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Director's Update

2017 has shaped up to be a big year for the Centre for People, Organisation and Work (CPOW). CPOW members have continued to deliver research excellence through high-quality outputs and impact. The Centre has held an array of successful seminars, workshops and colloquiums throughout the year, featuring Centre researchers, visiting scholars and industry representatives. On behalf of the Centre, I sincerely thank all those involved for their ongoing support and contributions.



In this last newsletter for 2017, we provide an update on two key research projects and report on a number of successful Centre events. I am also thrilled to congratulate Dr Fiona Macdonald on her receipt of a *Vice Chancellor's Award for Research Impact - Early Career Researcher*. Associate Professor Mike Rafferty for his appointment as an advisor to the Economic Space Agency and Dr Raymond Trau for his appointment as a member of the Diversity Council of Australia's Research Committee.

As the year draws to a close, CPOW still has a number of interesting events scheduled and we'd be delighted to see you there. In particular, I'm pleased to invite you to a session designed to support researchers to communicate the impact of their research. In this session, Visiting Professor David Allen from the University of Leeds will present on how to create traceable impact from academic research. Further details of the event can be found below.

I wish you a safe and happy holiday!

Project Updates

CRIMT Interuniversity Research Centre on Globalisation and Work: Partnership Project "Institutional Experimentation for Better Work"

A start-up meeting on the CRIMT Partnership Project took place 27-29 October 2017 in Magog, Canada. CPOW was represented by Associate Professor Vanessa Cooper, Professor John Burgess and Postdoctoral Research Fellow Dr Kate Farhall. The program comprised a partner board meeting, doctoral school, plenary sessions and interactive workshops.

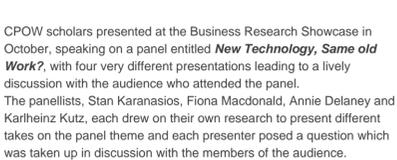
Researchers from all of the Partner Centres were invited to participate in a collaborative and purposeful exchange around the core themes of the project. The focus was on how the fault lines of change are disrupting traditional regulatory arenas, making and how this is leading to institutional experimentation (and whether work worse or better), how to identify such cases of experimentation, how to organise and compare these cases in the development of a comparative data base and of a Virtual Laboratory of Institutional Experimentation, and, most importantly, how to establish the basis for the kind of sustainable collaboration, between CRIMT researchers and with world-of-work actors, required for such a transformative project.

Overall, the program provided rich opportunities to build on the synergies between the different partner centres and researchers involved in the project. A meeting for CPOW's CRIMT researchers will be scheduled shortly to provide a full report on the Magog program and to discuss the 'Next Steps' in the project. Please contact cpow@rmit.edu.au if you are interested in getting involved in the CRIMT Institutional Experimentation for Better Work research program.

Skills for Green Jobs

CPOW members Kate Grosser, Peter Fairbrother and Mike Rafferty were part of a team that undertook the Australia Case of the Skills for Green Jobs for the International Labour Organisation (ILO). The report discusses the major changes since the one in 2009 (undertaken by Mike Rafferty and Serena Yu from University of Sydney), which outlined to what extent there are new initiatives or changed priorities in the major green skill programs. The report also outlined the major environmental policies and how these linked to changed demand for skills – how, if at all, these skills are met via training, problems and issues, and successes. The report described the continuity of unresolved conflict and lack of political consensus on key environmental policy, especially around renewable energy and CO2. However, despite a lack of progress at a national level activism on greening the economy and labour market, the report did note that there were several important developments occurring at a state level, local government level and corporate levels.

CoB Business Research Showcase



CPOW scholars presented at the Business Research Showcase in October, speaking on a panel entitled *New Technology, Same old Work?*, with four very different presentations leading to a lively discussion with the audience who attended the panel. The panellists, Stan Karanasios, Fiona Macdonald, Annie Delaney and Karlheinz Kutz, each drew on their own research to present different takes on the panel theme and each presenter posed a question which was taken up in discussion with the members of the audience.

Stan addressed the different ways technology can both change and support work, drawing on his research to highlight the use of technology by frontline police officers and the disruptions caused by the use of financial technology in Africa. Fiona looked at the use of technology in care work and posed the question of whether this made care work more autonomous and flexible or in fact underpinned the acceleration of 'just-in-time' labour under increased surveillance and control. Annie took up the potential use of technology in the global fashion industry and asked if technology could be used for 'good', offering increased supply chain transparency and improvements in worker agency and rights. Karl drew on his vast expertise in information systems and argued that any response to the panel theme depended on which technologies, which sector and which work was in focus.

