PARENTAGE ACROSS AUSTRALIAN FAMILY LAW**

Lead Investigator: Dr Fiona Kelly

#### **La Trobe Law School**

Drawing on the expertise of our co-investigators in both law and sociology, the aim of our project is to undertake a socio-legal study of the evolving concept of legal parentage in Australian family law. Through a case law, legislative, and pilot case file analysis of five parenting contexts in



which questions around legal parentage are repeatedly raised, we will map Australian parentage law trends. As Australian families diversify and the paths to parenthood grow, in large part due to rapid developments in the field of reproductive technology, the question of 'who is a parent?' has become more difficult to answer. Yet an answer is urgently needed if we are to provide legal stability for a generation of children born into families with which the law has yet to fully engage. While Australian scholars have explored discrete dimensions of this debate, no one has mapped legal parentage trends across the totality of axes. This project will make a valuable contribution to this cutting edge debate at a time when both federal and state governments have expressed interest in reform.

### **INDONESIA'S PROPOSED ANTI- WITCHCRAFT LEGISLATION: SORCERY, LAW, AND STATE**

Lead Investigator: Dr Nicholas Herriman

#### **School of Social Sciences and Communications**

Indonesian legislators have proposed new laws making witchcraft and sorcery illegal. This project, based on fieldwork interviews, aims to provide the first detailed study of these proposed laws, the underlying reasons and beliefs, and the shorter term effects of the laws' implementation. The significance lies in 'witches' and 'sorcerers' being regularly killed in Indonesia, though their killers are rarely prosecuted. The laws imply that 'witches' and 'sorcerers' themselves are to blame and should be jailed. The expected outcome of this unique study is new theoretical insights into local understandings of modernity. An additional outcome is that the project will also indicate a more



effective use of Australian government aid.

**WOMEN IN NON-TRADITIONAL EMPLOYMENT: AUSTRALIA AND BRITAIN C.1840S-1980S**

**Lead Investigator: Dr Emma Robertson  
School of Humanities**

In the 1990s, sociologists argued that the majority of women worked in ‘women’s only’ occupations, with Australia having the most sex-segregated workforce in the OECD. By studying women in non-traditional employment in both Australia and Britain, this project questions the nature of gendered divisions in the workplace and brings historical and sociological insight to contemporary issues of gender inequality. The focus is on those women who worked on ships, construction sites, and in the military and police forces, challenging the orthodoxy that such labour is men’s work. Studying women’s engagement in, and experiences of, paid employment brings awareness of women’s importance in driving change and pursuing social justice. The aim is to explain when, why and how changes to ‘non-traditional labour’ did or did not occur, in Australia and in Britain, and to examine what differences this made for women, for men, for work itself.



this international development. However the impact of institutionalisation of ADR on improved access to justice and substantive justice remains unclear. This research project focuses on ADR practitioners and explores their role within this justice landscape and the ethical issues that arise for them both around substantive and procedural justice. Two aspects of this research project are the subject of this application: 1. Identification of ethical issues that arise in different ADR processes and contexts; and 2. A comparative analyses of responses from US and Australian mediators to scenarios raising ethical and practical issues.

**Indigenous Peoples**

**OUR STORIES, OUR LIFE – MATERNAL ABORIGINAL WOMEN SPEAK FROM SHEPPARTON**

**Lead Investigator: Professor Helen Lee  
Co-Investigator: Ms Julie Andrews**

**School of Social Sciences and Communications**

Understanding and addressing the widening gap in health and wellbeing between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children is the focus of this pilot project, which will lead into a larger project with the Aboriginal community of Shepparton. The pilot involves collecting Aboriginal women’s stories about parenting past, present and future to explore the potential of using storytelling and life history narratives as a strategy for positive social change. The researchers will establish a partnership with the



Shepparton Aboriginal community and work collaboratively with the Aboriginal women involved in the pilot project to develop the larger project. With Chief Investigators from the fields of medicine, anthropology and history this interdisciplinary research will look beyond failed conventional approaches to addressing problems in regional Aboriginal communities to explore the potential of storytelling to engage communities in the process of intergenerational healing and inform the work of service providers, health practitioners and others.

