

# Judith Lumley Centre

Transition to Contemporary  
Parenthood Program

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## Transition to Contemporary Parenthood Program

Jan Nicholson

In 2013, the Judith Lumley Centre received a major gift from Mrs Roberta Holmes to fund an innovative new research program to identify the best ways to support mothers and fathers in their roles as parents. This inter-disciplinary program aims to identify the key challenges facing parents in contemporary society, to develop strategies to prepare women and men for parenting and to help parents to support their children's healthy development and wellbeing.

The program seeks to support and inform public debate around contemporary parenthood and the use of evidence-informed policies and practices to support better outcomes for parents and children.

Research areas include enhancing understanding of mothers' and fathers' needs and experiences during pregnancy and early parenting, identifying the patterns of parenting associated with optimal outcomes for children across the early life course, examining the role of new technologies, and seeking innovative opportunities to strengthen supports to parents through the institutions and communities that comprise their everyday environments.

### Our staff

#### Professor Jan Nicholson



Jan was appointed as the Inaugural Roberta Holmes Professor in 2014 to establish the Transition to Contemporary Parenthood Program (TCPP). She brings extensive experience in longitudinal studies of the effects of family, socioeconomic and institutional (services, school and workplace) influences on the health and wellbeing of parents and children, and has played a leading role in the development and evaluations of programs for enhancing parent and child wellbeing

#### Dr Amanda Cooklin



Amanda is a Research Fellow in the TCPP. A common theme in Amanda's research is identifying over-arching social and structural factors that affect parents, parenting and children's outcomes. Her research has focused on employment characteristics and the work-family interface as sites of practice and policy interventions to reduce work-family conflict, promote parents' mental health, parenting practices and children's outcomes.

**NEWS IN BRIEF****Seeking research participants – alcohol and relationships**

**Have you ever felt afraid when your current or former partner has been drinking? Or do you know someone in this situation?**

A new PhD project at the Judith Lumley Centre is looking at the effects of alcohol on relationships. The sad reality for many women is that they feel afraid when their partner drinks. While alcohol does not cause someone to be violent, research shows that women are more severely harmed by a violent male partner when he has been drinking.

This study is inviting women aged 18–35 years living in Victoria to share their experience in a confidential interview. This research is important – for us to hear women's perspectives, and to help us learn from the strategies they use to keep themselves safe.

To find out more about the study, please visit

<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/jlc/research/social-context/wings> or

call/text the confidential recruitment line 0474 159 118 or email

[wings.study@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:wings.study@latrobe.edu.au).

If you know anyone affected by this issue, and feel it is appropriate to sensitively share this request for research participants, please do so.

**Dr Sharinne Crawford**

Sharinne is a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow in the TCPP. She is coordinating the VicHealth-funded project on 'Parental fear as a barrier to children's independent mobility and resultant physical activity'. Her previous research has focused on program implementation and evaluation research using mixed methods across fields such as health promotion, community health, nursing and community development.

**Olga Tsironis**

Olga is the Program Administration Officer for the TCPP. Olga has over eight years' experience working in a range of sectors including IT, academic and research. In her current role, she manages a range of general administrative and specialised tasks to support the TCP Program.

**Dr Elizabeth Westrupp**

Elizabeth is a Research Fellow based part-time in the TCPP and part-time at Murdoch Childrens Research Institute. Her research examines the biological, parent, family and social environmental factors influencing children's development and wellbeing. At TCPP she will take a leading role on an NHMRC Partnerships project looking at the school-age outcomes for children whose parents participated in an early childhood program that sought to strengthen the home learning environment.

**Shannon Bennetts**

Shannon is a Research Officer with the TCPP, working on the VicHealth-funded project on 'Parental fear as a barrier to children's independent mobility and resultant physical activity'. Shannon is an associate investigator on the NHMRC Partnerships project examining the effects of an early childhood parenting program and is undertaking her PhD at the Murdoch Childrens Research Institute.

## Lunchtime Seminars

Open lunchtime research seminars are held on the first Wednesday of every month from February to December, from 12:30-1:30pm, and showcase the work of national and international academics/researchers.