The scholars presenting at the Business Research Showcase are just a few of the many CPOW researchers whose work problematizes glib assumptions that new technology is changing the form and nature of work. Some of the other work being undertaken by CPOW researchers is set out in a booklet highlighting CPOW research in this area. You can view a copy of the booklet [here](#).

Event Success



Digesting Femininities: The Feminist Politics of Contemporary Food Culture

On the 5th of October, CPOW's Gender, Equality and Diversity theme leader Dr Meagan Tyler, hosted another successful event through the Feminist Forum seminar series, co-hosted by CPOW and the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women Australia (CATWA). Over 60 participants attended the book launch for Dr Natalie Jovanovski's *Digesting Femininities: The Feminist Politics of Contemporary Food Culture*. Attendees heard from the author about the ways in which diet books, cook books and feminist works regarding food and the body – authored by and aimed at women – intertwine feminist concepts and rhetoric with body-policing narratives to develop discourses that encourage a pathological relationship with food and eating for women.

Through her analysis of these cultural products, Dr Jovanovski demonstrated the *'bullimic cultural consciousness'* created through food discourses, whereby women are simultaneously given licence to embrace their pleasurable and hedonistic relationship with food, while at the same time asked to purge this relationship through narratives of guilt and restraint. Through *Digesting Femininities*, Dr Jovanovski challenged the audience to imagine a genderless food culture, with discussion focussed on individual and structural level strategies to improve the food discourses society provides to women.

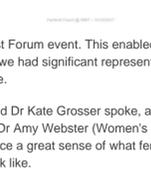
Conceptions of Care Symposium: Feminist conceptions and gendering care

This public event was held by CPOW, in conjunction with the Future Social Service Institute, on 12 October. It focused on the gendered nature of care and the importance of bringing a gender lens to policy, regulation and service planning, including work and care policy, disability and aged care services, and policy and support for informal and family carers. The public symposium was well attended by a mix of academic researchers and community services industry representatives, including employers, service providers, advocacy bodies and trade union activists. Professor Sue Yeandle, Director of the Centre for International Research on Care, Labour & Equalities, University of Sheffield, gave the keynote address *'Conceptualising care – a gender lens on contemporary developments'*, providing a comparative perspective on recent developments in the UK and Australia. Panel discussion was led by Sophie Ismail, ACTU, Anne Muldowney, Carers' Victoria, and Jen Hargrave, Women with Disability Victoria, each highlighting the critical role of a gender perspective for their organisations.



How to survive your feminist research project

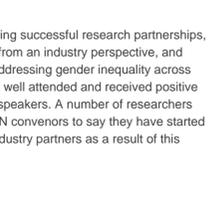
The *Feminist Forum series* goes from strength to strength. On the 31st of October we had more than 40 feminist researchers packed into an interactive space to workshop the highs and lows of conducting feminist research. This workshop was tailored to fit with a half-day event run by the Centre for Global Research at RMIT, which held a range of presentations by feminist researchers leading up to the Feminist Forum event. This enabled us to branch out with our attendees and we had significant representation from universities all around Melbourne.



CPOW members Dr Meagan Tyler and Dr Kate Grosser spoke, along with Dr Caroline Norma (GUSS) and Dr Amy Webster (Women's Health Victoria), who gave the audience a great sense of what feminist research outside of academia can look like.

Creating Change Through Collaboration

CPOW sponsored the recent Gender Inequality Research Network (GIRN) event, *'Creating Change Through Collaboration'*. The focus of the symposium was on research impact and engagement, with two panels of external speakers from leading industry, community and activist groups.



The discussion centred on creating successful research partnerships, understanding research impact from an industry perspective, and defining research priorities for addressing gender inequality across different sectors. The event was well attended and received positive feedback from participants and speakers. A number of researchers have already contacted the GIRN convenors to say they have started making new connections with industry partners as a result of this initiative.

Upcoming Events

CPOW EVENTS

Developing an impact case from academic research: Experience from the UK Research Excellence Framework (REF)

In this presentation Visiting Professor David Allen will deliver an understanding on how to create traceable impact from academic research. Based on the requirements of the UK Research Excellence Framework, he will discuss how to design research to ensure that it is both academically rigorous and impact is delivered. He will also discuss how to ensure that the impact is measurable beyond typical academic indicators, such as publications. His research has been used to help organisations manage technology and change and inform policy around technology investment in the public sector in the UK.