**SMALL-SCALE MINING IN THE PHILIPPINES: INDIGENOUS INSTITUTIONS FOR SUSTAINABILITY**

**Lead Investigator: Dr Wendy Mee  
School of Social Sciences and Communications**

This project examines the extent to which indigenous institutions and local ecological knowledge continue to influence small-scale gold mining in selected sites in the Cordillera region of the Philippines. Gold has been mined by indigenous communities in this region since before Spanish colonial rule. In the recent past, communities in this region continued to regard community membership and indigeneity as the bases of access to mining sites and participation in mining. Given rapid improvements in technology, the high price of gold in recent years, the mining operations of ‘gold rush’ miners from other areas, and the lack of alternative income sources, this research seeks to determine the extent and strength of indigenous social institutions and environmentally-sensitive practices in small-scale mining in the region. The outcomes of this research will inform



the development of appropriate legislative and regulative mechanisms of small-scale mining in this region

### **WELL BEATEN PATHS: ANTIQUITY OF TASMANIAN ABORIGINAL LAND USE**

**Lead Investigator: Associate Professor Richard Cosgrove**

**School of Humanities**



This project examines the archaeology of Aboriginal people in eastern Tasmania. The major aim is to test two models of Holocene and late Pleistocene land use

put forward by Harry Lourandos in 1968 and Richard Cosgrove and others in 1990. Specifically it investigates past tribal Aboriginal relationships using stone artefact raw material and the distance it travelled away from quarries as a proxy for social interaction. Stone artefacts will be analysed using non-destructive portable X-Ray Fluorescence (pXRF) to chemically characterise museum collections and quarry sites. Stone artefacts from the Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford and Tasmanian archaeological collections are used in the study. The project will have significance for further understanding the regional relationships and social connectedness between eastern and western Tasmania over 40,000 years. Significantly it will contribute to debates on the antiquity and land use patterns as well as trajectories of Aboriginal social/economic change and stasis.

### **SUPPORTING INDIGENOUS PEOPLE WITH COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT FOUND UNFIT TO PLEAD**

**Lead Investigator: Professor Patrick Keyzer**

**La Trobe Law School**

When indigenous people with foetal alcohol syndrome disorder (FASD) come into contact with the criminal justice

system they are often determined to be incapable of understanding legal proceedings. The courts have power to discharge the accused or make a custodial order that



detains the person in a secure psychiatric facility or prison. These custodial orders typically result in imprisonment, and for a longer period that the person would have experienced had they been found guilty and sentenced. The Australian Human Rights Commission has determined that this is arbitrary and inconsistent with human rights principles. However while the Australian Senate resolved unanimously earlier this year that steps should be taken to ensure that this does not take place, nothing further has been done to address the problem. The project will assist in the quest for a lasting solution.

### **PROSPECTS FOR SETTLEMENT: COLONIAL ENGRAVING AND THE INSCRIPTION OF PEOPLED LANDSCAPES**

**Lead Investigator: Dr Liz Conor**

**School of Humanities**

Engravings figure

prominently in colonial visual histories yet no study has focused on this genre as a

discrete and extensive archive that indelibly impressed upon settlers' sense of place in the landscape. Well-known engravings such as William Blake's 1793 Native Family in New South Wales (after Phillip Gidley King's water-colour) reveal the importance of this print technology in interpreting and reproducing from original artworks, and later photographs. The relation of engraving to other media, including photography, and illustrated print



culture, remains an unwritten history. These widely distributed and popularly consumed images visualised prospects for settlement in the print workshops of Europe where copperplate artisans and refining technologies converged with conventions for seeing the 'New World', from the time of exploratory voyages to the Americas through to ethnographic observation. Through their dissemination in global communication routes and their publication in emigration manuals and guidebooks the project will investigate engravings as a driver for immigration by peopling the landscape in ways that aided the colonial project.