Other seminars will be announced as they arise. For the program, please see the upcoming events listing at <http://www.latrobe.edu.au/jlc>. If you would like to be added to our mailing list or update your contact details, please email us at [jlc@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:jlc@latrobe.edu.au)

## Graduations

**Michelle Newton** graduated with her PhD on 20 March 2014. Michelle's thesis was entitled *Implementing caseload midwifery: exploring the views and experiences of midwives and key stakeholders*. She was supervised by Helen McLachlan, Della Forster and Karen Willis

**Ellie MacDonald** graduated with her PhD on 15 May 2014. Ellie's thesis was entitled *Sexual Health after birth: Findings of the Maternal Health Study*. She was supervised by Rhonda Small.



## Miranda Francis

Miranda is the first recipient of a TCPP PhD scholarship. She is jointly supervised by Professor Katie Holmes from the History Department in La Trobe's Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and Professor Jan Nicholson. Her oral history research project will focus on mothering and the way women shape their stories of mothering within the context of their life story. Her research will examine both the restorative qualities of life review and the resulting changes in historical perspective.

## New research projects

TCPP staff brought three major projects with them to La Trobe University.

### 'Parental fear as a barrier to children's independent mobility and resultant physical activity'

*Parental fear as a barrier to children's independent mobility and resultant physical activity* is a three-year research project (2012–2015) funded by VicHealth, investigating the barriers that limit children's independent mobility, including parental worries and concerns. This research is being conducted by the TCPP team in collaboration with the Parenting Research Centre, and with researchers from the Australian National University, University of Western Australia and University of Texas.

### 'Longitudinal Study of Australian Children' (LSAC)

*Growing up in Australia: The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children* is a unique, ongoing study of 10,000 Australian children and their families. The study is funded by the Commonwealth Department of Social Services, managed by the Australian Institute of Family Studies, with data collected biennially by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Jan Nicholson is one of the founding members of the LSAC consortium, leading the Parenting and Family content collected at each wave. The TCPP team has extensive experience working with partners and collaborators, in analysing and disseminating findings arising from these data. Key areas of work have included:

- The development and validation of brief developmentally-appropriate measures of parenting across the childhood years.
- Examining the impact of parenting on a range of children's outcomes including mental health and overweight
- Determining the effects of socioeconomic circumstances on the wellbeing and parenting of mothers and fathers in couple, single and separated families.
- Identifying the trajectories of parents' mental health difficulties across the early parenting years
- Understanding the effects of mothers' and fathers' work on their own health and wellbeing and that of their children

## Visits

**Dr Patricia McNamara** will spend her sabbatical at the Centre until December 2014. Dr McNamara is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Social Work and Social Policy at La Trobe University. She is an experienced teacher, social worker and family therapist. Dr McNamara's research interests focus on child and family welfare and mental health. Current projects include a scoping of pathways to university from out of home care, funded by the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education. She is also involved in the establishment and evaluation of a mentorship program for homeless young people at Lighthouse Foundation. Dr McNamara is a non-executive Director of Mackillop Family Services and a foundation Board member of the International Association for Outcome-Based Evaluation and Research in Family and Children's Services (iaOBERfcs).

**Amanda Rodriguez** is currently pursuing a Masters of Public Health at Lund University in Sweden. She is interning at JLC with the LaCE project assisting in writing the acceptability and feasibility paper. Prior to this, Amanda spent two years as a social worker in mental health for formerly incarcerated youth (women) in San Francisco, California and three years working on maternal health in Uganda. The fields of maternal health and mental health continue to interest Amanda and she hopes to merge them in the future. Amanda sees her time at JLC as an opportunity to practice her writing skills and learn more about the research process.

- Documenting the costs of common childhood disorders including mental health problems, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, language difficulties, sleep problems and overweight.

## 'The Early Home Learning Study Goes to School': NHMRC Partnership Grant

Professor Jan Nicholson, Dr Elizabeth Westrupp and colleagues from the Parenting Research Centre, Murdoch Childrens Research Institute, Deakin University and Queensland University of Technology have been awarded an NHMRC Partnership Project Grant commencing in 2014. The research will investigate the long term effects of a program that helped parents to enrich the home learning environment of their young children. Over 2,000 families participated in the original Early Home Learning Study, commissioned by the Victorian Government Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD), and designed and evaluated by the Parenting Research Centre.

## Planning Day 2014



On 30 April 2014, the Judith Lumley Centre held its annual Planning Day at the Nurses Memorial Centre.

