



# Working together

# Our Partners



**Australian Government**

**Australian Research Council**

## Australian Universities

The University of Queensland

The University of Western Australia

The University of Melbourne

The University of Sydney

## National Partners

Australian Government Department of Social Services

Brotherhood of St Laurence

Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

Queensland Government Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services

Victorian Government Department of Education and Training

Wesley Mission Queensland

## International Partners

University of California, Irvine

University of Ottawa

National University of Singapore

Boston College

University of Pennsylvania

University College London

Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Royal Holloway, University of London

University College Dublin

University of Essex

# Contents

- Life Course Centre .....2
- Celebrating Success ..... 16
- COVID-19 .....30
- Research .....38
- Retrospective .....61
- Impact .....74
- Engagement .....88
- Performance.....96

# Life Course Centre

The Australian Research Council (ARC) Centre of Excellence for Children and Families over the Life Course (the Life Course Centre) is a national research centre investigating the ways in which deep and persistent disadvantage endures within families and across generations.

# About Us

The Life Course Centre is committed to generating evidence-based research to develop new knowledge, technology and practices to benefit Australian children and families living in, or at risk of, deep and persistent disadvantage. Our commitment is founded in an innovative approach to identifying important life course influences, events and transitions, and developing strategic interventions to improve life opportunities and outcomes.

Bringing together a multi-disciplinary network of researchers and external partners throughout Australia and internationally with a shared focus on addressing entrenched social disadvantage, the Centre aims to:

Identify the drivers of deep and persistent disadvantage

Develop and trial new solutions in policy and practice

Build capacity across academic, government and non-government organisations

Develop data and technical infrastructure and innovation

Destigmatise disadvantage.

The Life Course Centre is administered by the Institute for Social Science Research at The University of Queensland and is a collaboration between the University of Queensland, the University of Sydney, the University of Melbourne and The University of Western Australia. It is supported by international experts, key Australian government agencies and non-government organisations working at the front line of disadvantage.

*More than 1 million Australians experience deep and persistent disadvantage – they are less likely to complete high school, find a good job and have stable housing; they often suffer from poor mental and physical health and social isolation. Unlike those who temporarily dip below the poverty line, their disadvantage is deep and persistent, resists simple solutions, and endures within families and across generations. The playing field is not level for everyone. The divisions from widening gaps between the ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots’ hurts everyone. It can undermine trust and cohesion and erode the social fabric that holds communities together.*

# Working Together

At the time of securing our initial ARC grant in 2014, the Life Course Centre was only the second seven-year social science Centre of Excellence to be funded by the ARC. We were then the only ARC Centre of Excellence from 2014 to secure funding for a further seven-year period in the 2020 round. The Australian Government's continued investment in the Life Course Centre is an investment in a sustained focus on transformative social science research and the translation of this research into effective policies and practices.

---

*"Coming together is a beginning.  
Keeping together is progress.  
Working together is success."*

Henry Ford

---

## We are working together...



across multiple research disciplines and universities, data sources, methods and technologies, and external partnerships



to progress an innovative science of disadvantage and life course approach to informing public policy and programs



to train the next generation of academic, government and industry leaders to address disadvantage in Australia and internationally



to track and understand the experiences of Australians in disadvantage, and to better equip them to overcome it



to position the Life Course Centre at the forefront of Australian and international research and translation on overcoming disadvantage.

## 2020 Highlights

# 54

student publications\*

(37 student-led)

# 32

non-academic articles\*

### Research

# 1,054

total research outputs  
2014–2020 (target 731)

# 172

research outputs 2020

# 126

journal articles 2020

# 50

working papers\*

(32 Life Course Centre  
Working Papers)

# 15

research disciplines

Define by 2-digit field  
of research codes

# 11

PhD student completions\*

# 33

end-user and industry reports\*

### Reach

# 2,276

mentions online

# 1,925

mentions on social  
media

# 307

news stories in 164 news  
outlets in 15 countries

# 5

equity internships  
for undergraduates

\* Record number for Life Course Centre in a single year 2014–2020.

# Director's Report

**What a year it was! The Life Course Centre has been in operation since 2014 and every year has brought challenges. But 2020 was a year like no other.**

COVID-19 has been a catastrophic global event, on a scale we probably never thought we would see in our lifetimes. It has devastated lives and livelihoods and turned our worlds upside down. Of course it is not over yet, and many parts of our lives may never go back to the way things were. But I was very pleased at how the Life Course Centre adapted to the circumstances of 2020, how we stayed connected, quickly pivoted to new technologies, and kept working together in new ways.

In fact, COVID-19 provided the opportunity to upskill and learn new ways of interacting, to utilise technology to work effectively remotely and collaborate across state and international borders. While the pandemic made it impossible for us to physically get together, it has also brought us closer together and strengthened our connections. The phrase of the year is undoubtedly 'you're on mute' but we have demonstrated what we can achieve with new ways of working together.

The theme of our 2020 Annual Report is 'working together', a phrase that captures our experiences and achievements throughout a year like no other. It is also a phrase that reflects the seven-year journey of the Life Course Centre from 2014 to 2020. I am incredibly proud of the collaborative relationships we have built between our four Australian university nodes, the internationally diverse and exceptionally talented researchers we have attracted, and the next generation of students and early career researchers we have supported to ensure our legacy carries well into the future.

The ARC Centres of Excellence scheme is an amazing opportunity for researchers and partners to come together to address large-scale scientific challenges and make discoveries to improve future outcomes. Funded in both the 2014 and 2020 rounds, I believe the Life Course Centre showcases the very best of this scheme. We have shown how a multi-disciplinary, cross-nodal group of researchers and students can come together to address significant social problems, and transform the way that social science is done in Australia.



*"I want to thank all of the Chief Investigators who agreed to work with me to establish and build the Centre, our incoming Chief Investigators, and our external partners and international colleagues for their ongoing support, trust and engagement with our collaborative work."*

Professor Janeen Baxter, Centre Director.  
Image courtesy: ABC "Generation COVID".

## Director's Report



Pictured at the Helping Families Change Conference in February 2020 (from left): Professor Peter Høj, former Vice-Chancellor and President of The University of Queensland (now Vice-Chancellor and President of The University of Adelaide); Life Course Centre Director Professor Janeen Baxter; UnitingCare Queensland's Group Executive, Family & Disability Services Brent McCracken; The Hon. Di Farmer MP, former Queensland Minister for Child Safety, Youth and Women, and Minister for Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence (now Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development); Life Course Centre Chief Investigator Professor Matt Sanders; and Country Lead, Triple P. International Ms Carol Markie-Dadds.

There are many small and large achievements that I could point to from Life Course Centre 2014–2020, but this is not the place to list them. Our website and Working Paper series (an open-access resource of more than 180 papers on the very latest research on social and economic disadvantage) help to paint the picture in more detail. As 2020 was the final year of our first round of ARC funding, it is an opportunity for us to look back.

Looking back specifically on the 2020 year, COVID-19 meant we were not able to have our usual levels of events and visitors. However, we were fortunate to fit in a major international conference in early February, of which we were a co-sponsor. The Helping Families Change Conference in Brisbane, under the direction of Chief Investigator Professor Matt Sanders, was a great success, drawing more than 200 attendees from 25 countries. Matt and I both delivered keynote addresses, and there were also presentations from a range of other Centre researchers and students.

Many of our other activities in 2020 had to be transitioned to online formats and, thanks to the hard work of our teams, this worked very well. In September, we hosted an online webinar on the Life Course Centre for Social Sciences Week. This was a great chance for us to reach out, and highlight our research, to the broader social science community. In October, we hosted another two webinars as part of our ongoing sponsorship of Anti-Poverty Week and its efforts to increase awareness and understanding of poverty.

We also expanded our digital communications reach in 2020. We supported the 20-episode Parenting in a Pandemic podcast series and 12-episode television series from Professor Matt Sanders that provided practical parenting actions to help steer families through the uncharted waters of COVID-19. Matt also hosted the Life Course Centre's own Families Under Pressure podcast series that presented insights from Chief Investigators and other experts on how to support families in times of crisis.

## Director's Report

The impact of COVID-19 pushed many pressing social issues to the forefront of the national policy agenda. Welfare, labour markets, homelessness, childcare, gender, parenting, family support, domestic violence, telehealth and digital access were all among the issues central to government responses. Our researchers responded quickly by producing a range of early research outputs, such as working papers and non-academic articles, and were in high demand for media commentary.

A highlight of the year, and a showcase of working together, was Centre research leaders coming together for an important collaborative paper in 2020 for the Committee for Economic Development in Australia (CEDA) on the lessons that we can take forward from COVID-19. Significantly, this paper focused on the positive opportunities presented by the pandemic to reimagine how we live and work to build a better, more equal, society for all. There will be other global shocks coming, so it is crucial that we learn from COVID-19 to help inform future preparations and responses.

Student milestones were another highlight of 2020, with high levels of student completions and many student-led publications in the seventh and final year of our first Centre of Excellence grant. Capacity building of the next generation is a vital part of our mission, and we are very proud of the achievements of our students and young researchers. Research Fellow Dr Jack Lam won a highly competitive ARC Discovery Early Career Research Award (DECRA) in 2020, and many of our other researchers also secured new grants in a tough funding environment.

Our research continues to generate strong impact featuring across a number of prominent reports in 2020, including the Productivity Commission report on mental health, Grattan Institute report on childcare, and the Australian Government inquiry into homelessness. Introducing a life course perspective to policy debate and discussions on addressing disadvantage has been a major achievement of the Centre to date, and we will continue to ensure our research findings reach those with greatest potential to enact change.

Another area where we have led the way is accessing and analysing administrative data. It was pleasing to see a key government reform in this area, the Data Availability & Transparency Bill, introduced to Parliament in late 2020 as we have been involved in this process right from the start. We are planning a new project with our partner, the University of Auckland, to analyse a large NZ database combining government, community, and public survey data. Through this, and other work, we want to lead the way in establishing frameworks for the ethical use of big data in the social sciences.

From our strong foundations, the Life Course Centre will continue to expand and evolve. Transition planning for the new Centre, starting from January 2021, included online planning days in November and many informal meetings on new research projects. We have also refreshed our Advisory Committee and appointed a new Chair, Emeritus Professor Peter Saunders, an expert in poverty, social policy and research translation.

We held our first research retreat for the new Centre in February 2021, held separately in each state with connected virtual sessions nationally. Not only has COVID-19 impacted how we work together but also our research agenda as we work to understand the short and long-term consequences on social disadvantage. There is a lot to be done and we are ready.

I hope you enjoy our 2020 Annual Report. Stay connected and safe.



**Professor Janeen Baxter**  
Centre Director

# Chief Investigators in the new Life Course Centre

We would like to welcome to the new Life Course Centre a diverse group of talented and committed Chief Investigators. The new Centre is larger and more diverse, with a broader range of discipline areas represented. We are expanding well beyond our social science origins!



**Prof Janeen Baxter**  
—  
Sociology



**Prof Deborah Cobb-Clark**  
—  
Applied Economics



**Prof Donna Cross**  
—  
Education & Public Health



**Prof Nick Glozier**  
—  
Psychiatry & Epidemiology



**Prof Guyonne Kalb**  
—  
Labour Economics



**Prof Karen Thorpe**  
—  
Developmental Science



**Prof Abigail Payne**  
—  
Public Economics



**Prof Cameron Parsell**  
—  
Social Work



**Prof Agnieszka Tymula**  
—  
Neuroeconomics



**Assoc Prof Abdullah Mamun**  
—  
Demography & Statistics



**Prof Simon Smith**  
—  
Sleep Science



**Prof Brendan Gleeson**  
—  
Geography & Urban Planning



**Assoc Prof Hayley Christian**  
—  
Public Health



**Prof Matthew Sander**  
—  
Parenting & Family Psychology



**Prof Zhi Huang**  
—  
Data Science

# 2020 Activity Report

In February 2020 we successfully lodged a transition plan with the ARC, requesting to cease the 2014 Centre on 31 December 2020, and commence the new Centre on 1 January 2021. Projects from the 2014 Centre will be ending and reporting results in 2021. This includes a suite of publications synthesising results across several projects, and providing some future directions for research and policy.

## Project 1.1

### Family Dynamics of Disadvantage

This project focused on mapping the processes of relationship formation and dissolution that produce sub-optimal life course trajectories. In mid-2021 we will publish key findings and policy implications. We will expand on this work in the new Centre by looking at how key institutions reinforce or counteract the negative impact of family dynamics that are likely to trigger disadvantage, particularly for women and children.

## Project 1.2

### Social and Economic Mobility

This project compared persistent disadvantage in Australia with the international context, using the macro-economic, institutional and policy context. This work can be considered as the general groundwork for the Opportunities Program in the new Centre.

## Project 1.3

### Integrated Intergenerational Data

This project advanced access to linked administrative data in Australia for research and policy-making purposes. It has been highly successful, and can be seen as a direct contributor to government projects such as Data Integration Program Australia (DIPA).

## Project 1.4

### Complex Disadvantage Models

This project captured a number of proof-of-concept projects in social data modelling, and contributed methodological innovations to the Centre, particularly in statistical modelling. These innovations continue to be used and may form the basis for new statistical models in the future.

## Project 2.1

### Caring for Children's Capabilities

This project focused on how disadvantage is transmitted in early childhood, with an emphasis on how early childhood experiences contribute to outcomes in adulthood. Capstone publications, including multi-media translation publications, will be produced in 2021. This project has provided valuable base research for our new work, Education Investments.

## Project 2.2

### Inherited Educational Outcomes

This project examined the complex interplay within educational systems to determine if educational choices and attainment are inherited and how educational institutions can intervene. Capstone publications will be completed by mid-2021, including a major flagship project on improving educational equity over the life course.

**Project 2.3**

## Intergenerational Welfare Dependency

This project focused on family dependency on public assistance and its impact for human capability formation. All research under this project was completed by the end of 2020. Capstone publications will be completed by mid-2021, and combine results from this project with the broader context provided by the Social and Economic Mobility project.