### **UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF ANIMAL BUSH TUCKER IN ABORIGINAL DIETS**

**Lead Investigator: Dr Jillian Garvey**

**School of Humanities**

Whilst the role of Australian plants in past Aboriginal diets has been well studied and documented, we know very little



about animal 'bush tucker' and its nutritional value, how it was hunted, butchered and cooked. Ethnographic studies have shown that prey animal butchery and body part division play an important role in tribal social and economic cohesion. This project will be longitudinal, aimed at understanding the hunting, butchery and subsistence behaviour by Aboriginal people over the past 40,000 years. A multidisciplinary approach to the analysis of traditional ethnographic and modern hunting, butchery and cooking techniques will be undertaken. The dietary benefits of key endemic prey species will be recorded through an examination of the nutritional quality of several native animals. It will broaden our understanding of how people survived climatic and environmental change in

different geographical regions. Other important outcomes include the potential role of endemic fauna in contemporary diets.

## Migration and Mobilities

### 3D MAPPING TECHNOLOGY FOR UNDERSTANDING HUMAN ADAPTATIONS TO INCREASING ARIDITY

Lead Investigator: Associate Professor Andy Herries

School of Humanities

The origin of our genus, Homo, is one of the most hotly debated topics in science. Early Homo fossils from the Drimolen and Haasgat caves have recently been dated to older than 1.95 million years. This makes them the oldest well-dated specimens of Homo in South Africa and contemporary with fossils that have been suggested to be ancestral to the genus Homo. The origin of Homo has been associated with a period of increased aridity and significant environmental change that impacted the regional adaptation and evolution of mammal species. The aim is to reconstruct the landscape (geology, ecology) of South Africa in detail between 2.3 and 1.9 million years for the first time and help understand this changing world and the processes that drove our evolutionary history, including the extinction of a number of species. This will be done by 3D mapping the caves themselves as well as changes in the landscape through time by applying cosmogenic nuclide exposure dating to understand landscape erosion. The project will also document the uniqueness of the greater



South African fossil record versus the better studied East African record and address the complex origin of our genus, Homo, from a pan-African perspective.

### PREDICTIVE MODELLING OF ANCIENT CULTURAL LANDSCAPES IN CYPRUS AND GEORGIA: A COMPARISON OF SIMILAR ENVIRONMENTAL ADAPTATIONS IN CULTURALLY DISTINCT SETTINGS

Lead Investigator: Dr Jessie Birkett-Rees

School of Humanities

This research will enable systematic surveys of ancient settlements and agricultural remains (especially stone terrace wall systems) for GIS-based modelling of ancient agrarian landscapes in Cyprus and Georgia. Previous survey and mapping of the hinterland around Bronze Age Politiko-Troullia, Cyprus reveals visible archaeological remains, and has supported localised GIS modelling of long-term agricultural land use. In contrast, archaeological research around the multi-period site of Chobareti, in Anti-Caucasus mountains of Georgia, incorporates regional survey identifying archaeological sites and associated landscape features. However, alluvium and lush vegetation limit the visibility of archaeological remains here. Modelling methods developed on Cyprus will be used to predict ancient settlement locations and land use patterns on the minimally visible landscapes of Georgia. In a complementary fashion, the broader survey methods developed in Georgia will be used to extend regional reconnaissance around Politiko-Troullia, thus developing mutually beneficial,



data-rich models that will enable comparative analyses of long-term population movements and cultural landscape dynamics in Georgia and Cyprus.

### TONGANS IN REGIONAL VICTORIA: SETTLERS, SEASONAL WORKERS AND OVERSTAYERS

Lead Investigator: Professor Helen Lee  
School of Social Sciences and Communications

Tongans in Mildura and Robinvale have different visa statuses, including Australian citizenship, permanent residence and temporary work visa, in addition to some visa 'overstayers'. A pilot project will be conducted to examine the impact of these different statuses, as well as gender and age differences, on their access to public services, their relationships within their own community and with other ethnic groups in the region, and their trans-local and transnational networks with other Tongans. The pilot study will be used to develop an interdisciplinary project on Pacific Islanders in regional Victoria focusing on these issues. The project will inform policy-making to address problems faced by migrant groups in rural areas of Australia.