The day began with a presentation from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), Professor Keith Nugent, who praised JLC research achievements and spoke

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## Awards

**Maggie Flood** was the recipient of the 2013 Vivian Bullwinkel Award and a scholarship to undertake her Masters degree. Maggie's research will assess the accuracy of birth data in 2011 and analyse postpartum haemorrhages from birth from 003-2011.



## Staff News

**Angela Taft** was a Visiting Professorial Fellow at the Federal University of Parana in Brazil in July-August 2014.



Angela and colleagues following a workshop in Sao Paulo about publishing in English journals.

further on the role that research centres play in the University's Future Ready research strategy. Alison Angleton, the Manager for the 'Building Healthy Communities' Research Focus Area (RFA), discussed the role of RFA's in the University's Future Ready strategy. Alison discussed how she could support the work of JLC and emphasised the importance of translating the Centre's research; and developing and maintaining research partnerships and collaborations.

Angela Taft welcomed the new staff of the Transition to Contemporary Parenthood Program (TCPP) some of whom had just joined the centre. She discussed the opportunities and challenges facing the University. These include the various changes brought about as part of the Future Ready: Strategic Plan 2013-2017. Angela also discussed the potential goals for JLC in 2014. Jan Nicholson described progress of staff recruitment to date of the TCPP and the hopes for its further development. Current progress is described in more detail above.

During the afternoon, participants made plans for their research areas and career trajectories for the next twelve months and the next five years. The day was a productive and successful one for new and longer term staff.

## ICM Conference in Prague

Michelle Newton

In June, the Triennial Congress of the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) was held in Prague, Czech Republic, with over 3,800 attendees. The five day program was filled with high quality and engaging presentations and workshops.



From left: Della, Maggie, Simone, Michelle, Helene, Helen, and Mary Anne Biro.

Amongst the 486 Australian midwives who attended the Congress, the Judith Lumley Centre was well represented with presentations from a number of staff members, as well as past and present students. All sessions were well attended, and there was a high level of interest in the projects that have arisen from JLC from both Australian and international midwifery colleagues.

The following staff and students presented papers at the International Confederation of Midwives conference. These were:

**Mary-Ann Davey**

*Intervention in labour and early breastfeeding outcomes*

**Maggie Flood**

*Challenges identifying the postpartum haemorrhage rate in Australia*

**Della Forster**

*Supporting breastfeeding in local communities (SILC): a cluster randomised controlled trial in Victoria, Australia*

**Jennifer Jarman presenting Kate Dawson's**

*Exploring the introduction, expansion and sustainability of caseload midwifery in Australia*

**Helene Johns**

*Between the baby and the breast: a prospective cohort study exploring prevalence and outcomes associated with early breast milk expressing*

**Helen McLachlan**

*The effect of caseload midwifery on women's experience of labour and birth: results from the COSMOS RCT*

**Jane Morrow**

*Exploring the effect of continuity of care on in-hospital postnatal care*

**Michelle Newton**

*Caseload midwifery: exploring the views and experiences of caseload midwives and key stakeholders*

The conference also provided important opportunities for further research collaborations with national and international colleagues on work central to JLC, such as international collaboration to address issues of implementation of midwifery caseload models of care.

## Maternal Health Care in Rwanda

Kristina Edvarsson



Since 2013, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) has been supporting a large research project on maternal health care in Rwanda, with principal investigators located

in Sweden and Rwanda. As an international Postdoctoral Fellow based at the Judith Lumley Centre, I have been given the opportunity to participate in this highly important and interesting project. I visited Rwanda for the first time in May this year.

The overall project has received 10 million SEK of funding for five years. The two Principal Investigators, Professor Gunilla Krantz (Gothenburg University) in Sweden, and Associate Professor Joseph Ntaganira (University of Rwanda), together with their collaborators Professors Ingrid Mogren and Lars Lindholm (Umeå University), and Marie Berg (Gothenburg University), have developed a research plan that includes four PhD projects. These projects have a common aim of investigating various aspects of Rwanda's antenatal care and delivery services, including quality and utilisation of antenatal care and delivery services, pregnancy complications and their impact on health and family circumstances, with analyses of cost effectiveness

A comprehensive epidemiological data collection was undertaken in June 2014 when 800-1000 women were interviewed in their homes by trained interviewers. The questionnaire included a wide range of questions related to pregnancy and childbirth, including the quality and utilisation of antenatal care services. Additional qualitative and quantitative sub-studies will be undertaken. These studies will provide a valuable source of data for research, and more importantly, they will constitute an important information base for efforts to improve Rwanda's maternal and child health care services.