**Project 3.1**

## Communities Overcoming Disadvantage

This project focused on the causes of delinquency in community context, and will be completed by mid-2021. It is likely to lead to some major future intervention opportunities.

**Project 3.2**

## Targeting Australian Disadvantage: Are Parenting and Outcomes Linked?

This seven-year project is a population-level trial of a parenting intervention, and has benefited from \$7M in funding support from the Queensland Government to fund free access to the program for all Queensland parents. Data collection was completed by the end of 2020, with analysis to be completed by the end of 2021.

In 2020, we were not able to celebrate the 2014 Centre's achievements in the way that we had planned. However, the pandemic conditions did provide the Centre's Chief Investigators with a unique natural experiment – to examine the impact for disadvantaged Australians from the radical policy changes that were implemented in response to the pandemic. The Committee for Economic Development of Australia (CEDA) published an Information Paper from the Life Course Centre looking at social policy opportunities created by COVID-19, and Professor Lorraine Mazerolle is leading a major collaborative project from the Chief Investigators that will progress this research, with publication slated for 2022.

# 2021 Activity Plan

The new Life Course Centre commenced on 1 January 2021, after an establishment period of virtual planning days and initial committee meetings in 2020. In 2021, we will be delivering a mixture of establishment activities for the new Centre and celebrations for the 2014 Centre. These will include:

Research Retreat in February 2021. Held through a mixture of node-based face-to-face activities and whole-of-Centre Zoom sessions, this will be followed up throughout 2021 with a series of blue sky research sessions and project planning sessions.

---

Strategic Plan to be finalised by June 2021, involving an extensive consultation process throughout the Centre.

---

We will continue our success with online events through both an internal seminar series and flagship workshops for an external audience such as our Anti-Poverty Week seminars.

---

Centre launch at a date to be confirmed, and subject to COVID-19 conditions.

---

The launch of a new outreach series based on research from the 2014 Centre, including multi-media publications.

---

Development of the Centre's new reporting system, which has been greatly expanded to include project management and business management functions and expanded functionality for researchers.

---

We will be welcoming a large number of new members to the Centre in 2021. It is likely that the Centre will effectively double in size, as 2014 members continue their association, and new Chief Investigators bring their new teams on board.

---

# Governance

## Advisory Committee

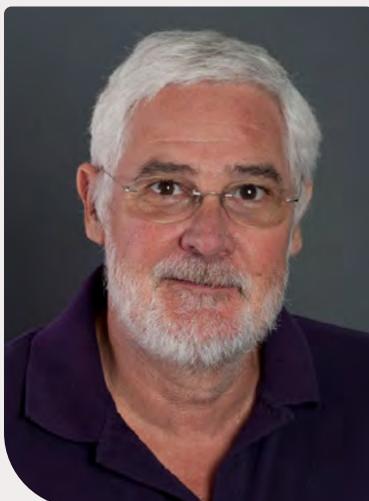
We revised and expanded our Advisory Committee in 2020 and welcomed a new Chair, Emeritus Professor Peter Saunders who will help to guide our research and outreach over the next few years. Peter was the Director of the Social Policy Research Centre (SPRC) at the University of New South Wales from 1987–2007. He now holds a Research Chair in Social Policy at SPRC. Peter's research interests include poverty and income distribution, household needs and living standards, social security reform, and ageing, and he has immense experience in research translation and social policy. We are very pleased to have Peter, and the other members of our Advisory Committee, on board.



We thank the outgoing Chair of our Advisory Committee, the Honourable Amanda Vanstone AO, for her support and guidance in our first few years, and especially her insights into research translation and communication. Amanda was the Chair from the Centre's inception until 2019, which included the period of the mid-term review. She recommended to the Centre Director that the Committee's membership be expanded and refreshed, which we have now done.

### Chair

**Professor Peter Saunders**  
Research Chair (former Director)  
Social Policy Research Centre,  
University of New South Wales



Peter Saunders

### Members

**Professor Janeen Baxter**  
Director  
Life Course Centre

**Ms Marilyn Chilvers**  
Executive Director, Strategy  
Customer, Delivery and  
Transformation  
New South Wales Government  
Department of Customer  
Service (partner organisation)

**Professor John Daley**  
Senior Fellow (former CEO)  
Grattan Institute

**Professor Greg Duncan**  
Distinguished Professor  
University of California, Irvine  
(Associate Investigator and  
Chief Scientific Advisor)

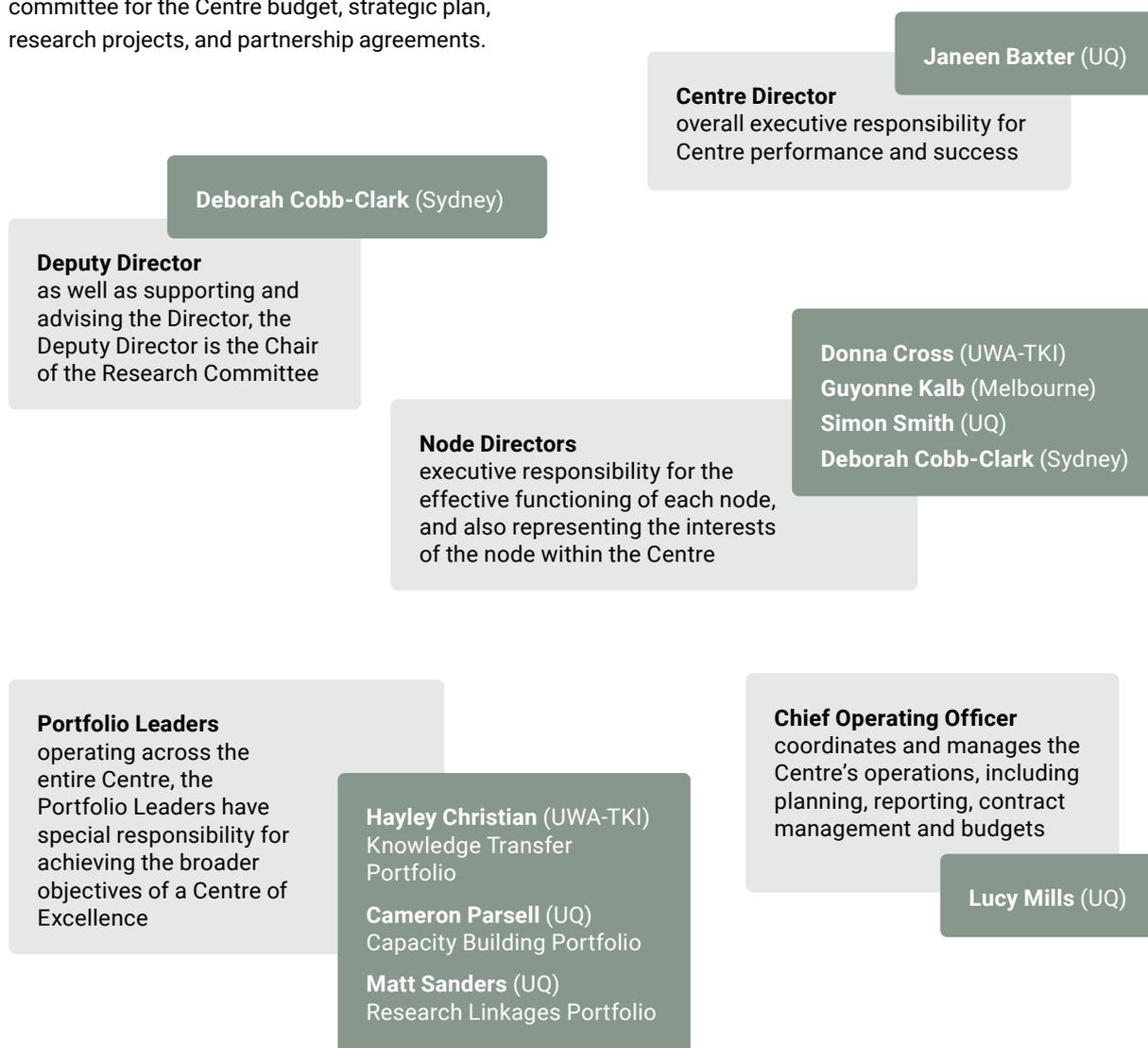
**Dr Shae Garwood**  
Manager, Research, Advocacy &  
Prevention, Innovation & Strategy  
Anglicare WA (partner  
organisation)

**Professor Shelley Mallett**  
General Manager, Research and  
Policy Centre  
Brotherhood of St Laurence  
(partner organisation)

**Ms Elizabeth Hefren-Webb**  
Deputy Secretary  
Australian Government  
Department of Social Services  
(partner organisation)

## Executive Committee

The role of the Executive Committee is to oversee the strategic direction of the Centre, oversee its performance against the objectives and agreed performance targets of the ARC Centre of Excellence scheme, and ensure that Centre resources are allocated effectively. In addition, the Executive Committee acts as the formal authorising committee for the Centre budget, strategic plan, research projects, and partnership agreements.



## Governance

## Research Committee

The role of the Research Committee is to review the progress of the Centre's research, take initiatives to ensure that Centre research is multidisciplinary and cross-nodal, strongly aligned with the Centre's research programs, responsive to the needs of partners, and provides opportunities for co-design of new projects with partners.

Representatives will be appointed annually to the Research Committee from the following groups:

Partner Investigators  
Associate Investigators  
Research Fellows

### Program Leaders

The Program Leaders provide intellectual guidance for the three Research Programs and the Centre's research as a whole, and each of them is an internationally recognised leader in the area their Program covers.

**Deputy Director** (Chair)

**Deborah Cobb-Clark** (Sydney)

**Janeen Baxter** (UQ)

**Centre Director**

**Nick Glozier** (Sydney)  
Program 1: People  
**Brendan Gleeson** (Melbourne)  
Program 2: Places  
**Janeen Baxter** (UQ)  
Program 3: Opportunities

**Chief Operating Officer**

**Lucy Mills** (UQ)

## Centre Professional Staff

As well as its large network of researchers, the Centre has a dedicated professional staff team, located across all four Australian university nodes. This team is fully funded by, and focused on the activities of, the Centre.

### Centre Management (based at UQ)

**Chief Operating Officer**  
Lucy Mills

**Centre Coordinator**  
Dee Dearing

**Engagement**  
Carla McCarthy

**Media & Communications**  
Matt MacDermott

**Reporting & Analysis**  
Lisa Pope

**Visual Communications**  
Heidi Minchin

### Node Administrators

**Melbourne**  
Kate Gilkison

**Sydney**  
Rebecca Gelding

**Western Australia**  
Narelle Mullan

# Celebrating Success

The ARC Centre of Excellence scheme demands excellence, not as an end, but as a means for addressing complex, large-scale problems such as the intergenerational transmission of social disadvantage. Here we celebrate a selection of 2020 successes from the individuals and teams that make up the Centre across our four nodes at The University of Queensland (UQ), The University of Western Australia (UWA), the University of Sydney (Sydney) and the University of Melbourne (Melbourne).

# Our Students

The final year of our first seven-year ARC grant was highlighted by a large number of student completions and student-led publications. We had 11 of our UQ students complete their PhDs in 2020. We were thrilled to celebrate their graduations, along with some earlier graduates, on campus at UQ in early 2021 as graduation ceremonies made a welcome return following COVID-19 cancellations in 2020. Our recent graduates have been working closely with Centre Chief Investigators on a range of topics related to social, economic and health disadvantage over the life course. Many of them have already published important work from their studies and have secured employment in academia and other sectors, and we look forward to continuing to follow their life course journeys as they advance their careers and emerge as the next generation of life course research leaders.

## 2020 PhD student completions

### Dr Sarah Ball

**Topic:** Behaviour change, rigorous evidence and public policy:

An ethnography of the use of 'behavioural insights' in policy development by the Australian Federal Government.

**Supervisors:** Professor Cameron Parsell, Professor Brian Head, Dr Sarah Bennett, Dr Emma Antrobus.

**Now:** Postdoctoral Research Fellow, School of Social & Political Sciences, Melbourne, on ARC Linkage project 'The new digital governance of welfare-to-work'.

### Dr Madonna Boman

**Topic:** Risky transitions: Young people moving from out-of-home care in Queensland, Australia.

**Supervisors:** Professor Cameron Parsell, Dr Jack Lam.

**Now:** Postdoctoral Research Fellow, School of Nursing, Midwifery & Social Work, UQ, on ARC Linkage project: 'Enhancing children's journey in Out-of-Home Care: A multi-perspective study'.

### Dr Laetitia Coles

**Topic:** Determinants of participation in childcare amongst fathers who work very long hours.

**Supervisors:** Professor Belinda Hewitt, Associate Professor Wojtek Tomaszewski, Professor Lynda Cheshire.

**Now:** Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Institute for Social Science Research, UQ.

### Dr Patricia Collingwood

**Topic:** School truancy and financial independence during emerging adulthood: A longitudinal analysis of receipt of and reliance on cash transfers

**Supervisors:** Professor Lorraine Mazerolle, Associate Professor Jason Ferris.

**Now:** Principal Research and Insights Officer, Crime and Corruption Commission, Queensland.

### Dr Berihun Dachew

**Topic:** Hypertensive disorders of pregnancy and the risk of mental and behavioural disorders in offspring.

**Supervisors:** Professor Rosa Alati, Associate Professor Abdullah Mamun, Associate Professor James Scott.

**Now:** Postdoctoral Research Fellow, School of Public Health, Curtin University.

### Dr Ruth (Lute) Faleolo

**Topic:** Pasifika well-being and Trans-Tasman migration: A mixed methods analysis of Samoan and Tongan well-being perspectives and experiences in Auckland and Brisbane.