### MOBILITIES IN THE MURRAY-DARLING REGION STEP 1: A TRAVELLING WORKSHOP

Lead Investigator: Dr Trevor Hogan  
School of Social Sciences and Communications

This is an interdisciplinary research program that examines the causes, impacts and dynamics of population mobility in the Murray



Darling Region. The first step is bringing La Trobe scholars from across the faculties into dialogue with regional, national and international experts in mobilities research. A series of events (e.g. public lectures, master classes, seminars and research planning sessions) will be hosted within the Murray Darling Region to create opportunities for collaboration, identify research problems and produce innovative approaches to seeking funding and applying expertise to addressing those problems. Invited participants will include Higher Degree by Research students, multidisciplinary research teams and non-University stakeholders in local government and regional agencies. By hosting the events in Bendigo and Mildura, we will bring international, national and La Trobe expertise into dialogue with local stakeholders, thereby ensuring the resulting research projects are relevant, timely and achievable.

#### **LATE PLEISTOCENE CULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL LANDSCAPE EVOLUTION OF THE SEMI-ARID MALLEE REGION, VICTORIA**

**Lead Investigator: Dr Jillian Garvey**  
**School of Humanities**

This project will produce a predictive map of the late Pleistocene landscape of northwest Victoria along the south bank of the Murray River through the creation of a high resolution digital elevation model based on LiDAR data. After retrieving sediment cores from ancient lakebeds a detailed fire record for this region will be produced to determine the timing of the establishment of the semi-arid Mallee woodlands on this landscape. Human settlement and adaptations to environmental changes will be informed by our landscape model and fire history



record in this semi-arid region. The results of our research funded by this RFA will be used to develop a larger landscape evolution model for the Murray-Darling River System of southwest NSW and northwest Victoria from the last ice age, with its associated megafaunal extinctions and landscape transformation caused by burning, through the creation of historic pastoral landscapes.

#### **PLACEMAKING AND RURAL RETIREMENT MIGRATION: MOTIVATIONS, PRACTICES AND PROCESSES**

**Lead Investigator: Dr Rachel Winterton**  
**School of Nursing and Midwifery**

This project critically investigates placemaking practices undertaken by retirement migrants within rural communities. Semi-structured interviews are currently being conducted with retirement migrants residing in six diverse rural communities, located in peri-urban, agricultural and amenity settings. Findings will explore the motivations of rural retirement migrants to undertake placemaking activities within their communities, and the types of activities that they subsequently undertake. Significantly, it will also identify which community and external systems and structures that they engage with to undertake these placemaking activities, and their expectations from these systems and structures. This research is significant in that it will allow a critical exploration of how retirement migrants create and recreate rural places, while providing insight into how retirement migrants can be better supported and utilised.



#### **THE PALAEOGENOMIC BASIS OF SOCIAL ORGANISATION IN THE EARLIEST SEDENTARY VILLAGES**

**Lead Investigator: Dr Cristina Valdiosera**

**School of Humanities**

This project will employ the latest Next Generation Sequencing (NGS) technologies to recover low coverage genomes that will allow us to conduct population genomic analysis on skeletal remains from seven individuals from Wadi Hammeh 27.



Recently, these NGS technologies have been used to shed light on the spread of farming cultures from the Near East to Europe (e.g. Skoglund et al. 2012), but nothing is known of the genetics of the pre-agrarian populations. If the genetic variability of the Wadi Hammeh 27 population was relatively high, there will be a good chance of tracing specific kin relationships between individuals and testing the patrilocal model of social organisation. The genomic data can also be used to investigate the genetic origins of the Natufians and trace their genetic input to subsequent populations.

A pilot study on a human third molar from the site has already determined the presence of sufficient ancient human DNA for further analysis in the sample. The remains of all seven individuals (Webb and Edwards 2013, Webb and Edwards 2002) include teeth, which are the best potential samples for ancient DNA analyses. The samples are stored at the University of Sydney and are administered by Dr Phillip Edwards (La Trobe) under permit from the Department of Antiquities of Jordan. All samples are immediately available for study.