Rwanda is a low income country, with approximately 61% of the 11,000,000-person population classified as poor. The maternal mortality has been estimated to be 476 per 100,000 live births, and the prevalence and impact of obstetric complications are largely unknown. There are many barriers to good maternal health care in Rwanda, although the health system has been

## Other International Presentations

In addition to the papers delivered at the ICM conference, a number of Centre researchers gave presentations at international forums.

### Lisa Amir

*Breast infections in breastfeeding women: case studies of abscess, mastitis and more*

GOLD Lactation online conference, May 2014.

### Helene Johns

*The MILC Study – Exploring the prevalence and outcomes associated with breast milk expressing: a prospective cohort study*

GOLD Lactation online conference, May 2014.

### Touran Shafiei

*Designing randomised trials to be inclusive of migrants: The example of LaCE, a trial of Labour Companion Education for first-time parents*

Paper delivered at the EUPHA Migrant Health Conference in April 2014

### Mary-Ann Davey and Kate Gibson

*Interventions in labour and early breastfeeding outcomes in Victoria, Australia.*

Perinatal Medicine conference, Harrogate UK, June 2014.

reinforced by community health-based health insurance. The country has a troubled history which culminated with the 1994 genocide when more than 800,000 Tutsis lost their lives. The government has since made considerable efforts to restore the country and have set high goals for development.

I look forward to returning to Rwanda in August when the data collection has taken place. I feel very privileged to be part of this project, and I hope I can share my new knowledge and experiences with my colleagues at La Trobe University and Umeå University in Sweden.

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## New Staff

In addition to the TCPP staff, the Centre has welcomed two new staff members in 2014.



### Mridula Shankar

Mridula is an early career researcher whose research interests focus on sexual and reproductive health and rights. She is particularly interested in policy and programmatic approaches that foster choice and equity in contraceptive access; the intersections between gender inequalities and other social inequalities and the pathways through which they operate to impact sexual and reproductive health outcomes, and interventions for preventing and

reducing violence against women.

Mridula is currently engaged in research initiatives that address violence against migrant and refugee women and is part of a research team evaluating access and equity to medical abortion for women in Australia. This team is led by Angela Taft, and includes researchers from La Trobe University, the University of Sydney, Deakin University, the University of Queensland, Monash University and Marie Stopes International Australia.

Mridula holds a Masters degree in Public Health with a focus on Maternal and Child Health from the University of California, Berkeley.

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**Jan Nicholson**

Led a symposium at Head Start's 12th National Research Conference on Early Childhood in Washington DC in July: *Government-research-community partnerships: Evidence for an effective approach to enhancing the early home learning environment of children from disadvantaged families.*

**Liz Westrupp**

Led two symposia presented at international conferences in July: the International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development biennial conference in Shanghai and the International Association for the Study of Child Language conference in Amsterdam.

**Jay Daniel Thompson**

Jay is on secondment (until April 2015) as Research and Publications Officer with the Centre. Dr. Thompson comes to JLC from the Research Services Division, where he has been employed primarily as a Scholarships and Candidature Officer since August 2010. Jay is Book Reviews Editor for the *Journal of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature (JASAL)*, and

continues to research in the fields of Australian literature, critical whiteness studies, and literary criticism.

## Farewell to Nayana Samaraweera and Rhonda Tombros

In May, the Centre farewelled **Nayana Samaraweera** and **Rhonda Tombros**.

Nayana had been a visitor with the Centre since September 2013, and had worked closely with Angela Taft. He is a Medical Doctor (MBBS, MSc) from Sri Lanka specialising in public health. His specialist area is maternal and child health.

Rhonda had been a Research Fellow with the Centre since September 2013. She worked with Angela Taft, Della Forster and others to prepare and submit academic articles about intimate partner violence, termination of pregnancy and models of maternity care. Rhonda commenced as a lecturer in the School of Law, University of Canterbury, in New Zealand, in June 2014.

We wish Nayana and Rhonda well with their future endeavours.

**Judith Lumley Centre**

formerly Mother and Child Health  
Research

A La Trobe University  
215 Franklin Street  
Melbourne Vic 3000  
T +61 3 9479 8800  
E [mchr@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:mchr@latrobe.edu.au)