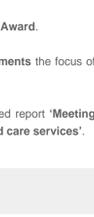




Dr Fiona Macdonald, Acting Director
Centre for People, Organisation & Work



Welcome to the final CPOW Newsletter for 2019

Highlights in this issue:

- Dr Louise Byrne and team engaged to work with National Mental Health Commission to develop **National Peer Workforce Development Guidelines** (\$109,479).
- Dist. Prof. Sara Charlesworth gives evidence to **Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality & Safety**.
- CPOW at CRIMT 'Institutional Experimentation for Better Work' international research partnership conference in Canada.
- **Queensland Mental Health Lived Experience Workforce Framework** developed by Drs Louise Byrne & Lena Wang.
- Stan Karanasios awarded **Emerald Publishing Research Excellence Award**.
- **NDIS disability support worker employment and working arrangements** the focus of 2 new industry research reports co-authored by Dr Fiona Macdonald.
- Sara Charlesworth and Wendy Taylor co-authors of new commissioned report 'Meeting the social and emotional support needs of older people using aged care services'.

New Projects

Louise Byrne and Lena Wang to contribute to NMHC National Peer Workforce Development Guidelines: \$109,479

The National Mental Health Commission (NMHC) is undertaking work to develop National Peer Workforce Development Guidelines under Action 29 of the Fifth National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan Implementation Plan. The NMHC has engaged Dr Louise Byrne and her research team including Dr Lena Wang at RMIT University to assist with engagement processes and drafting the Guidelines. This project will help support the peer workforce through providing formalised guidance for governments, employers and the peer workforce about support structures required to sustain and grow the workforce. The development of national guidelines will ensure consistency across Australia and they will also be a step towards professionalisation of the peer workforce.

[Read about the Framework](#)

Engagement & Impact

Sara Charlesworth gives expert evidence to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety



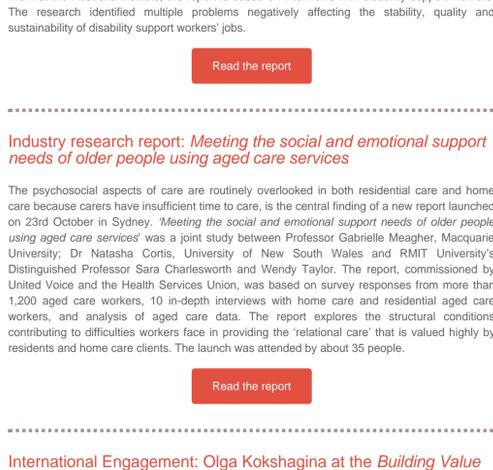
Sara Charlesworth (Photo: RMIT University)

Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality & Safety

Distinguished Professor Sara Charlesworth was recently invited to provide expert evidence about aged care employment conditions to the **Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality & Safety**. In her submission Sara set out how the undervaluing of aged care work in government funding and in employment regulation is contributing to poor work conditions and poor conditions of care for frail, aged service users. She stated that gender and gender (in)equality sit at the heart of the poor wages and conditions for frontline aged care workers: not only is the workforce overwhelmingly female there is an historic perception of aged care work as quintessentially 'women's work' and therefore as 'unskilled'. Urging the Federal Government to commit to resourcing a sustainable aged care system Sara said 'we know that job quality directly shapes the quality of care, so providing workers with appropriate remuneration, working time and job security, and the time to provide un rushed care, will benefit those being cared for'. Drawing on Sara's evidence Counsel assisting the Commission, Peter Rozen QC, stated that the true value of work in aged care is not reflected in terms and conditions of employment including remuneration and job classification' and that, as the primary funder and head of the aged care 'supply chain', the Government must play a more active role in aged care remuneration.