**Supervisors:** Professor Paul Memmott, Professor Mark Western, Dr Kelly Greenop, Dr Denise Clague.

**Now:** Postdoctoral Research Fellow, History, La Trobe University.

## Our Students



From left: Cameron Parsell (incoming CI), Lorraine Mazerolle (outgoing CI), Peter Rankin (delayed graduate due to COVID-19), Mark Western (Director, Institute for Social Science Research and outgoing CI), Wojtek Tomaszewski (AI), Heather Zwicker (Executive Dean, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences), Andrew Clarke (Research Fellow), Francisco Perales (Research Fellow), Ella Kuskoff (new Graduate), Sarah Ball (new Graduate), Joemer Maravilla (Research Fellow), Madonna Boman (new Graduate), Angelina Tang (new Graduate) Dagnachew Fetene (delayed ISSR graduate due to COVID-19). Front: Janeen Baxter (Life Course Centre Director).

### Dr Nicole Kapelle

**Topic:** May your wealth be easily divisible by two: Marital dissolution and personal wealth of German men and women over the life course.

**Supervisors:** Professor Janeen Baxter, Dr Sergi Vidal Torre, Dr Philipp Lersch.

**Now:** Postdoctoral Fellow in Sociology & Social Demography, University of Oxford.

### Dr Ella Kuskoff

**Topic:** The road to hell is paved with good policy intentions: An analysis of government intervention in cultural aspects of domestic violence.

**Supervisors:** Professor Cameron Parsell, Dr Andrew Clarke, Professor Greg Marston.

**Now:** Postdoctoral Research Fellow, School of Social Science, UQ.

### Dr Cari McIlduff

**Topic:** Cultural sensitivity in working with Indigenous Peoples: A model proposed and evaluated towards culturally sympathetic methodology for capacity building and social change.

**Supervisors:** Associate Professor Karen Turner, Associate Professor Christine Wilson, Professor Matt Sanders.

**Now:** Postdoctoral Fellow, University of Saskatchewan, Canada.

### Dr Emina Prguda

**Topic:** Engaging parents involved in Community Corrections: The role of parenting interventions in improving child and parent outcomes.

**Supervisors:** Dr Kylie Burke, Dr Emma Antrobus, Dr Sarah Bennett.

**Now:** Research Fellow, Veteran Mental Health Team, Gallipoli Medical Research Foundation, Greenslopes Private Hospital.

### Dr Angelina Tang

**Topic:** The shifting labour market position of international graduates in Australia.

**Supervisors:** Associate Professor Francisco Perales, Professor Janeen Baxter, Dr Francisco Rowe.

**Now:** Research Assistant, Institute for Social Science Research, UQ.

## Our Students

## New PhD students

We recruited four new PhD students in 2020 who will transition to the new Centre along with our ongoing students. Our new students are:

### Heidi Hoffmann (UQ)

**Topic:** A sociological analysis of suicide in Australia.

**Supervisors:** Professor Janeen Baxter, Associate Professor Cameron Parsell, Associate Professor Francisco Perales.

### Yongbo Liu (UQ)

**Topic:** Multi-generational effects of health inequality in Australia: Influence of grandparental social economic status on health outcomes.

**Supervisors:** Professor Janeen Baxter, Dr Martin O'Flaherty, Dr Jack Lam.

### Thao Nguyen (Melbourne)

**Topic:** Three essays on immigrant children.

**Supervisors:** Professor Guyonne Kalb, Dr Andrew Clarke.

### Bonnie Searle (UQ)

**Topic:** How do early childhood educators' beliefs, behaviours and context impact upon child feeding practices and mealtimes within Australian childcare centre in low-income areas.

**Supervisors:** Professor Karen Thorpe, Associate Professor Robyn Littlewood, Dr Sally Staton.



New PhD student Heidi Hoffmann (second from right) with her supervisors (from left) Cameron Parsell, Janeen Baxter and Francisco Perales.

## Our Students

### Student publications

Centre students achieved record levels of publishing success in 2020 from across our nodes and across various research disciplines and topics. Here we celebrate a few highlights of our student publications success. More student research is featured in our Research section.

**54** student publications in 2020:

**39** journal articles

**6** book chapters

**4** working papers

**5** reports

**37** student-led publications in 2020:

**33** journal article

**3** book chapters

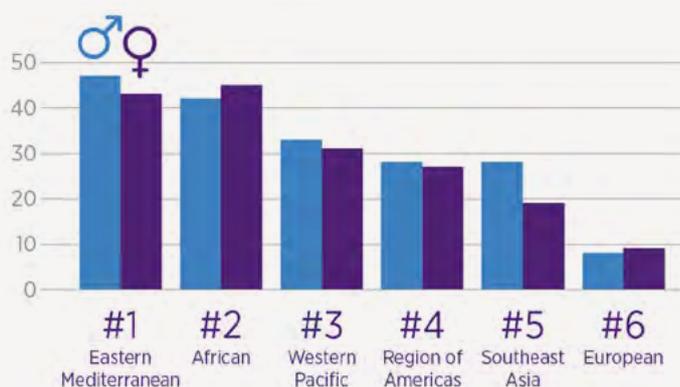
**1** working paper

#### Global studies examine adolescent health and motherhood

Adolescent health issues and associations with disadvantage in developing countries were a focus of the large volume of 2020 publications from UQ students supervised by Associate Professor Abdullah Mamun, whose research spans life course epidemiology. This group produced an output of more than 10 separate journal articles, including two by Tuhin Biswas in *EClinicalMedicine*, published by *The Lancet*. One examined bullying victimisation in more than 310,000 school students aged 12-17 in 83 low, middle and high-income countries. It found almost one-third of students had been bullied, with younger males from poor backgrounds most at risk. The study, which attracted widespread media coverage, recommended increased peer and parental supports to help lower risks of bullying. Tuhin also published a global study that showed one in five adolescents had experienced suicidal thoughts or anxiety, with the highest risk among older teenage girls from low-income backgrounds with no close friends.

Adolescent motherhood was the focus of a study published by student M. Mamun Huda in *The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health*. This study analysed data from more than 700,000 adolescent girls aged 15-19 from 74 low and middle-income countries. It showed the high global prevalence of adolescent motherhood was proving hard to shift, with reductions modest or absent in many developing countries and even rising in some. It recommended more education and health supports for adolescent girls. A separate study by Md. Mehedi Hasan investigated the provision of reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health services across 75 low and middle-income countries to identify gaps in coverage. While it found the coverage of such services was improving in developing countries, progress was uneven and insufficient to meet targets set by UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Meanwhile, Tahmina Begum published articles in 2020 related to her PhD thesis topic of caesarean birth and offspring health, and Berihun Dachew published on his topic of maternal hypertensive during pregnancy and offspring health trajectories.

## Our Students



Global prevalence of school bullying (Percentage rate by region. 317,869 students, aged 12–17 years, 83 countries, between 2003 and 2015)



Tuhin Biswas

### Publications: Global studies examine adolescent health and motherhood

- Begum, T., Fatima, Y., Perales, F., Anuradha, S., and Mamun, A. (2021). Associations of caesarean section with body mass and waist circumference trajectories from age 2 to 13 years: A nationally representative birth cohort study in Australia. *Pediatric Obesity*, e12769. doi:10.1111/ijpo.12769
- Begum, T., Khan, S. M., Adamou, B., Ferdous, J., Parvez, M. M., Islam, M. S., Kumkum, F. A., Rahman, A., and Anwar, I. (2020). Perceptions and experiences with district health information system software to collect and utilize health data in Bangladesh: a qualitative exploratory study. *BMC Health Services Research*, 20 (1) 465, 465. doi: 10.1186/s12913-020-05322-2
- Begum, T., Saif-Ur-Rahman, K. M., Yaqoot, F., Stekelenburg, J., Anuradha, S., Biswas, T., Doi, S. A., and Mamun, A. (2020). Global incidence of caesarean deliveries on maternal request: a systematic review and meta-regression. *BJOG*, 1471-0528.16491. doi: 10.1111/1471-0528.16491
- Biswas, T., Scott, J. G., Munir, K., Renzaho, A. M.N., Rawal, L. B., Baxter, J., and Mamun, A. A. (2020). Global variation in the prevalence of suicidal ideation, anxiety and their correlates among adolescents: A population based study of 82 countries. *EclinicalMedicine*, 24 100395. doi:10.1016/j.eclinm.2020.100395
- Biswas, T., Scott, J. G., Munir, K., Thomas, H. J., Huda, M. M., Hasan, Md. M., D.de Vries, T., Baxter, J., and Mamun, A. A. (2020). Global variation in the prevalence of bullying victimisation amongst adolescents: Role of peer and parental supports. *EclinicalMedicine*, 20 100276. doi:10.1016/j.eclinm.2020.100276
- Biswas, T., Townsend, N., Magalhaes, R. J. Soares, Hasan, M., and Mamun, A. (2020). Patterns and determinants of the double burden of malnutrition at the household level in South and Southeast Asia. *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. doi: 10.1038/s41430-020-00726-z
- Dachew, B., Ayano, G., and Alati, R. (2020). Does weight gain during pregnancy influence antenatal depressive symptoms? A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*, 138:110255. doi: 10.1016/j.jpsychores.2020.110255
- Dachew, B., Scott, J.G., Mamun A., Fetene, D. A., and Alati, R. (2020). Maternal hypertensive disorders during pregnancy and the trajectories of offspring emotional and behavioural problems: The ALSPAC birth cohort study. *Annals of Epidemiology*, 53:63-68.e1. doi:10.1016/j.annepidem.2020.08.015
- Hasan, M. M., Soares Magalhaes, R. J., Ahmed, S., Ahmed, S., Biswas, T., Fatima, Y., Islam, M. S. Hossain, M. S., and Mamun, A. A. (2020). Meeting the global target in reproductive, maternal, newborn, and child health care services in low- and middle-income countries. *Global Health: Science and Practice*. doi:10.9745/GHSP-D-20-00097
- Hasan, M. M. Tasnim, F., Tariqujjaman, M., Ahmed, S., Cleary, A., and Mamun, A. (2020). Examining the prevalence, correlates and inequalities of undiagnosed hypertension in Nepal: a population-based cross-sectional study. *BMJ Open*, 10 (10), e037592. doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2020-037592
- Huda, M. M., O'Flaherty, M., Finlay, J. E., and Al Mamun, A. (2021). Time trends and sociodemographic inequalities in the prevalence of adolescent motherhood in 74 low-income and middle-income countries: a population-based study. *The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health*, 5(1):26 - 36. doi:10.1016/S2352-4642(20)30311-4

## Our Students

### A role for men in early childhood education and care

Victoria Sullivan published four book chapters and two journal articles in 2020 on her PhD thesis topic of men's role in the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) sector. More than 90 per cent of the global ECEC workforce is female and increasing male participation is seen as critical to meeting current and future labour shortfalls. Victoria contributed to three separate chapters of the book, 'Exploring career trajectories of men in the early childhood education and care workforce: Why they leave and why they stay'. This book was the result of an international research collaboration across 12 countries and

included a visit by one of Victoria's supervisors, Dr Yuwei Xu of University College London (UCL), to the Institute for Social Science Research (ISSR) at UQ to meet with Victoria and her other supervisors Professor Karen Thorpe and Dr Laetitia Coles. Victoria's chapters covered motivations, workplace environments and relationships as factors influencing men's participation in ECEC. Her chapter in a separate book, 'Men in childcare: Factors affecting entry and exit of a career in ECEC', investigated the everyday experiences of workplace relationships of male ECEC educators. Victoria's journal articles included analysis of beliefs surrounding the inclusion of men in the ECEC workforce.

#### Publications: A role for men in early childhood education and care

- Kedar, Y., Andr , M., and Sullivan, V. (2020). Intrinsic motivations as a factor in men's career decisions in ECEC. In *Exploring Career Trajectories of Men in the Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce: Why They Leave and Why They Stay*, edited by Brody, D. L., Emilsen, K., Rohrmann, T., and Warin, J. London: Routledge. doi:10.4324/9781003048473
- Ljunggren, B., McHale, J., and Sullivan, V. (2020). Workplace environment: Leadership and governance. In *Exploring Career Trajectories of Men in the Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce: Why They Leave and Why They Stay*, edited by Brody, D. L., Emilsen, K., Rohrmann, T., and Warin, J. London: Routledge. doi:10.4324/9781003048473
- Sullivan, V., Sak, R., and Thorpe, K. (2020). Experiences of workplace relationships as factors precipitating or preventing dropout of male educators in ECEC. In *Exploring Career Trajectories of Men in the Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce: Why They Leave and Why They Stay*, edited by Brody, D. L., Emilsen, K., Rohrmann, T., and Warin, J. (pp. 83-97). London: Routledge.
- Sullivan, V., Sak, R., and Thorpe, K. (2020). The everyday experiences of workplace relationships as factors affecting the retention and exit of male educators in Early Education and Care. In *Men in childcare: Factors affecting entry and exit of a career in ECEC*. London: Routledge
- Sullivan, V., Coles, L., Xu, Y., Perales, F., and Thorpe, K. (2020). Beliefs and attributions: Insider accounts of men's place in early childhood education and care. (2020). *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 146394912092946. doi: 10.1177/1463949120929462
- Thorpe, K., Jansen, E., Sullivan, V., Irvine, S., McDonald, P., and The Early Years Workforce Study team (2020). Identifying Predictors of Retention and Professional Wellbeing of the Early Childhood Education Workforce in a Time of Change. *Journal of Educational Change*, 21(4):623-47. doi:10.1007/s10833-020-09382-3.

## Our Students

### UWA students investigate child health outcomes

Our students from the Telethon Kids Institute (TKI) and The University of Western Australia (UWA) were also active in publishing in 2020 exploring a range of issues relating to child and adolescent health. Leah Cave published longitudinal research on racial discrimination and child and adolescent health outcomes. She also published a study focused on levelling education outcomes for students with medical and mental health needs. Another of our TKI and UWA students Gursimran Dhamrait led a journal article that investigated the relationship between prenatal and perinatal risk factors and the developmental vulnerability of twins. Examining the developmental trajectories of 828 twin pairs born in Western Australia, this study found that both biological and sociodemographic risk factors were associated with developmental vulnerability in twins at 5 years of age.