#### **ARCHAEOMAGNETIC APPLICATIONS FOR LOOKING AT HUMAN-CLIMATE INTERACTIONS IN AUSTRALIA**

**Lead Investigator: Dr Agathe Lisé-Pronovost**

**School of Humanities**





Lake Mungo, Australia's oldest human occupation site is primarily a record of campfires and associated stone tools and bone deposited over 50,000 years of

fluctuating lake levels. Yet, the record of early Australian fire technology and its change through time in response to environmental change remains poorly documented. Working on material from this world heritage site is crucial, and especially the earliest occupation sites currently being destroyed by erosion. The aim is to use archaeomagnetism at S.E. Australian archaeological sites to investigate fire use by Australia's early inhabitants including as an engineering tool for making stone tools; something only documented in Australia during the last 2,000 years. The project also looks at the effects of changing aridity on the use of this technology. The acquired data will also form the basis for the first Australian reference curve for using changes in the Earth's magnetic field through time for dating archaeological sites. This will also provide primary data on changes in the Earth's magnetic field and evolution of the Earth's interior through time, something severely lacking for the southern hemisphere and Australia in particular.

**REIMAGINING REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT THROUGH A TRANSNATIONAL LENS: THE KAREN IN BENDIGO**

**Lead Investigator: Dr Raelene Wilding  
School of Social Sciences and Communications**

This project examines the settlement experience of the Karen in Bendigo. They are a growing refugee-background community, who make significant positive contributions to their new home city as well as simultaneously sustaining links with Karen living in

refugee camps on the Thai-Burma border and resettled elsewhere in Australia and around the world. The new era of mobilities means that refugee



settlement in local communities is increasingly shaped by non-local flows of people, resources and ideas. What are the implications of these flows for processes of belonging and social inclusion in regional Australia? To what extent do local and non-local social fields compete with or complement each other in the experience of settlement, and with what effects? An exploration of the arrival, reception and engagement of the Karen in Bendigo presents a useful opportunity for considering important questions about migration, settlement, belonging and identity in a mobile world.

**Sustainability and Social Justice**

**NEGOTIATING GRIEF AND TRAUMA IN THE CORONERS COURT OF VICTORIA**

**Lead Investigator: Mr Marc Trabsky  
La Trobe Law School**

This project seeks to explore and understand the experience of legal professionals working in the Victorian Coroners Court. The project is placed within the



wider context of the lawyer well-being research. This research evidences abnormally high levels of depression, substance abuse and suicide amongst the legal profession in Australia. To date, no research has been undertaken in regard to the well-being of legal professionals in the Coroners Court,

despite what would appear to be a uniquely difficult and stressful work environment. This project thus aims to investigate the intimate, affective and relational aspects of working in the coronial jurisdiction. It questions how legal professionals who work in this jurisdiction negotiate their affective responses to grief and trauma, and maintain boundaries between their public roles and private lives.

**EFFECTS OF GENETIC PREDISPOSITIONS ON CULTURAL ADAPTATION OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

**Lead Investigator: Associate Professor Emiko Kashima  
School of Psychological Science**

This research seeks to understand the potential impacts of genetic predispositions on cultural adaptation of international students who study in



Australia. Recent cultural neuroscience research has begun to shed new light on the genetic as well as cultural influences on human adaptation to their social environment, especially in terms of socio-cultural sensitivities. This project investigates the relevance of this knowledge in the domain of psychological acculturation – i.e., how individuals maintain their wellbeing while building social ties and learning new culture. Questions to be tackled include “Do genes that are expected to influence individuals’ socio-cultural sensitivities influence the ways in which individuals adapt to life in Australia? Which genotypes have what implications and how strong are those influences? How do they relate to the development of social ties and personalities?” By addressing these questions, this project will advance the existing knowledge concerning psychological acculturation of

international migrants in some significant ways.

### **COMPETITION AND COOPERATION: COMPARISONS OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOL STUDENTS**

**Lead Investigator: Associate Professor Buly Cardak**

**School of Economics**

The relative effectiveness of public versus private schooling has been widely studied over the past several decades, but past studies tend to



focus on readily available outcome measures, such as test scores, dropout rates and wages. This project will focus on more fundamental drivers of individual success in life. It will be the first study that attempts to: (1) document whether students and graduates from different school sectors differ in their competitiveness, altruism, time patience, risk preferences, and reasoning ability; and (2) assess if differences can be interpreted as “causal” by using a range of statistical methods and several cohorts of students to isolate selection bias. The findings will not only draw attention to the roles of school types and family backgrounds in moulding individuals’ cognitive and behavioural traits which past studies neglect, but will also inform educators and policy makers on potential school inputs that matter to these traits.