[Read the transcript](#)

International engagement: CRIMT 'Institutional Experimentation for Better Work' Research Partnership



Plenary session. From left, facing audience: Adrienne Eaton (Rutgers University), Gerhard Bosch (University of Duisburg-Essen), Shelagh Campbell (University of Regina), Prof. Peter Fairbrother (RMIT), Christian Lévesque (HEC Montréal), Gregor Murray (Université de Montréal). (Photo: Nicolas Roby)

Dr Kate Farhall and Professor Peter Fairbrother attended the recent CRIMT partnership project planning conference in Magog, Québec. The conference itself was an experiment, with every session including plenaries utilising a common template to report cases of organisational and institutional experimentation in the regulation of work and employment. Overall 140 people attended, including 50 doctoral students and post-doctoral scholars.

Following the 2018 CRIMT conference on Sources of Disruption and Experimentation, CPOW members and other Project partner centres developed the template for examining cases of institutional experimentation through meetings and a series of Regional Workshops in Europe, North America and Australia. The first workshop was held at RMIT in Melbourne in February 2019 and involved Fiona Macdonald, Ruth Barton, Shelley Marshall and Annie Delaney, Kate Farhall and Peter Fairbrother. A wide range of topics were explored at Magog involving much conversation and reflection about how each case involved and enabled actor engagement, for better or worse work. The partnership provided Project partners with an opportunity to share ideas in relation to the theme of 'better work', lay the foundations for shared research, team building, case material for publications and teaching materials. See a list of the CRIMT project partners [here](#).

Queensland Mental Health Lived Experience Workforce Framework developed by Louise Byrne and Lena Wang



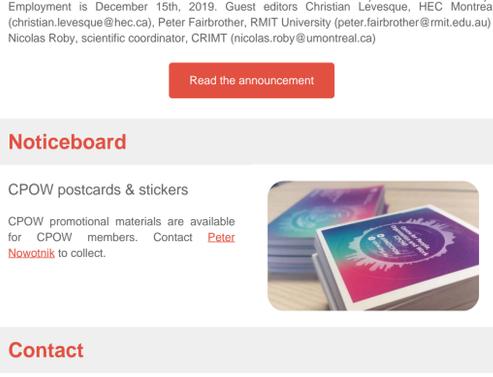
Lena Wang and Louise Byrne (Photo: Louise Byrne)

Recently the Queensland Mental Health Lived Experience Workforce Framework was released to provide practical advice and resources for any organisation employing or looking to employ peer/lived experience staff. Lived experience academic Dr Louise Byrne led the development and colleague Dr Lena Wang also contributed to the project, which was funded by the Queensland Mental Health Commission (QMHC).

Professor John Mendoza, inaugural Chair of the National Advisory Council on Mental Health stated the framework 'just maybe the most important contribution to changing the culture and practices of mental health services in a generation'. Queensland Mental Health Commissioner Mr Ivan Frkovic said the framework represented a comprehensive guide to harnessing the knowledge of employees who had experience of mental ill-health. See QMHC site for more information and to download a copy of the Framework.

[Read the media release](#)

Emerald Publishing Research Excellence Award for Stan Karanasios



Stan Karanasios (Photo: RMIT University)

Emerald Publishing Research Excellence Award 2019

"Toward a unified view of technology and activity: the contribution of activity theory to information systems research brings together"

Dr Stan Karanasios was awarded an **Emerald Publishing Research Excellence Award** for 2019 for a paper in the journal *Information Technology & People*. Stan's 'Highly Commended Paper' award was given for his sole-authored paper titled *"Toward a unified view of technology and activity: the contribution of activity theory to information systems research brings together"*.

The conceptual paper brings together a program of research undertaken by Stan on developing activity theory for studying the interaction between digital technologies and organisations and outlines how the theory can be used to better understand the interaction between technology and people. Emerald Publishing has made the paper free to access for 2019.