Gursimran Dhamrait

#### Publications: UWA students investigate child health outcomes

- Cave, L., Hancock, K., Jones, C., de Lacy, D., Briedis, T., Moffatt, A., and Wheatley, G. (2020). Levelling education outcomes for students with medical and mental health needs. *Continuity in Education*, 1(1):98 - 117. doi:10.5334/cie.7
- Cave, L., Cooper, M. N., Zubrick, S. R., and Shepherd, C. C. J. (2020). Racial discrimination and allostatic load among First Nations Australians: a nationally representative cross-sectional study. *BMC Public Health*, 20(1). doi:10.1186/s12889-020-09978-7
- Cave, L., Cooper, M. N., Zubrick, S. R., and Shepherd, C. C. J. (2020). Racial discrimination and child and adolescent health in longitudinal studies: A systematic review. *Social Science & Medicine*, 250:112864. doi:10.1016/j.socscimed.2020.112864
- Dhamrait Kaur, G., Christensen, D., Pereira, G., and Taylor, C. L. (2020). Associations between biological and sociodemographic risks for developmental vulnerability in twins at age 5: a population data linkage study in Western Australia. *BMJ Open*, 10(10):e038846. doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2020-038846

# Our Researchers

Life Course Centre researchers continue to set new standards of excellence across the many research disciplines that comprise our comprehensive life course approach to addressing deep and persistent disadvantage. In 2020, our researchers achieved exceptional award recognition and grant success as highlighted by the standout examples showcased here.

## Awards

Professor Matt Sanders, Chief Investigator, UQ, was awarded an Order of Australia on Australia Day 26 January 2020 for distinguished service to research in clinical psychology and child, parent and family well-being. Director of the Parenting and Family Support Centre at the UQ School of Psychology, Matt is the founder and lead author of the world-renowned Triple P - Positive Parenting Program. He has published over 300 peer-reviewed articles, 28 books and 69 book chapters, and advised governments at senior policy levels in Australia and internationally.

A Life Course Centre-supported paper featuring several of our researchers across our university nodes was awarded the Best Paper Prize by the Economic Record journal in December 2020. The prize, judged on papers published in 2019, was awarded to: 'Childcare Use and Its Role in Indigenous Child Development: Evidence from the Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children in Australia' from March 2019. The authors were: Dr Francisco Azpitarte, Research Affiliate; Mr Abraham Chigavazira; Professor Guyonne Kalb,

Chief Investigator, Melbourne; Associate Professor Francisco Perales, Research Fellow, UQ; Dr Brad Farrant, Research Affiliate, Professor Stephen Zubrick, Chief Investigator, UWA.

Professor Lorraine Mazerolle, Chief Investigator, UQ, was named in the world's Top 10 Most Influential Criminologists by Academic Influence in October 2020. The list was based on citations and web presence over the last 10 years. Lorraine was the only Australian-based academic and the only woman in the Top 10. Lorraine also received the Distinguished Criminologist Award from the Australian & New Zealand Society of Criminology in 2020.

Dr Victoria Baranov, Research Fellow, Melbourne, was co-winner of the Australian Health Economics Society 2020 Rising Star Award. Victoria's research explores how health and psychological factors, including maternal depression, interact with disadvantage. Dr Nathan Kettlewell, Research Affiliate, the University of Technology Sydney, was the 2020 Rising Star Runner-Up for his research examining private health insurance, mental health, and risk preferences.



Matt Sanders



Victoria Baranov

## Our Researchers



Karen Thorpe (fifth from left) at the announcement of the Early Childhood Education Expert Reference Council, which she Chairs.

Dr Kirsten Hancock, Research Fellow, Telethon Kids Institute, UWA, received the WA Institute for Education Research 2020 Early Career Award. Kirsten’s research investigates the factors that help and hinder children to perform to their highest potential at school, with a specific focus on the relationship between school attendance and educational outcomes. This award supports her ongoing engagement activities with schools.

Professor Guyonne Kalb, Centre Chief Investigator, Melbourne, and her team received a Faculty of Business and Economics 2020 Deans’ Research Award for Exceptional Distinction in Research Engagement and Partnerships. This team also includes Research Fellows, Associate Professor Nicolas Héroult, Dr Julie Moschion, Dr Ferdi Botha and Dr Jordy Meekes. The team was recognised for engagement and evaluation work with several partners, including NSW Department of Communities & Justice and Australian Government Department of Social Services.



Kirsten Hancock

## Appointments

Professor Karen Thorpe, Chief Investigator, UQ, was appointed Chair of the Early Childhood Education Expert Reference Council, an independent group of experts in early childhood policymaking, research and practice.

Professor Janeen Baxter, Centre Director, UQ, was appointed to the Committee for Economic Development of Australia (CEDA) Council on Economic Policy, comprising a wide range of policy experts to help guide CEDA’s research agenda.



Pictured (from left) at the CEDA QLD welcome back 2020 event in January at the Queensland Performing Arts Centre: Emeritus Professor Peter Coaldrake, former QUT Vice-Chancellor and Chair of Queensland Performing Arts Trust; Janeen Baxter, Life Course Centre Director; Melinda Cilento, CEDA Chief Executive Officer; Dare Power, Queensland Performing Arts Trust member.

## Our Researchers

### Grants

#### Australian Research Council grants

Dr Jack Lam, Research Fellow, UQ was awarded an ARC Discovery Early Career Research Award (DECRA) in November 2020. Securing a DECRA is highly competitive and Jack was one of only two DECRA recipients in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at UQ. His research, building on existing work from an earlier UQ Early Career Researcher Grant, will investigate how significant life events generate temporary or sustained changes in loneliness. The project will generate valuable new evidence for understanding the dynamics of the growing problem of loneliness and will seek to improve economic and social outcomes for individuals, families and governments.

Associate Professor Jenny Povey and Professor Janeen Baxter, Associate Investigator and Centre Director, UQ, were part of a multi-disciplinary team awarded an ARC Linkage Project in January 2020 on enhancing children's journey in out-of-home care. The project, led by Professor Karen Healy and including Dr Jemma Venables of the UQ School of Nursing, Midwifery & Social Work and Dr Peter Walsh from The Benevolent Society, aims to improve the experiences and outcomes for Indigenous and non-Indigenous children in out-of-home care through analyses of longitudinal and interview data from children, their birth families and carers. The project also includes a range of other community and government partners.

Associate Professor Irma Mooi-Reci, Associate Investigator, Melbourne, led a successful ARC Special Research Initiative, announced in October 2020, to investigate the role of temporary, casual, and part-time work on Australians' fertility behaviour. It will aim to identify causal mechanisms and pathways between employment types and fertility and provide work and family policy recommendations.

Professor Deborah Cobb-Clark, Chief Investigator, Sydney, was a part of a successful ARC Linkage Project, announced in January 2020, to investigate insecure work and the mental health of workers and their families. The project, led by Monash University in partnership with Beyond Blue, will explore how insecure work affects the well-being of workers and families, and will also inform how poor mental health influences the types of jobs that people enter.

Associate Professor Leah Ruppanner, Associate Investigator, Melbourne, led a successful ARC Linkage Project, announced in May 2020, to investigate female representation in Victorian local government. The project will explore chronic under representation of women in Australian politics through a local government lens and generate new knowledge about barriers and pathways to female political representation.

Dr Andrew Clarke and Professor Cameron Parsell, Research Fellow and Associate Investigator, UQ, were part of a successful ARC Linkage Project, announced in March 2020, to investigate the experiences of people on the social housing waiting list. Based on in-depth interviews with applicants and collaborations with community groups throughout Australia, the project will generate new knowledge on applicants' circumstances, the assessment process, and the impact of extended periods on the social housing waiting list.



Jack Lam



Jenny Povey

## Our Researchers

### Other grants

Dr Tomasz Zajac, Associate Professor Wojtek Tomaszewski and Associate Professor Francisco Perales, Research Fellow, Associate Investigator and Research Fellow, UQ, led a successful project funded by the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (NCSHE) 2020/21 Research Grants Program, announced August 2020. The project will examine student mental health in the context of the current equity groups framework in Australia's higher education system. It will use Multi-Agency Data Integration Project (MADIP) data to investigate the impact of mental health and membership of established equity groups on first-year retention, and inform future policies on student mental health.



Wojtek Tomaszewski is part of a team that will investigate mental health and equity groups in higher education.



University of Sydney Chief Investigators (from left): Professors Deborah Cobb-Clark, Agnieszka Tymula and Nick Glozier.



Professor Annamarie Jagose, University of Sydney Dean of Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

## Sydney celebrates Life Course Centre funding success

Our University of Sydney node hosted a special celebration in March 2020 to mark the ARC's continued funding of the Life Course Centre. The event was attended by Professor Deborah Cobb-Clark and Professor Agnieszka Tymula of the School of Economics, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, and Professor Nick Glozier of the Brain and Mind Centre, Faculty of Medicine and Health. All three are Chief Investigators in the newly funded Life Course Centre commencing January 2021.

Deborah has been a Chief Investigator since the Centre's inception in 2014 and will also hold the positions of Deputy Director and Sydney Node Director from 2021. Agnieszka is moving from Associate Investigator to Chief Investigator in the new Centre, while Nick is a new incoming Chief Investigator who will be Program Leader of our new People research program. The celebration featured a welcome address by Professor Annamarie Jagose, University of Sydney Dean of Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, followed by an overview of the future Life Course Centre research that will be progressed by the university's three Chief Investigators. Our Sydney node will spearhead pioneering work on the cognitive science of disadvantage, a major innovation in our research program. This work will bring together behavioural economics and neuroscience to investigate the two-way relationship between disadvantage and cognition, decision-making, risk-taking, self-control and choices.

## Professional Staff

As well as the large network of researchers and students that make up the Life Course Centre, we also have a dedicated team of professional staff committed to building and enabling teams, projects, initiatives, collaboration and culture across the Centre. As the Centre continues to evolve and grow, this team will play a key role in underpinning our ongoing efficiency, effectiveness and excellence.

### Award for Service Excellence

The Life Course Centre Professional Team from our administering node at the Institute for Social Science Research at UQ was honoured with a 2020 UQ Award for Excellence. These awards celebrate the achievements and successes of staff across all levels of UQ, with the Awards Selection Committee rewarding outstanding contributions, innovative work and exemplary leadership. This year's awards saw a record 222 nominations. The Life Course Centre Professional Team claimed the Award for Excellence in the Service category.

"The Life Course Centre Professional Team provides exceptional service and support to ensure the success of this Centre of Excellence scheme, which is a major research initiative. The team works closely with Chief investigators across four universities, as

well as research fellows, students, external partners and international partner investigators to establish a culture of innovation, inclusiveness and engagement. Their exceptional service has established a strong culture of professionalism across all parts of the Centre, while raising the profile and reputation of UQ social science, and importantly, underpinned the development of a successful new Australian Research Council proposal for new funding from 2021," the Awards Selection Committee commented.

The Life Course Centre Professional Team nominated for the award comprised: Dee Dearing, Centre Administrator; Heidi Hoffmann, Research Assistant; Matt MacDermott, Communications Officer; Carla McCarthy, Engagement Officer; Dr Lucy Mills, Chief Operating Officer; and Dr Lisa Pope, Analysis & Development Coordinator.



Pictured at the 2020 UQ Awards for Excellence ceremony: (left to right) Matt MacDermott, Carla McCarthy, Heidi Hoffmann, and Lisa Pope. The award was presented by UQ Vice-Chancellor and President Professor Deborah Terry (front centre) and attended by Life Course Centre Director Janeen Baxter (right).

## Professional Staff



Rebecca Gelding



Kate Gilkison



Narelle Mullan



Heidi Minchin

Also at the 2020 UQ Awards for Excellence, Dr Lucy Mills, Professor Janeen Baxter, and Emma Earl, Research Partnerships Manager at the Institute for Social Science Research were part of the UQ 2020 ARC Centres of Excellence Bid Development Team that received a Commendation in the Leadership category. This team helped UQ secure three of the nine Centres of Excellence awarded in the 2020 round. UQ was the only university to receive more than one Centre and secured all three of its shortlisted bids – the Life Course Centre, the ARC Centre of Excellence for Innovations in Peptide and Protein Science, and the ARC Centre of Excellence for Plant Success in Nature and Agriculture – from an initial 93 expressions of interest nationwide.

## Our national team

The Life Course Centre has significantly strengthened its national Professional Team with key appointments across all four university nodes. Dr Rebecca Gelding has joined the University of Sydney School of Economics as Project Officer and Node

Administrator. Kate Gilkison has joined the Melbourne Institute: Applied Economic & Social Research at the University of Melbourne as Project Officer and Node Administrator. Narelle Mullan has joined the Telethon Kids Institute and The University of Western Australia as Program Manager and Node Administrator. These positions represent a major investment for the Centre in expanded support for our researchers, and these roles will be critical as the Centre continues to expand, integrates new people and teams nationally, and lifts its services, support, responsiveness and coordinating activities to new levels of excellence.

Heidi Minchin has joined the Life Course Centre Professional Team in 2020 at UQ's Institute for Social Science Research in the new position of Visual Communications Officer. Design, layout and graphics will be an increasingly important part of research translation, as the range of potential communications channels continues to proliferate. Heidi will help the Centre to communicate complex concepts in an engaging fashion, cut through the huge amount of competition in this space, and ensure that our work is accessible to all interested people.

## Thank-you Leanne

At the end of 2020 we said farewell to our long-serving UWA Node Administrator Leanne Scott. Leanne had been with the Centre since its inception in 2014, working closely with Deputy Director (Research) and Chief Investigator Professor Stephen Zubrick. As well as co-ordinating our UWA research leaders, programs, teams and activities, Leanne was always on hand at major events in other states, such as conferences and workshops, to lend her experience and skills to ensure everything ran smoothly. Leanne was a friend to many across all our university nodes and partner networks. We thank her for all her hard work over the first seven years of the Life Course Centre and wish her all the best in her retirement.



Leanne Scott

# COVID-19

COVID-19 turned our worlds upside down in 2020. A global health pandemic of unrivalled scale, it changed almost all aspects of how we live and work. These changes present both risks and opportunities for addressing disadvantage over the life course. While it will be some time before we can fully assess the impacts of COVID-19, our early research and media engagement demonstrated the responsiveness and reach of our Centre to this once-in-a-generation event.