Date/time: 22 November 2017, 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm (drinks will follow)

Location: RMIT Building 80, 445 Swanston St, Level 5, Room 12

Keynote speaker: Professor David Allen, University of Leeds, UK

RSVP: cpow@rmit.edu.au

OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST

Transformation and Technology: Moving to Mobile

Public Lecture by Visiting International Professor David Allen, University of Leeds, UK. Professor Allen is visiting RMIT again and in this public lecture will reflect upon his recent research (carried out in 2017) on mobile technology and transformation in the police.

Date/time: 27 November 2017, 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. (drinks will follow)

Location: RMIT Building 80, 445 Swanston St, Level 10, Room 17

Keynote speaker: Professor David Allen, University of Leeds, UK

RSVP: cpow@rmit.edu.au

Feminist Forum: Women's Safety in the Hypersexual City

Come along and hear Dr Nicole Kalms (Monash University), in discussion with Dr Lauren Gurrieri (RMIT University), speak about a path-breaking work, *Hypersexual City: The Provocation of Soft-Core Urbanism*, on representations of women in the hypersexual city.

Date/time: 30 November 2017, 5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Location: RMIT Building 80, 445 Swanston St, Level 5, Room 12

Enquiries & RSVPs: catwaaustralia@gmail.com

All those interested in feminist ideas are welcome.

Researcher Profile: Kate Farhall

Dr Kate Farhall is a Postdoctoral Fellow in the School of Management who completed her PhD in Political Science at the University of Melbourne in 2016. Kate's research interests lie in feminist theory – particularly regarding sexuality, sexual violence, gender norms and the feminist movement itself – as well as structural forms of gender inequality in contemporary society more broadly. Her previous research has primarily focussed on constructions of sexuality and relationships in the media and other cultural artefacts; however, she has also worked collaboratively on projects analysing the changing role of journalism in the public sphere.



Kate's work has been presented at various local and international conferences, symposia and public forums and published in Sexualities, the edited collection *Freedom Fallacy*, and by media outlets, including *The Conversation*. She has taught across courses in the social sciences, from gender studies to international relations, to media studies, and qualitative research methods. Kate's postdoctoral work will focus on workplace engagement with the issue of intimate partner violence, particularly in regional areas of Victoria.

Congratulations

Dr. **Fiona Macdonald** is one of the recipients of the 2017 RMIT Awards for Excellence. She has been awarded the *Vice Chancellor's Award for Research Impact - Early Career Researcher*. Fiona received the award for the impact of her research programme investigating the workforce challenges of Australia's new National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). Through addressing questions that are critical to social and economic outcomes arising from the NDIS, Fiona aims to use her research to further evidence-based policy-making and to achieve policy impact through communicating research findings, and policy and practice implications of her research.

Associate Professor Mike Rafferty has been appointed an advisor to the Economic Space Agency (ECSA). ECSA is a start-up organisation with two major projects - Space and Gravity. Space is a virtual platform based on a post-blockchain computing fabric. Space aims to 'open-source finance' - to allow communities and individuals to make offers and issue their own programmable tokens that will function as attractors, around which to orient the creation of their own value constellations. ECSA offers to diverse groups of people a leverage point in the corporate race to own the value of socially networked production. Gravity is the post-blockchain revolution of smart contracts - a cryptographic object-capable computational fabric, architected specifically for the creation of natively scalable, secure, interoperable smart contract and smart organisation networks. Gravity aims to add the following qualities to blockchains: scalability, privacy, security, interoperability, and governance.

Dr. **Raymond Trau** has accepted an invitation from the Diversity Council Australia (DCA) Research Committee to join them as a member. He will be providing input to the DCA Research Unit's Board Reporting and strategic direction. DCA's Research Committee is an external group that oversees DCA's research. Their members include leading academics and practitioners with knowledge of diversity and inclusion theory and practice. Raymond feels very honoured by the invitation and adds, "It is an opportunity to influence and contribute to workplace diversity research and practices in this country. This also provides plenty of opportunity to participate in many research projects, and of course networking with influential practitioners in this space."

Contact

If you would like to join CPOW or include your research activities in forthcoming newsletters, please email these to: cpow@rmit.edu.au

CPOW acknowledges that economic and social divisions are defining features of the world we live in. The Centre's research focuses on addressing economic inequalities and fragmentation, social questions around gender, sexuality, ethnicity, age and locality, to enhance working lives and advance positive social change. Find out more at: [CPOW](#)