### **THE ROLE OF THE CREATIVE CLASS IN TRANSFORMING RURAL TOWNS**

**Lead Investigator: Ms Melissa Kennedy**  
**School of Humanities**

This PhD project seeks to add to the literature on the rural creative class, by firstly developing an index to scope the extent of rural creative towns in Victoria. Following this, three case

studies of ‘creative communities’ will be undertaken in order to analyse the characteristics of the rural creative class and extrapolate how their networks, knowledge and creative activities are brought to bear on the transformation and regeneration of small towns.



### **CSR STRATEGY AND SOCIAL RISK MANAGEMENT: DEVELOPING A PROCESS MODEL**

**Lead Investigator: Associate Professor Suzanne Young**

**La Trobe Business School**

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) ‘is the responsibility of an organisation for the impacts of its decisions and activities on society and the environment, through transparent and ethical behaviour that contributes to sustainable development, including the health and the welfare of society; takes into account the expectations of stakeholders; is in compliance with applicable law and consistent with international norms of behaviour; and is integrated throughout the organisation and practised in its relationships’ (ISO). CSR is a relatively new phenomenon in the business sector, with the potential to create significant additional business and social value for organisations who successfully manage its alignment and integration with existing corporate values and strategy. The aim of this project is to develop a new process-oriented model for CSR that can be implemented as a means of managing corporate social risk arising from the nature of their products such as tobacco, alcohol or gambling. The project will use ethnographic case



studies of Australian-based organisations currently experiencing social risk.

### **RESPONDING TO ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE: THE THREATENED FORAGER HYPOTHESIS**

**Lead Investigator: Associate Professor Emiko Kashima**

**School of Psychological Science**

Humans and animals alike need to respond adaptively to sudden and drastic environmental changes that take place in their



surroundings. Awareness of sudden environmental changes however can trigger threat reactions, causing strong emotions and hindering effective actions. This project aims to clarify the psychological and neural bases of threat reactions, and how culture and gene influence those reactions. This project uniquely brings together the analyses of cultural influences, intrapersonal psychological processes, brain activities and human genetic influences within a single framework. It will be shown that cultural beliefs and narratives that remind people of human resilience can alter threat reactions and enhance adaptive responses, despite high environmental sensitivity that some individuals may show genetically. The project will contribute to the development of culture that fosters psychological resilience and high quality of life in the current and future generations.

### **RURAL TOURISM: HERITAGE, IDENTITIES AND SUSTAINABILITY**

**Lead Investigator: Associate Professor Warwick Frost**

**La Trobe Business School**

This study will identify critical success factors which must be addressed to strategically achieve rural and regional change in an Australian context. The focus will be on change related to



tourism, cultural events and tourism-related agriculture and manufacturing (such as wine and artisanal and niche food production). This qualitative project will focus on

three regions across Australia AND utilise the Critical Success Factors framework as a theoretical lens to understand the processes of successful rural development. These critical success factors will be identified through a series of semi-structured long interviews with key stakeholders involved in the processes of restructuring, diversification and innovation. The study will also identify people who take on the role of a 'champion' or 'change agent', leading and inspiring others to be involved in the processes of restructuring within a region or rural area. Critical success factors that have been identified will be analysed from both a business and social sciences perspective. Clearly the problem of restructuring for rural Australia is typically conceived in economic terms, particularly employment. However, it is also important to recognise and understand the social and community implications. Findings will be used to both better understand the processes of successful rural development and to assist regions, government agencies and community organisations in future development processes and strategies.

**THE MELBOURNE LANEWAYS PROJECT: CONTESTED PUBLIC SPACES AND SUSTAINABLE URBANISM**

**Lead Investigator: Dr Trevor Hogan  
School of Social Sciences and Communications**

The Melbourne Laneways Project will assess and communicate the value of Melbourne's laneways as critical and

dynamic cultural sites to the city's liveability.