## Responsiveness and reach

COVID-19 rapidly elevated many of the social, economic and health issues central to the research focus of the Life Course Centre to the top of the political agenda of governments, both nationally and internationally. Topics such as welfare, education, employment security and flexibility, gender equality, household and caring responsibilities and financial, mental and physical wellbeing were front and centre in public policy discussions and debate. Our researchers responded with early insights and media commentary across a variety of mediums. Here we showcase some key highlights of this 2020 COVID-19-related activity.

### COVID-19 outputs in 2020



## Responsiveness and reach

### Working Papers

An important focus of the Life Course Centre Working Paper Series is enabling timely and accessible dissemination of the very latest research on disadvantage, and this proved to be particularly valuable during COVID-19. The series provided an outlet for our researchers to share a range of early research and insights. Working Papers published in 2020 included one of the world's first papers, based on a global online survey of 5,700 respondents, to present findings on how COVID-19 infection within a household and adverse labour market shocks have led to lower reported levels of subjective well-being. The paper highlighted that ongoing job creation programs would be essential to recovery from the pandemic. While temporary transfer payments were helpful in mitigating short-term effects, sustainable employment would go a long way to improving people's well-being. Further 2020 Working Papers examined increased inequalities in financial well-being from COVID-19 labour market shocks, and gendered impacts in employment, working hours and wages. In a more forward-looking focus, our 2020 Working Papers also included a collaborative paper from Centre research leaders on opportunities for major social reform resulting from COVID-19.

#### Working Papers included:

- Baxter, J., Cobb-Clark, D., Cornish, A., Ho, T., Kalb, G., Mazerolle, L., Parsell, C., Pawson, H., Thorpe, K., De Silva, L., and Zubrick, S. (2020). Never Let a Crisis Go to Waste: Opportunities to Reduce Social Disadvantage from COVID-19, *Life Course Centre Working Paper Series 2020-30*.
- Botha, F., and de New, J. P. (2020). COVID-19 infections, labour market shocks, and subjective well-being, *Life Course Centre Working Paper Series 2020-19*.
- Botha, F., de New, J. P., de New, S. C., Ribar, D. C., and Salamanca, N. (2020). COVID-19 labour market shocks and their inequality implications for financial wellbeing, *Life Course Centre Working Paper Series 2020-20*.
- Meekes, J., Hassink, W. H. J., and Kalb, G. (2020). Essential Work and Emergency Childcare: Identifying Gender Differences in COVID-19 Effects on Labour Demand and Supply, *Life Course Centre Working Paper Series 2020-27*.

### The Conversation

Another valuable medium for our researchers to share early COVID-19-related research and insights was The Conversation, a high-impact, non-academic website featuring research-based news and analysis. The monthly audience of The Conversation in Australia is 7.9 million, and 16.3 million through republication. Articles from Centre researchers published in The Conversation in 2020 included a study highlighting the heavy impact of COVID-19 on young people. This article showed that almost one in three Australian workers aged 18-24 lost their jobs due to the pandemic, and almost a quarter of 18-24-year-olds reported high levels of mental distress, compared to only 9 per cent in 2017. A separate article highlighted the rising pressures that the pandemic had placed on mothers. It showed COVID-19 had wreaked havoc on work and family life and it was "mothers who picked up the pieces at the expense of their employment". Further articles from our researchers in The Conversation in 2020 included one examining how the pandemic had led to quick action on homelessness, and another highlighting the importance of maintaining healthy levels of sleep.

#### Articles in The Conversation included:

- Kabátek, J. (2 October 2020). 5 charts on how COVID-19 is hitting Australia's young adults hard, *The Conversation*.
- Parsell, C., and Pawson, H. (19 October 2020). COVID spurred action on rough sleepers but greater homelessness challenges lie ahead, *The Conversation*.
- Pattison, C., Rossa, K., and Smith, S. (3 April 2020). Sleep won't cure the coronavirus but it can help our bodies fight it, *The Conversation*.
- Ruppner, L., Churchill, B., and Scarborough, W. (26 March 2020). Why coronavirus may forever change the way we care within families, *The Conversation*.
- Ruppner, L. (21 July 2020). COVID-19 is a disaster for mothers' employment. And no, working from home is not the solution, *The Conversation*.

## Responsiveness and reach



Janeen Baxter being interviewed for ABC's 'Generation COVID' series. Photo courtesy ABC.

### Generation COVID

Life Course Centre Director Professor Janeen Baxter was invited to participate in a special ABC series in 2020 examining the impact of COVID-19 on Australia's young people. The multi-media 'Generation COVID' series comprised interviews, analysis and videos featured on the ABC website and aired on ABC TV. It was initiated by the ABC to gain insights into the thoughts, hopes and fears of Australia's youth in response to the pandemic. The series also featured commentary from leading Australian academics in fields such as sociology and economics. The ABC interviewed Janeen for the series at UQ in June 2020. She shared a life course perspective on the effects of COVID-19 on young people and stressed the importance of looking at the event through the lens of disadvantage. She also described the scope and nature of the 2020 pandemic shutdowns as having no real historical parallel. "It's a health crisis, it's an economic crisis, it's a political crisis, it's a social crisis," Janeen said.

Delays in study, work, relationships, buying a house and having children were identified as some of the by-products of the pandemic that could have lifelong impacts on today's youth. Financial and social supports around young people would be critical in determining just how much COVID-19 set them back. "If they come from advantaged situations, this will just be a delay in those stages, but for other young people, it might not just be a delay, it may put them off track completely," Janeen said. "They may never be able to afford to buy a house. If people delay having children, it may be that they never have children. That could well exacerbate what we're already seeing in terms of the aging crisis, and the skills crisis in Australia." Her advice to young people included prioritising the short-term supports they need from family, friends and networks they could rely on and also keeping an eye on some longer-term outcomes through options such as retraining, reskilling and new areas of study.

---

*"It's such a transitional time for them, moving out of home, buying their first house, getting a good job and establishing long-term relationships. These are critical life course stages. If they don't happen smoothly, it then has consequences."*

Professor Janeen Baxter, Generation COVID, ABC, July 2020

---

## Responsiveness and reach



Cameron Parsell (centre), whose research focus includes homelessness, poverty, social services and charity, was a guest on UQ's HigherEd Heroes podcast in 2020 with hosts Al Stark (left) and Seb Kaempf (right).

## Media exposure

Our researchers were prominently featured across a range of television, radio, podcast and print media in 2020 where they examined a wide variety of issues relating to COVID-19. Highlights included Professor Guyonne Kalb and Associate Professor Leah Ruppanner interviewed on the nightly ABC 730 television program, addressing the worsening of the gender divide in work and care. Guyonne also featured in The Australian Financial Review, and Leah on ABC Radio National's 'Big Ideas' program, both again discussing the worsening of women's experiences during COVID-19. Professor Stefanie Schurer appeared on the ABC Radio National's 'The Economists' program discussing COVID-19's impact on children.

In podcast appearances, Guyonne and Leah featured in the Women are the Business podcast from the University of Melbourne Faculty of Business and Economics, alongside guests such as former Prime Minister of Australia, The Honourable Julia Gillard. Professor Agnieszka Tymula appeared on the Sydney Ideas podcast from the University of Sydney, discussing COVID-19 fears and anxieties. Professor Cameron Parsell was a guest on UQ's 'HigherEd Heroes' podcast as well as the Housing Journal Podcast from the International Journal of Housing Policy where he discussed COVID-19 and homelessness. Professor Lorraine Mazerolle appeared on the 'Reducing Crime' podcast hosted by Professor Jerry Ratcliffe of Temple University, Philadelphia.

Lorraine also provided insights for the article 'Crossing the line: Why people breach borders and break the rules' in The Sydney Morning Herald. She explained such decisions were based on risk-versus-reward scenarios, but the legitimacy of authorities was also important. "If people don't understand the laws, they don't see them as legitimate... and that impacts whether they'll be willing to follow those laws," Lorraine said. The challenge was to convince people that laws were put in place for good reasons, being fair and not singling anyone out, and communicating in a procedurally just way. Lorraine and colleague Associate Professor Sarah Bennett developed a 'script' for police officers on COVID-19 compliance duty to use, which was adopted in Queensland, Victoria and parts of New Zealand.



Lorraine Mazerolle (right) appeared on the Reducing Crime podcast in 2020 hosted by Jerry Ratcliffe of Temple University, Philadelphia.

## The economy

Our economists were at the forefront of analysing COVID-19 labour market impacts and identifying those workers in need of additional support. Research from the Melbourne Institute: Applied Economic & Social Research, led by Professor Guyonne Kalb and supported by the Life Course Centre, found female workers in Melbourne and regional areas of Australia were bearing the brunt of the COVID-19 downturn. It suggested these outcomes could be due to women being over-represented in industries such as hospitality and tourism and recommended governments looked closely at these sectors to see what extra supports could be provided. Other topics examined by our Melbourne economists in 2020 included the introduction of the JobKeeper and JobSeeker payments and levels of mental distress.

Centre researchers from the University of Sydney School of Economics were represented in a series of 2020 articles on COVID-19 based on surveys of Australia's leading economists run by the Economic Society of Australia and The Conversation. Professor Deborah Cobb-Clark and Professor Stefanie Schurer were among those featured in resulting articles in The Conversation. In a 22 July 2020 article 'Should the government keep running up debt to get us out of the crisis?' economists overwhelmingly encouraged the government to keep spending to support the economy. Stefanie recommended investing in industries that would drive future demand, including green technology and internet infrastructure. Deborah and Stefanie were also signatories to a 19 April open letter from Australian economists to the Prime Minister that urged the government to not sacrifice people's health for the sake of the economy. "We cannot have a functioning economy unless we first comprehensively address the public health crisis," the letter stated. In May, Deborah participated in an Australian Government Department of Treasury meeting of government officials and academics to discuss the labour market outlook and policy responses to COVID-19.

### List of articles related to the economy

- Botha, F., Butterworth, P., and Wilkins, R. (2020) Mental distress in Australia over the course of the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, *Melbourne Institute: Applied Economic & Social Research, Research Insights*.
- Broadway, B., Mendez, S., and Moschion, J. (2020). Behind closed doors: The surge in mental distress of parents, *Melbourne Institute: Applied Economic & Social Research, Research Insights*.
- Hérault, N., Kabátek, J., Kalb, G., and Meeks, J (2020). Did JobSeeker and JobKeeper achieve their aims? *Melbourne Institute: Applied Economic & Social Research, Research Insights*.
- Kalb, G., Guillou, M., and Meekes, J. (2020). The ups and downs of the COVID-19 crisis: a gender divide? *Melbourne Institute: Applied Economic & Social Research, Research Insights*.

Responsiveness and reach

### Case study

Research that brought together the highly topical themes of gender, COVID-19 and work generated an exceptional level of international impact and reach in 2020. The journal article ‘COVID-19 and the gender gap in work hours’, was a collaboration between Life Course Centre Associate Investigator Leah Ruppner, Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Melbourne and her US co-authors: Caitlyn Collins, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Washington University in St. Louis; Liana Christin Landivar, Sociologist at the Maryland Population Research Center; and William J. Scarborough, Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of North Texas.

This study used survey data to examine changes in US mothers’ and fathers’ work hours from February to April 2020. During this period, COVID-19 forced school and daycare closures across the US, increasing caregiving responsibilities for working parents. This study showed it was mothers with young children who reduced their work hours to meet these rising caregiving demands, by a factor of four to five times more than fathers reduced their paid work hours. This disproportionate impact on mothers’ employment further widened the gender work gap in the US. To avoid long-term losses in women’s labour force participation, the study encouraged employers to provide greater flexibility, including shorter work hours, to keep mothers attached to employment. Fathers should also be encouraged to provide more care for their children. The relevance and release of this study in the midst of COVID-19, with families around the world struggling to adapt to challenging new circumstances, demands and stresses, resulted in widespread global impact and reach:

*“What is clear from robust government-collected data is that the pandemic is driving mothers to scale back employment.”*

Collins, C., L. Christin Landivar, L. Ruppner, and W. J. Scarborough. (2020). COVID-19 and the gender gap in work hours. *Gender, Work & Organization*. doi:10.1111/gwao.12506

### Citations

- No. 1 Life Course Centre journal article published in 2020 by citations (46)
- In the Top 1% of journal articles cited worldwide (for field and year).
- 1 policy citation – The Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.
- Top Tier Journal
- Published in a Top Tier Journal - *Gender, Work & Organization* (Top 3% in SCImago Journal Rank)

### Impact



- No. 1 Life Course Centre journal article published in 2020 by field weighted impact (63.25 times the impact of papers from the same field, published in the same year)
- No. 1 Life Course Centre journal article published in 2020 by Altmetric (160 news mentions from 123 news outlets, 20 blog mentions, 509 tweets).
- News mentions included: The New York Times, The Washington Post, USA Today, The Los Angeles Times, Chicago Tribune, The Japan Times, The Conversation, The Chronicle of Higher Education, Bloomberg, Forbes, Vogue, Yahoo News, NBC News, CBS News, BBC News.

Statistics obtained 12 March 2021 from SciVal and Altmetric

## International perspectives

Our global network of research leaders provided valuable international perspectives on COVID-19. In an April 2020 blog post and open editorial in the Toronto Star newspaper, Partner Investigator Professor Miles Corak of the City University of New York said Canada's COVID-19 economic downturn revealed "longstanding inequalities" that had been growing for decades. A "great revealer" had arrived in the form of COVID-19, with its economic fallout showing almost perfectly the divide between the vulnerable and those who are not. Miles described employment changes among professional, scientific and technical workers as "decimal point dust" while the "foot soldiers" in the COVID-19 frontline were the young and women, students, part-time and temporary workers with low wages and no union contracts, the already unemployed, and those who confront risks that repeat during the course of their lives leading to more precarious incomes, less stable and lower quality housing, and families that are less secure. "Inequality has been robbing many Canadians of security, prosperity and dignity for decades. That's what COVID-19 reveals. We don't have an adjustment problem. We have, as we have long had, an inequality problem."