Industry Research: Two new reports on disability support worker employment and working arrangements under the NDIS



Fiona Macdonald (Photo: RMIT University)

reports by Fiona Macdonald

INNOVATIVE WORKFORCE FUND | greenacres | The Australia Institute | Centre for Future Work

Where Secure Employment Meets Client Needs, a report authored by Dr Fiona Macdonald was launched in Sydney in early October. Commissioned by Greenacres Disability Services, and funded through the national Workforce Innovation Fund, the report outlines research investigating the impacts of the NDIS funding model on disability support worker working arrangements and employment conditions and suggests some industry wide actions and workplace options for improving job security. David Moody, CEO of the disability services national peak industry body, the NDS, and Natalie Lang, the NSW Branch Secretary of the Australian Services Union co-launched the report to an audience of 25-30 disability service providers.

[Read the report](#)

A second research report *Precarity and Job Instability on the Frontlines of NDIS Support Work*

A second research report *Precarity and Job Instability on the Frontlines of NDIS Support Work* was launched to an audience of disability support workers in Newcastle in November. The result of a research collaboration between Professor Donna Baines, University of Sydney, Dr Fiona Macdonald, RMIT University, and Dr Jim Stanford and Ms Jessie Moore of the Centre for Future Work at the Australia Institute, the report is based on interviews with disability support workers. The research identified multiple problems negatively affecting the stability, quality and sustainability of disability support workers' jobs.

[Read the report](#)

Industry research report: Meeting the social and emotional support needs of older people using aged care services

The psychosocial aspects of care are routinely overlooked in both residential care and home care because carers have insufficient time to care, is the central finding of a new report launched on 23rd October in Sydney. *Meeting the social and emotional support needs of older people using aged care services* was a joint study between Professor Gabrielle Meagher, Macquarie University; Dr Natasha Cortis, University of New South Wales and RMIT University's Distinguished Professor Sara Charlesworth and Wendy Taylor. The report, commissioned by United Voice and the Health Services Union, was based on survey responses from more than 1,200 aged care workers, 10 in-depth interviews with home care and residential aged care workers, and analysis of aged care data. The report explores the structural conditions contributing to difficulties workers face in providing the 'relational care' that is valued highly by residents and home care clients. The launch was attended by about 35 people.

[Read the report](#)

International Engagement: Olga Kokshagina at the Building Value in Healthcare event in Barcelona

(Photo: Olga Kokshagina)

Olga Kokshagina was a facilitator and one of the organisers of *Building Value in Healthcare* – an event showcasing collaborative study on value-driven innovation in healthcare by RMIT University Europe and Vall D'Hebron University Hospital in Barcelona. A keynote presentation on what defines value in healthcare was given by Dr. Yolima Cossio Gil, Director Information Systems at Vall D'Hebron. Dr. Cossio Gil has set the stage for the hospital's priorities in terms of patient centric care. Julio Sanchez, Director eHealth from a leading information systems provider - Telefonica shared how Telefonica collaborates with various stakeholders in healthcare to drive digital transformation and prepare for the future of healthcare.

An insightful panel discussion facilitated by Olga focused on the future of value driven healthcare, procurement's role and the challenges of providing patient centric care. Panelists included Dr. Carlos Molina; Head of Strokes Division and Dr. Eva Aurin Padro, Head of Innovation & eHealth at Vall D'Hebron and CEO of IOMED - Xavier da Oca.

International Engagement: James Scambary convenes panel at the European Association of South East Asian Scholars Conference

Dr James Scambary recently convened a panel at the European Association of South East Asian Scholars Conference at Humboldt University in Berlin. The panel, titled 'Sub-National Conflict, Clientelism and State Formation', examined how variations in informal governance and conflict intersect through competition over local power, state consolidation and political order in a variety of case studies including the Philippines, Indonesia and East Timor. The aim of the discussion was to compare and contrast the different ways in which such sub-national conflicts and actors articulate with national level formal and informal politics and actors.