Melbourne's laneways are an exciting example of the transformation, contestation and urban dynamism found within cities. The first phase will be a pilot study of the popular Hosier Lane, a small laneway opposite Federation Square said to be Melbourne's third largest tourist destination, a site of contestation between developers, planners, artists and residents. The project will develop links with local and international collaborators and seek external funding for the second phase. The second phase, contingent on external funding, will broaden the study to answer the question of the role and future of Melbourne's laneways for the CBD's liveability and sustainability. International research networks will be utilised resulting in publications and collaborations that give it a comparative and contextualised footing.

**TREATMENT-SEEKING PRACTICES AND CAPACITY-BUILDING FOR HEALTHCARE SERVICES IN REGIONAL FIJI**

**Lead Investigator: Dr Tarryn Phillips  
School of Social Sciences and Communications**



On the Fijian island of Ovalau, medical staff and the Board of Visitors at the local hospital have identified an increasing social problem. A high number of preventable health conditions and deaths from otherwise treatable conditions are caused by people neglecting to seek timely medical treatment from hospital staff. In this proposed project, the multidisciplinary research team will



examine the relationship between treatment-seeking practices, access to healthcare and health outcomes on the island. The project has two parts: a) a pilot project, which will collect initial data on the socio-cultural, political and economic reasons behind the delayed use of the hospital; and b) support for the development of an ARC Discovery grant application, which will examine medical practices in the wider region of Lomaiviti province. The outcomes will be both academic and policy-oriented, and the findings will be applicable to healthcare in developing contexts globally.

**EDUCATION PROGRAM TO REDUCE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN TIMOR-LESTE**

**Lead Investigator: Professor Susan McDonald**

**School of Nursing and Midwifery**



Violence against women in any setting is unacceptable behaviour. For women in developing countries such as Timor-Leste,

almost 40% (and in some districts up to 76% of) women experience physical and or sexual violence. Where gender inequality and disempowerment is heavily embedded in social custom, violence is allowed to be perpetuated with impunity and imposes serious physical, mental health and productivity impacts on women, families and communities (WHO,2005).The prevalence of violence against women is particularly elevated during pregnancy. Midwives are in located throughout the community in hospitals, health centres and health posts across a wide geographic area in Timor-Leste and held in high regard by the community and other health professionals. Being able to work with colleagues at Univercidade Nacional Timor Lorosa'e to design a

program that can be included as part of the midwifery degree program will ensure the next generation of health workers enter the community with better skills to work with women and families to reduce violence. The aim of this scoping study is to work with key stakeholders and educators in Timor-Leste to develop, implement and evaluate an education program for health professionals designed to enhance their skills in recognition, reporting and support of women and families who experience violence.

### **THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION'S HISTORY FROM 1919**

**Lead Investigator: Professor Diane Kirkby**

#### **School of Humanities**

This project will seed funding for application for ARC Linkage funding for a history of the International Labour Organisation that coincides with the centenary of the organisation. The interdisciplinary team of researchers will address the question of how the organisation's tripartite philosophy of managing the interests of workers, employers and governments was challenged by the flows of both labour and patterns of exploitation that transcended or evaded national borders.



### **HARMONY: ACHIEVING SOCIAL JUSTICE FOR INDIAN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVIVORS**

**Lead Investigator: Professor Angela Taft**

#### **School of Nursing and Midwifery**

Preventing and reducing domestic violence (DV) is a national priority. Migrant women in Australia are particularly vulnerable to DV due to gender inequality, social isolation, unstable legal status and little

knowledge of support. Responding to this challenge requires systematic, culturally appropriate strategies to enhance women's safety and that of their families. Indian born migrants are an emerging population. Australia's health system benefits from bilingual Indian doctors. A UK GP model successfully increased referrals of DV survivors sixfold to support agencies. By working closely with Victoria's Indian communities, Harmony will develop culturally safe strategies for Indian GPs partnered with bilingual advocates to promote prevention and adapt the UK model to increase disclosure, support and referral among Indian families.



The study will pilot data for a large grant and generate globally new knowledge on the feasibility and effectiveness of culturally safe strategies to enhance the rights and safety of immigrant women experiencing DV.

#### **ENQUIRIES**

Dr Adnan Syed Muhammad T +61 3 9479 5282  
Development Manager F +61 3 9479 1464  
La Trobe University E ths@latrobe.edu.au  
Victoria 3086 latrobe.edu.au/th