---

*"COVID-19 is not the great leveller, it's the great revealer."*

Professor Miles Corak

---



---

*"Parenting is hard, and in the current COVID-19 environment, it has become even harder."*

Associate Professor Orla Doyle

---

Partner Investigator Associate Professor Orla Doyle of University College Dublin (UCD) examined how COVID-19 could potentially widen educational inequalities in Ireland. In research published by the UCD Geary Institute for Public Policy in April 2020, Orla explored home schooling trends during lockdown. It highlighted the importance of having adequate resources in place to support families, particularly those with children in disadvantaged schools. The study found families with lower levels of parental education were receiving less resources, including textbooks and educational apps. While Ireland had initiated delivery of food parcels during COVID-19 to the homes of children who use government school meal programs, similar educational initiatives could also be required. This could include delivering workbook and educational activities along with food parcels to ensure children without access to online resources could continue to engage with learning. Orla also contributed to research on Ireland's working-from-home experiences in 2020. It showed strong support from workers for ongoing work-from-home models. Lack of commute was the major benefit of working from home, while missing socialising with co-workers was the main disadvantage.

# Research

The research of the Life Course Centre has been organised in three major interconnected programs – Disadvantage Systems, Human Capabilities and Social Transformations. This structure has allowed our multi-disciplinary researchers to tackle the complexity of deep and persistent disadvantage through investigation of how disadvantage occurs and endures, who experiences it and how, and the real-world solutions that can make a difference.

# Deputy Director (Research) Report



I am extremely pleased to report that in the final year of the Life Course Centre's first round of ARC funding, we have once again met our research output targets in 2020. In a year disrupted like never before courtesy of COVID-19, our researchers produced a total of 172 research outputs, comprising 126 published journal articles, 33 reports, 12 book chapters and one book. Having exceeded our research output targets in all seven years of the Centre, our total research outputs 2014–2020 are now 1,054, against a target of 731 (see Figure 1). This represents a significant evidence base on addressing deep and persistent disadvantage over the life course and provides excellent foundations for the continued, evolving research focus of the Centre over the next seven years of its second ARC grant.

## Public impact

Key highlights in 2020 included a record number of reports to industry and government. We also published record volumes of non-academic articles and working papers. This strong presence in public discourse reflects the continued maturing of the Centre over seven years and also the elevation of many of the social and economic issues central to our research onto the national agenda due to the events of COVID-19. Our 33 industry and government reports in 2020 more than doubled our target of 15. We also had a record 32 non-academic articles and made three submissions to government reviews. Our researchers published a total of 50 working papers, which met our ambitious target and was a much higher output than in any previous year of the Centre.

## Academic impact

Our research outputs achieved significant academic impact in 2020. The 105 articles indexed in SciVal have already attracted over 150 citations from 42 countries, with 11.4 per cent in the top 10 per cent most cited articles worldwide in 2020. Over 76 per cent of our articles were published in top quartile journals, with over 43.6 per cent in the top 10 per cent ranked journals by SCImago Journal Rank, including: The Lancet Child and Adolescent Health, Antipode, Journal of Sex Research, Gender, Work and Organization, and the Journal of Marriage and Family. Our most cited article from 2020 also had the highest field weighted impact, over 60 times that of similar articles for its field and year.

## Breadth of research

Highlighting the Centre's multi-disciplinary approach to tackling enduring social, economic and health disadvantage over the life course, our indexed articles in 2020 were published in over 100 different journals, spanning 15 separate 2-digit field of research subject areas (Figure 2).

## Collaborations

The Centre also continues to collaborate extensively on the publication of journal articles (Figure 3), with a total of 327 authors from 110 institutions in 18 countries, including 17 non-academic institutions, contributing to our indexed journal articles in 2020. A high level of collaborations within institutions reflected the large number of student articles published (54 outputs involving students in 2020, including 37 student-led publications).

## 2020 reach

Of all Centre research outputs in 2020, 103 were tracked by Altmetric and 94 of these (91 per cent) were mentioned online. These outputs attracted a total of 2,276 mentions online, including over 1,925 mentions on social media, 307 news stories, two policy mentions and one Wikipedia citation. Our research was mentioned by 164 different news outlets from 15 countries in 2020, including in Australia by ABC News, The Sydney Morning Herald, The Conversation and The Mandarin, and internationally by The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times, Forbes and BBC News.

Deputy Director (Research) Report

**Figure 1**

Life Course Centre research publications from 2014 to 2020, including our key performance indicator targets. Research publications include journal articles, books, book chapters, conference publications and reports.

■ Target  
■ Achieved



**Ongoing reach**

In 2020, articles from the six previous years of the Centre attracted 41 policy citations, including in reports published by leading international organisations such as the World Bank, Congressional Research Service, International Labour Organisation, Brookings Institute, and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia.

**2014–2020 impact**

Reflecting on the substantial body of research produced by the Life Course Centre over seven years, it is pleasing to see that, as shown in the figure to the right, our total indexed journal articles 2014-2020 are creating a significant critical mass of collective impact. It is my hope that this impact continues to grow in the future, both through this body of work and the work to come in the new Life Course Centre.

**Professor Stephen Zubrick**  
Deputy Director (Research)

**2014–2020 impact**

**Indexed articles:**

**7,395**

citations by authors from...

**150**

countries

**Articles tracked by Altmetric:**

**17,261**

online mentions, including...

**160**

policy citations

**1,738**

news mentions

**15,066**

social media mentions

**5**

Wikipedia citations

**Most cited article in 2020**

Collins, C., Landivar, C. L. Ruppner, L., and Scarborough, W.J. (2020). COVID-19 and the Gender Gap in Work Hours. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 28: 101-112. doi:10.1111/gwao.12506

Deputy Director (Research) Report

Figure 2

Articles published in 2020 by Journal Field of Research code (two-digit). Journals are assigned multiple Field of Research (FoR) subject codes where they have a broad target audience, with some journal articles assigned to more than one FoR code depending on the journal they are published in. Only the top ten two-digit FoR categories are shown out of a total of 15 (based on 105 indexed journal articles, SciVal 12/3/21)

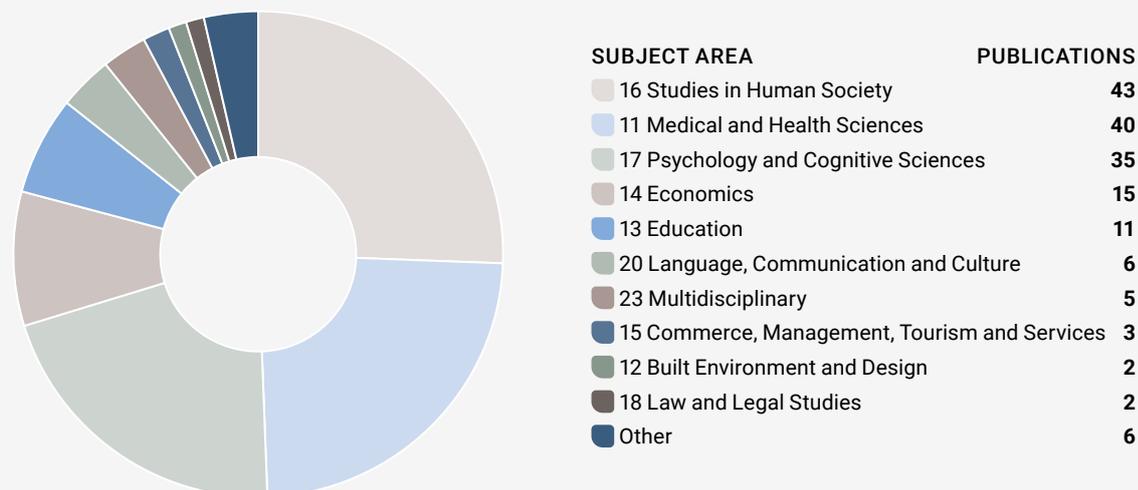
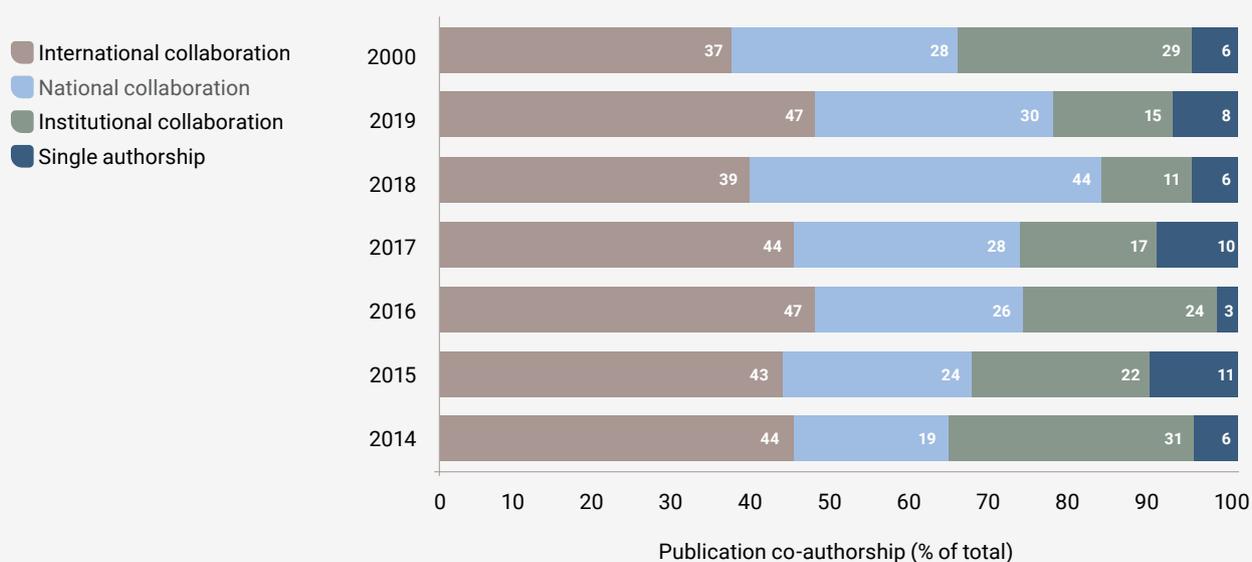


Figure 3

The percentage of publications with international, national and institutional (i.e. within the same institution) collaboration produced by the LCC from 2014 to 2020 (based on 724 SciVal journal articles, year defined as published year – some 2021 publications included in 2020). The increase in institutional collaboration in 2020 is partly due to the large number of student publications in this year.



Note: all figures based on data retrieved from Scopus/SciVal/Altmetric on 12 March 2021. Supporting information can be found in the Appendix available on request.

## Chief Investigator authored papers Life Course Centre 2014–2020

### Top 5 life-of-Centre Chief Investigator authored papers by field weighted index\*

- 1 Baxter, J., Buchler, S., Perales, F., & Western, M. (2015). A life-changing event: First births and men's and women's attitudes to mothering and gender divisions of labor. *Social Forces*, 93(3):989-1014. doi:10.1093/sf/sou103
- 2 Ward, C., Sanders, M. R., Gardner, F., Mikton, C., & Dawes, A. (2016). Preventing child maltreatment in low-and middle-income countries. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 54:97-107. doi:10.1016/j.chiabu.2015.11.002
- 3 Caliendo, M., Cobb-Clark, D. A., & Uhlenborff, A. (2015). Locus of control and job search strategies. *Review of Economics and Statistics*, 97(1), 88-103. doi:10.1162/REST\_a\_00459
- 4 Murphy, K., Mazerolle, L., & Bennett, S. (2014). Promoting trust in police: Findings from a randomised experimental field trial of procedural justice policing. *Policing and Society*, 24(4):405-424. doi:10.1080/10439463.2013.862246
- 5 Cobb-Clark, D. A., Kassenboehmer, S. C., & Schurer, S. (2014). Healthy habits: The connection between diet, exercise, and locus of control. *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 98:1-28. doi:10.1016/j.jebo.2013.10.011

\*takes into account citation patterns of field, age of paper

## Research Program 1: Disadvantage Systems

This research program has investigated how social and economic systems can generate and perpetuate deep and persistent disadvantage. These systems include families, education, work, governments and other institutions, and the attitudes and expectations embedded within them. Our research has explored the interplay between systems and key life course events to examine when and how disadvantage is accumulated, sustained or overcome. Central to this has been accessing the administrative data that enables us to track and analyse life pathways. Here we showcase some key research highlights in our Disadvantage Systems program in 2020 in areas such as family dynamics, gender, and labour markets.

## The precarious pathways of young mothers

Young mothers are at increased risk of adverse life course outcomes, including social, economic and health disadvantage stemming from early entry to motherhood. Our family dynamics research has explored the unique circumstances and risks of young motherhood, and the opportunities to provide extra support to young mothers on their life course journey. A key finding from this research is that the experiences of young motherhood are diverse and effective support must be tailored to suit specific circumstances and needs.

A 2020 Life Course Centre Working Paper examined the precarity of education and work pathways of young women in Australia in the years after they became mothers. It found a negative impact for young women who were already on a path not associated with precarity, such as being stably in education. For women already on precarious paths, becoming a mother did not further negatively impact their ongoing labour market trajectory but neither did it lead to improvement. The authors highlight the need for support for young mothers to take account of the diverse needs and circumstances of young mothers as well as reducing the stigma of young motherhood to increase interaction with services.

Further Centre research included a mixed-method study on social support levels reported by young mothers in Australia. It found this group generally reported higher social support, but poorer family relationships, than older mothers. Young mothers often experienced difficult childhoods and strained parental relationships but many reconnected with their mothers after pregnancy and saw them as important sources of support. An international study, utilising Swedish data, looked beyond young mothers to also include young fathers and family formations. It found large variations in the trajectories of young mothers and fathers, in areas such as having further children, re-partnering and family structures. These results challenged the view that young parenthood means 'having life's script written'.