International engagement: Kate Farhall at the Centre for Research into Violence and Abuse, Durham University

Dr Kate Farhall (Photo: Peter Nowinski)

In October Dr Kate Farhall gave a seminar for the **Centre for Research into Violence and Abuse** at **Durham University**. Entitled "Everyone knows your business": Understanding the workplace-domestic violence nexus outside of large cities', the seminar examined the complications, challenges and opportunities for workplace responses to domestic violence in non-metropolitan areas. Kate introduced a proposed integrated theoretical framework for understanding women, work and violence in non-metropolitan contexts, arguing for the need to draw on existing theory to develop an appropriate lens for understanding the work-domestic violence nexus in rural and regional areas. She presented qualitative interview data from her research and examined the ways in which 'space' and 'place' and 'varieties of patriarchy' shape experiences of domestic and family violence and work, as well as impacting on the ways in which workplaces and policy are able to, or should, respond.

Recent CPOW events: Putting New Zealand's 2017 Care and Support Workers Pay Act into Practice

A recent CPOW seminar profiled the research of New Zealand academics Dr Julie Douglas and Associate Professor Katherine Ravenswood regarding issues arising in the implementation of the pay equity settlement for care and support workers in New Zealand. This important research which is explored in the report *The Value of Care – evaluating the impact of the 2017 pay equity settlement of the aged, residential, home and community and disability sectors* looks at the impact and implementation issues arising from a pay equity settlement which covers 55,000 predominantly minimum wage women workers. The settlement has led to a revival of equal pay action under New Zealand's *Equal Pay Act 1972*, providing a stark contrast with the recent unsuccessful case for early childhood educators under Australia's *Fair Work Act 2009*. On the positive side the research found that pay increases were accepted by both workers and employers as long overdue and that workers benefited from the recognition of the skills associated with their work. On the downside some workers reported having their hours cut leading to lower incomes and more insecurity. Some managers were reported to be asking for more from workers to justify the pay increases, demonstrating a misunderstanding of the basis for the settlement and a lack of acceptance of the 'new value' ascribed to the work.

– Report by Lisa Heap, PhD student, the School of Management

Media Mentions

The real news on 'fake news': politicians use it to discredit media, and journalists need to fight back [Andrea Carson, Latrobe University](#) and [Kate Farhall, RMIT University](#) in [The Conversation \[AU\] – 1st October 2019](#).

Can feminism be saved from identity politics? Opinion on [ABC Religion and Ethics – 28th October 2019](#), Meagan Tyler, RMIT University.

Calls for Papers

Ideas in Employment Relations Research: Call for Papers for special issue of *Industrial Relations: A Journal of Economy and Society*

This *Industrial Relations* special issue invites contributions that apply ideational perspectives to employment relations studies. Research in political science, sociology and economics increasingly rely on normative and cognitive meaning structures to explain social phenomena. Deadline for submitting the long abstract is January 15, 2020.

[Read the announcement](#)

New Deadline: Call for Papers for special issue of *Relations Industrielles/Industrial Relations: Digitization and Regulation of Work and Employment*

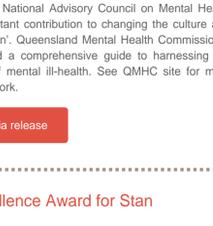
The new deadline for submissions for the special issue: Digitization and Regulation of Work and Employment is December 15th, 2019. Guest editors Christian Lévesque, HEC Montréal (christian.levesque@hec.ca), Peter Fairbrother, RMIT University (peter.fairbrother@rmit.edu.au) Nicolas Roby, scientific coordinator, CRIMT (nicolas.robey@umontreal.ca)

[Read the announcement](#)

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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](#)

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

RMIT University acknowledges the people of the Woi wurrung and Boon wurrung language groups of the eastern Kulin Nation on whose unceded lands we conduct the business of the University. RMIT University respectfully acknowledges their Ancestors and Elders, past and present. RMIT also acknowledges the Traditional Custodians and their Ancestors of the lands and waters across Australia where we conduct our business.



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