Other 2020 research on motherhood included a book highlighting the disparities and institutional barriers mothers in the US face when re-entering the workforce, and a study examining the unique work-family pressures for immigrant mothers in Australia.

*“These insights are useful for decreasing stigma towards young parents, and blaming all misfortune on ‘bad choices’. Indeed, stigma has been quoted as a significant barrier for young mothers, leading them to avoid interacting with supportive services, the very behaviour that could help young mothers utilise their transformative energy.”*

Kalucza, S., Lam, J., & Baxter, J. (2020). Transformative event, disruption or cumulative disadvantage? Labor market and education trajectories of young mothers in Australia. *Life Course Centre Working Paper Series: 2020-04*.

Hoffmann, H., Olson, R. E., Perales, F., & Baxter, J. (2020). New mothers and social support: A mixed-method study of young mothers in Australia. *Journal of Sociology*, DOI: 10.1177/1440783320978706

Kalucza, S., Baranowska-Rataj, A., and Nilsson, K. (2020). Not all the same: Swedish teenage mothers' and fathers' selection into early family formation trajectories. *Advances in Life Course Research*, 44. doi: 10.1016/j.alcr.2020.100326

Lee, R., Ruppanner, L., and Perales, F. (2020). Making it work: Migration, motherhood and employment in Australia. *Social Science Research*, 102429. doi:10.1016/j.ssresearch.2020.102429

Ruppanner, L. (2020). *Motherlands: How States in the US Push Mothers Out of Employment*. Temple University Press.



Leah Ruppanner

## What happens when families don't work?

Our researchers have progressed important work relating to the impacts of relationship breakdown. This research has highlighted relationship breakdown as a key life course transition that leads to critical declines in wealth and major repercussions on family dynamics. Its impact is not just restricted to the partners separating but can also extend to the next generation through adult children's reduced wealth, education and earnings.

Centre research published in 2020 investigated gendered net worth changes over the marital dissolution process, starting three years prior to separation and continuing up to 15 years post-divorce. Overall, it found both men and women experienced dramatic relative wealth declines with negligible gender differences. However, predicted wealth levels indicated that men may be in a financially better position compared to women due to higher pre-separation wealth levels. This research suggests that marital dissolution may drive lasting wealth inequalities, particularly with regards to housing wealth. It builds on separate research showing gendered wealth inequalities within married couples, particularly in housing wealth.

Further research has explored the intergenerational impact of relationship breakdown. This research found that parental separation during childhood is associated with about 46% less net wealth for adult children. This negative association is limited to adult children who experienced parental separation before age 15. The association does not differ between children who experienced parental divorce before age 6 and between age 6 and 14.

Our researchers also investigated the association between chronic illness and relationship breakdown. They found the risk of dissolution to be 40 per cent higher when either partner reports an illness, with financial stress the main contributing factor. This study provided new insights into the factors undermining relationship stability and highlighted the importance of reducing financial stress associated with chronic illness. Separate research explored the allocation of resources for couples in households experiencing financial hardship and found that wives generally reported more financial hardships than husbands. This unequal resource distribution can stem from differences in bargaining power between partners.

*“We identify reduced education and earning capacities, unstable family structures among adult children and less future-oriented time preferences as likely mechanisms through which parental separation influences adult children's wealth.”*

Lersch, P. M., and Baxter, J. (2020). Parental separation during childhood and adult children's wealth. *Social Forces*. doi:10.1093/sf/soaa021

This paper was among the Centre's most impactful of 2020, making our Top 5 journal articles of 2020 based on Altmetrics, including 125 social media mentions.



### Other linked publications

- Botha, F., & Ribar, D.C. (2020). For Worse? Financial Hardships and Intra-Household Resource Allocation among Australian Couples. *Life Course Centre Working Paper Series: 2020-28*.
- Kapelle, N., and Baxter, J. (2020). Marital dissolution and personal wealth: Examining gendered trends across the dissolution process. *Journal of Marriage and Family*. doi:10.1111/jomf.12707
- Kapelle, N., and Lersch, P.M. (2020). The accumulation of wealth in marriage: Over-time change and within-couple inequalities. *European Sociological Review*. doi:10.1093/esr/jcaa006
- Lam, J., Vidal, S., and Baxter, J. (2020). Chronic conditions, couple-level factors and union dissolution. *Advances in Life Course Research*, 100340. doi:10.1016/j.alcr.2020.100340

## Disadvantage Systems

## Female labour force participation

Labour markets are a key focus for Centre researchers at the Melbourne Institute: Applied Economic & Social Research at the University of Melbourne, who published a range of new research in 2020 on issues including wage growth, gender and paid parental leave.

This research identified that Australia's recent low wage growth was mostly driven by employee factors such as age, education, contract type, occupation and industry, while gender was less influential. Separate research attributed increased female labour force participation to changes in Australia's population composition, labour supply preferences and reductions in gender wage gaps. However, tax and transfer policies designed to improve work incentives for women have contributed very little and, in some cases, have even worked against increasing female participation rates. Further research showed that expectant mothers were disconnected from labour markets for longer periods after job loss, compared to displaced women who were not pregnant. It

recommended policies to protect expectant mothers against the long-term consequences of job loss could include providing more high-quality childcare and encouraging men to share childcare responsibilities.

Our economists highlighted the positive impacts flowing from the introduction of Australia's Paid Parental Leave in 2011. Their results, based on detailed survey data, found positive effects on mothers taking leave in the first half year and on mothers' probability of returning to work in the first year. Further, it was disadvantaged mothers, with low income, low education and no access to employer-funded leave, who responded most. Separate Centre research found the Paid Parental Leave scheme led to an increase in the number of children that families intended to have. With fertility intentions predicting fertility outcomes, this finding suggested paid parental leave programs can increase the fertility of working women and moderate declining fertility rates in many developed countries.

*“The Australian Government could better support female labour force participation through policies that provide further incentives instead of putting hurdles in the way.”*

Hérault, N., & Kalb, G. (2020). Understanding the rising trend in female labour force participation. *Life Course Centre Working Paper Series: 2020-12*.

### Other linked publications

Bassford, M., and Fisher, H. (2020). The impact of paid parental leave on fertility intentions. *Economic Record*, 96(315): 402–30. doi:10.1111/1475-4932.12561.

Broadway, B., Kalb, G., McVicar, D., and Martin, B. (2020). The impact of paid parental leave on labor supply and employment outcomes in Australia. *Feminist Economics*, 1 - 36. doi:10.1080/13545701.2020.1718175

Meekes, J., and Hassink, W. H. J. (2020). Fired and pregnant: Gender differences in job flexibility outcomes after job loss, *Life Course Centre Working Paper Series 2020-06*.

Meekes, J., and Kalb, G. (2020). Wage growth distribution and changes over time: 2001–2018, *Life Course Centre Working Paper Series 2020-13*.



Chief Investigator Guyonne Kalb from the Melbourne Institute: Applied Economic & Social Research at the University of Melbourne has led a number of Centre studies on female labour market participation.

## Do parents pass gender role attitudes onto their children?

A 2020 Life Course Centre Working Paper investigated the impact of intergenerational influences on Australian adolescents' gender role attitudes. It found substantial correlations in gender role attitudes between parents and their children. While fathers' attitudes influenced the attitudes of their sons and daughters equally, mothers' attitudes influenced their daughters more than their sons, highlighting the important role of mothers in the gender socialisation of their daughters. The study also showed that when one parent holds egalitarian gender role attitudes, regardless of that parent's gender, the influence of the other parent's attitudes on the child is diminished. This suggested that egalitarianism is intergenerationally 'stickier' and trumps traditionalism when there is parental disagreement on gender role attitudes. The study said interventions that targeted parents' gender role attitudes could deliver significant flow-on effects for the next generation.

### Linked publications

Perales, F., Hoffmann, H., King, T., Vidal, S. & Baxter, J. (2020). Mothers, fathers and the intergenerational transmission of gender role attitudes. *Life Course Centre Working Paper Series: 2020-05*.



Centre PhD student Alice Campbell of the Institute for Social Science Research at the University of Queensland has authored several studies on sexual minority groups.

## Improving insights into sexual minorities

Our family dynamics research has included the challenges facing sexual minority groups, particularly in adolescence and young adulthood. We know these groups have poorer mental health than their heterosexual peers, and new 2020 studies have focused on improving the quality of data and insights into this association. This included evaluating how sexual minorities engage with surveys and identifying informant discrepancies in sexual minority-mental health associations depending on who assesses mental health (child, mother, father, teacher). Centre research has identified social support and school belonging as important mediators of poorer health outcomes for sexual minority youth and provided up-to-date evidence on changes in sexual identity labels among emerging adult women. Our research has also highlighted unique barriers to social inclusion for sexual minority groups, including less frequent contact with and living geographically distant from their siblings in adulthood.

### Linked publications

- Campbell, A., Perales, F., and Baxter, J. (2020). Sexual minority women in longitudinal survey research: Is attrition a problem? *Archives of Sexual Behavior*. doi:10.1007/s10508-020-01669-z
- Perales, F., and Campbell, A. (2020). Health disparities between sexual minority and different-sex-attracted adolescents: Quantifying the intervening role of social support and school belonging. *LGBT Health*. doi:10.1089/lgbt.2019.0285
- Perales, F., Campbell, A., and Johnson S. (2020). Mental-health disparities between heterosexual and sexual-minority adolescents: Examining the role of informant discrepancies. *Journal of Adolescence*, 79:122 - 127. doi:10.1016/j.adolescence.2020.01.006
- Perales, F., and Plage, S. (2020). Sexual orientation, geographic proximity, and contact frequency between adult siblings. *Journal of Marriage and Family*. doi:10.1111/jomf.12669
- Campbell, A., Perales, F., and Baxter, J. (2020). Changes in sexual identity labels in a contemporary cohort of emerging adult women: Patterns, prevalence and a typology. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 1–13. doi:10.1080/00224499.2020.1814092

## Disadvantage Systems

## Achieving educational equity

Centre research has explored mechanisms for equalising educational outcomes in Australian schools. A 2020 study analysed the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), which aims to improve overall achievement by identifying students who are underperforming against national minimum standards and require additional support. Our research showed achievement gaps between students below the standards and students at or above the standards persisted across year levels. Labelling students below the national minimum standards had no significant effect on later reading or numeracy achievement, suggesting NAPLAN was not meeting its aims. Further Centre research identified the important role of student engagement in driving improved school achievement by students from low socio-economic backgrounds. While there are other factors at play at the same time, student engagement can be influenced by teachers, school leaders, curriculum choices and school resources, making it ripe for policies seeking to equalise educational outcomes.

### Linked publications

Adams, E. K., Hancock, K. J., and Taylor, C. L. (2020). Student achievement against national minimum standards for reading and numeracy in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9: A regression discontinuity analysis. *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 1-28. doi:10.1002/ajs4.124

Tomaszewski, W., Xiang, N., and Western, M. (2020). Student engagement as a mediator of the effects of socio-economic status on academic performance among secondary school students in Australia. *British Educational Research Journal*. doi:10.1002/berj.3599

## Intergenerational mobility in Australia

Professor Miles Corak of the City University of New York published research in 2020 examining intergenerational mobility in Australia. He said Australia had taken important steps to better understand this issue through advances in the availability of administrative and longitudinal data. Through this, we know one-quarter to one-third of income inequality among Australian parents is passed onto the next generation. This compared relatively well to many other rich countries, including those with the most scope for policy learning, Canada and the US. However, 'a fuller picture' required comparisons across the many different dimensions of mobility that citizens care about, mobility not just of incomes but also of position and direction, in particular scope for upward mobility. Associate Professor Irma Mooi-Reci of the University of Melbourne also published a 2020 paper on major challenges, including data gaps, and future directions for intergenerational mobility research.

### Linked publications

Corak, M. (2020). Intergenerational mobility: What do we care about? What should we care about? *Australian Economic Review*, 53(2):230 - 240. doi:10.1111/aere.v53.2,10.1111/1467-8462.12372

Mooi-Reci, I. (2020). Intergenerational mobility research: Current challenges and future directions. *Australian Economic Review*, 53(2):241 - 246. doi:10.1111/aere.v53.2,10.1111/1467-8462.12371

This paper was inspired by a panel discussion at the 'Intergenerational Paths to Self-Sufficiency' workshop hosted by the Life Course Centre and University of Melbourne in 2019. The panellists were Professors Tim F. Liao, Research Affiliate; Miles Corak, Associate Investigator; Mark Wooden; Janeen Baxter, Centre Director; Jean Yeung, Associate Investigator.



Irma Mooi-Reci

## Partnerships key to unlocking administrative data

One of the success stories of Life Course Centre 2014-2020 has been negotiating access to administrative data on children and families in disadvantage. Our researchers have worked closely with government to access such data, not previously used for research, to investigate people's repeated interactions over time with welfare, education, work, child safety and other institutions. Centre research published in 2020 showcased the power of this partnership approach. It profiled a case study project between the Australian Government Department of Human Services and the Life Course Centre using administrative welfare data to examine associations between welfare receipt and relationship separation. The results provided greater statistical power for analysing hard-to-reach minority groups, which are typically not well represented in survey data. This paper stressed that close collaboration between researchers and data custodians was critical for appropriate sharing and accurate representation of data, and outcomes that are relevant for policy design and evaluation.

### Linked publication

Spallek, M., Haynes M., Baxter, J., and Kapelle, N. (2020). The value of administrative data for longitudinal social research: A case study investigating income support receipt and relationship separation in Australia. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 1–15. doi:10.1080/13645579.2019.1707984

**This research was earlier published as: Spallek, M., Haynes M., Baxter, J., and Kapelle, N. (2018). Relationship separation and length of time in receipt of income support payments: A longitudinal analysis of Australian Government administrative data. Life Course Centre Working Paper Series: 2018-11.**

## Research Program 2: Human Capabilities

This research program has investigated the capacity of individuals, families and communities to overcome deep and persistent disadvantage. It has explored the multi-faceted contributors and consequences of entrenched disadvantage, and the cognitive and non-cognitive skills and family and community conditions that can make a difference in building and supporting human capabilities over the life course. Here we showcase some key research highlights published in our Human Capabilities program in 2020 in areas such as individual decision-making, personality traits, cognitive skills, school readiness, welfare and unemployment.

## Experiments in behavioural economics – evidence from the lab

Decision-making, peer presence and risk-taking were among the issues explored in a series of published research papers in 2020 by Centre researchers at the University of Sydney School of Economics. This research, grounded in behavioural economics experiments, included a study on irrational decision-making in young people with mood disorders. Based on incentive experiments involving choices over consumer products, it found that economic irrationality was higher in young people with more severe mood disorder symptoms, a result with important implications for identification and treatment.

Separate research has examined how teenagers trade off rewards. Using an experiment among low-income high school students, this study found strong present bias for both food and monetary rewards. Further research used a laboratory experiment to measure the influence of peer presence on adolescents' decision-making. Adolescents were asked, in private and when observed by a peer, to choose between a safe monetary outcome and a lottery. The results showed that adolescents' weighting of losses to gains, or loss aversion, increased in the presence of peers, a positive finding for policy seeking to reduce harmful adolescent behaviours.

Our researchers have also undertaken behavioural economics experiments relating to issues such as credit card debt, obesity and gender bias. One study investigated whether a prize-linked financial tool could incentivise people to increase their minimum credit card repayments. Borrowers could win a prize with lottery-like odds by repaying above a set threshold. This increased repayments by 31 per cent, highlighting the potential of such tools to improve low repayment practices. Another study involving our researchers investigated the economic decision-making of people with obesity and pre-diabetes. It found significant negative association between risk tolerance and markers of obesity and concluded that risk tolerance, when combined with patience, could benefit health outcomes. Our research also utilised an economic experiment to test gender-bias in career advice. It found no evidence that women workers are less confident or that career advice is gender-biased, demonstrating the need for caution when making general interpretations of gender bias in specific settings.

*“Given how upsetting some of the statistics on adolescent decision-making are and the amount of the policy effort that specifically addresses behaviour in adolescence, we still have relatively little economic understanding of why this group so often ends up in trouble.”*

**Tymula, A. & Wang, X. (2020). Increased risk taking, not loss tolerance drives adolescents' propensity to gamble more under peer observation. Life Course Centre Working Paper: 2020-08.**

### Other linked publications

Cheung, S. L., Tymula, A., & Wang, X. (2020). Present bias for monetary and dietary rewards: Evidence from Chinese teenagers. *Life Course Centre Working Paper Series: 2020-16.*

Hendy, P., Slonim, R., & Atalay, K. (2020). Prize linked debt: Increasing credit card repayments in an online experiment. *Life Course Centre Working Paper Series: 2020-09.*

**This paper was based on the economics honours thesis of Patrick Hendy, who was supported by a Life Course Centre Scholarship for Research Addressing Social and Economic Disadvantage. Patrick was awarded First Class Honours and the University Medal from the University of Sydney in 2019 and is now employed as an analyst at the Reserve Bank of Australia.**

Pastore, C., Schurer, S., Tymula, A., Fuller, N., & Caterson, I. (2020). Economic preferences and obesity: Evidence from a clinical lab-in-field experiment. *IZA Institute of Labor Economics Discussion Paper Series IZA DP No. 13915.*

Silva-Goncalves, J. & van Veldhuizen. (2020). Subjective judgement and gender bias in advice: Evidence from the laboratory. *Life Course Centre Working Paper Series: 2020-29.*

Weinrabe, A., Chung, H.-K., Tymula, A., Tran, J., & Hickie, I. B. (2020). Economic rationality in youth with emerging mood disorders. *Journal of Neuroscience, Psychology and Economics.*

Human Capabilities

## Cognitive measures and neuroscience methods

Research published in 2020 evaluated the cognitive impact of major life events. It compared the effects of 18 life events on affective and cognitive well-being in a large population-based cohort. Separation, injury, illness and monetary loss had negative impacts on both types of well-being. Marriage, retirement and childbirth had positive effects on cognitive wellbeing but not on affective well-being, whilst moving home had negative effects on cognitive, but not affective, wellbeing. A better understanding of the impact, and different responses, to major life events will assist clinicians, economists and policymakers, but individuals’ hopes for happiness deriving from positive events may be misplaced, the paper concludes.

A Life Course Centre Working Paper co-authored by Partner Investigator, Professor Barbara Wolfe of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, examined how neuroscience could be married with social sciences to tackle the complexity of child poverty, but warned that simple solutions should not be expected. The authors conclude that thoughtful, integrative research shows great promise for refining policies, programs and interventions targeting child poverty.

Separate research from Professor Wolfe highlighted how new cross-disciplinary research insights, including neuroscience methods, could augment knowledge on child poverty, and called for consensus measures to maximise global child poverty research. Further research examined the life course consequences of early childhood health problems by gender, and found that early mental health problems in men play a strong role in negative job-related health outcomes such as limited or no work, large work gaps, and early retirement.

*“It is not that there will be a clear brain signal that is diagnostic of poverty... Poverty represents many different kinds of social interactions, challenges and stressors over the course of a child’s development. But developmental neuroscience does have a rich corpus of data that can help.”*

Pollak, S.D, & Wolfe, B.L. (2020). How developmental neuroscience can help address the problem of child poverty. *Life Course Centre Working Paper Series: 2020-02*

### Other linked publications

Kettlewell, N., Morris, R. W., Ho, N., Cobb-Clark, D. A., Cripps, S., & Glozier, N. (2020). The differential impact of major life events on cognitive and affective wellbeing. *SSM – Population Health*, 10, 100533.

**This paper contributes to a broader Centre research agenda being led by current and continuing Chief Investigator Professor Deborah Cobb-Clark of the University of Sydney School of Economics, and incoming Chief Investigator Professor Nick Glozier from the university’s Brain & Mind Centre. Deborah has led our Human Capabilities program from 2014–2020, will be Centre Deputy Director and Sydney Node Director from 2021, and will lead new research on the cognitive science of disadvantage, while Nick will lead our new People research program.**

Pollak, S. D., & Wolfe, B. L. (2020). Maximizing research on the adverse effects of child poverty through consensus measures. *Developmental Science*. doi:10.1111/desc.12946

Flores, M. & Wolfe, B.L. (2020). The influence of early life health conditions on life course health. *Life Course Centre Working Paper Series: 2020-11*.

(clockwise from front) Sarah Dahmann, Deborah Cobb-Clark, Tiffany Ho, Alexander Cornish, Hayley Fisher and Julianna Silva Goncalves

Deborah Cobb-Clark and members of her research team in a long-awaited in-person meeting late in 2020 following COVID-19 lockdowns and social distancing measures at the University of Sydney. Deborah will lead new Centre research on the cognitive science of disadvantage, along with Agnieszka Tymula (also pictured far right).



## The complexity of school readiness

School readiness is an important predictor of a child's future success and is often thought of only in terms of formal assessments made at the start of schooling. However, new work by Centre researchers at the Telethon Kids Institute and The University of Western Australia highlights the other relevant factors that comprise school readiness.

Our researchers investigated the experiences of 4,000 families with pre-school-aged children. They found that factors outside of a child's capabilities, including parents, family, home environment and local community, should also be considered when determining how ready a child is for school, and if they need extra support. The researchers examined a child's individual, family and community characteristics at ages 4-5 and followed-up to see how the child was faring academically, emotionally and behaviourally at ages 8-9.

The findings show that while child capacities are important to school readiness, they are not the only factors that predict later outcomes. A combination of child, parenting, school and community risks was the strongest predictor of lowest reading comprehension at ages 8-9, while parenting risks was the strongest predictor of emotional and behavioural difficulties. The authors conclude that the focus of school readiness should shift solely from a child's capacities to a more holistic view of factors outside the child such as parental health and stress, family life and school and community characteristics.

This research extends a body of published Centre research findings, dating back to 2014, on early childhood development. In 2020, our research in this field also included identifying distinct clusters of risks that influence developmental vulnerability. Our researchers also published an ethnographic study on the personal experiences of parents in disadvantaged Australian communities in supporting their children's transition to school. Separate research highlighted associations between the physical environments of neighbourhoods, including playgroups, kindergartens, yard and green spaces, and early childhood development.

*“School entry is a particularly important transition in the life course... This study highlights the importance of family, school and community factors when considering school readiness.”*

Christensen, D., Taylor, C. L., Hancock, K. J., and Zubrick, S. R. (2020). School readiness is more than the child: a latent class analysis of child, family, school and community aspects of school readiness. *Australian Journal of Social Issues*. doi:10.1002/ajs4.138

### Other linked publications

Bell, M. F., Turrell, G., Beesley, B., Boruff, B., Trapp, G., Zubrick, S. R., and Christian, H. E. (2020). Children's neighbourhood physical environment and early development: an individual child level linked data study. *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health*, 74(4), 321-329. doi: 10.1136/jech-2019-212686

**This paper contributes to a broader Centre research agenda that has been led to date by outgoing Chief Investigator Professor Stephen Zubrick of the Telethon Kids Institute and UWA. This research will now be progressed by incoming Chief Investigator Professor Hayley Christian, also of TKI and UWA, who will study suburb support and neighbourhood environments for children and families in vulnerable communities as part of our new Places research program.**

Jose, K., Banks, S., Hansen, E., Jones, R., Zubrick, S. R., Stafford, J., and Taylor, C. L. (2020). Parental perspectives on children's school readiness: An ethnographic study. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 1-11. doi:10.1007/s10643-020-01130-9

Taylor, C. L., Christensen, D., Stafford, J., Venn, A., Preen, D., and Zubrick, Z. (2020). Associations between clusters of early life risk factors and developmental vulnerability at age 5: a retrospective cohort study using population-wide linkage of administrative data in Tasmania, Australia. *BMJ Open*, 10(4):e033795. doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2019-033795

## Welfare and pathways of disadvantage

The primary mechanism linking welfare receipt across generations is the failure to complete high school. This is a key finding of Centre research exploring the intergenerational correlation in welfare receipt for young people and their parents over nearly two decades. Adolescents in welfare-reliant families have more disruptions to their schooling, from moving home, suspensions and expulsions, and receive less family financial support, impacting their chances of completing high school and avoiding welfare. Young people's risk-taking behaviour, such as smoking, drug use, delinquency and pregnancy, is another key mechanism underpinning intergenerational welfare reliance.

Separate research examined the impact of changes to Australia's national social security system that required job seekers to engage in non-search activities such as training and volunteering. Unemployed fathers subject to the 1999 policy change spent less time on welfare during their children's adolescence, and their children were also substantially less likely to receive unemployment benefits when they became young adults. Completion of the mandated activities, role modelling, changes in attitudes, improved health, support and stability are likely potential channels for these effects.

### Linked publications

- Bubonya, M., & Cobb-Clark, D. A. (2020). Pathways of disadvantage: Unpacking the intergenerational correlation in welfare. *Economics of Education Review*, 80, 102066. doi: 10.1016/j.econedurev.2020.102066
- Cobb-Clark, D., Dahmann, S.C., & Gielen, A.C. (2020). The intergenerational effects of requiring unemployment benefit recipients to engage in non-search activities. *Life Course Centre Working Paper Series: 2020-18*.

## Personality traits and investments

Internal locus of control is an important personality trait that refers to the degree to which people believe they, as opposed to external forces, have control over the outcome of life events. Two published studies in 2020 explored this topic in relation to economic behaviour. One showed that investment in equities increases with people's locus of control, and this association remains after controlling for risk and time preferences, financial literacy, overconfidence, optimism, trust and other personality traits. The second study showed higher internal locus of control positively influences people's participation in work-related training through its effect on expectations about future wage increases. The findings suggest those with an external-focused sense of control may require additional training support.

### Linked publications

- Caliendo, M., Cobb-Clark, D. A., Obst, C., Seitz, H., & Uhlendorff, A. (2020). Locus of control and investment in training. *Journal of Human Resources*, 0318-9377R2. DOI: 10.3368/jhr.57.4.0318-9377R2
- Salamanca, N., de Grip, A., Fouarge, D., & Montizaan, R. (2020). Locus of control and investment in risky assets. *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 177, 548–568.



Nicolás Salamanca

## The power of positive parenting

Our research has shown that parenting plays a key role in the development of a child's capabilities, and new 2020 research focused on the positive impact of fathers' engagement with a child's education. It demonstrated that fathers' engagement enhances non-cognitive skill development related to economic decision-making and positive life course outcomes into adulthood. Fathers' inputs into children's education has been understudied to date but these findings highlight the pivotal role of fathers in non-cognitive skill production over the life course. Further Centre parenting research in 2020 evaluated the effect of evidence-based parenting programs, including support for parents of teenagers dealing with conflict and parents of pre-schoolers with ADHD symptoms. Randomized controlled trials on both programs showed significant post-intervention improvements for children and parents. A large-scale clinical trial of the Triple P evidence-based parenting program, involving 166 families, also produced positive results on content and process fidelity of the program.

### Linked publications

- Elkins, R., and Schurer, S. (2020). Exploring the role of parental engagement in non-cognitive skill development over the lifecycle. *Journal of Population Economics*, 33(3):957–1004. doi:10.1007/s00148-020-00767-5
- Dittman, C. K., Burke, K., and Hodges, J. (2020). Brief parenting support for parents of teenagers dealing with family conflict: A pilot randomized controlled trial. *Child & Youth Care Forum*. doi:10.1007/s10566-020-09557-2
- Franke, N., Keown, L.J., and Sanders, M. R. (2020). *An RCT of an online parenting program for parents of preschool-aged children with ADHD symptoms*. SAGE, 24(12). doi:10.1177/1087054716667598
- Sanders, M. R., Spry C. S., Tellegen, C. L., Kirby, J. N., Metzler, C. M., and Prinz, R. J. (2020) Development and validation of fidelity monitoring and enhancement in an evidence-based parenting program. *The Journal of Behavioral Health Services & Research*, 47(4): 569–80. doi:10.1007/s11414-020-09713-5.



Kylie Burke is now a senior researcher with the Metro North Mental Health Service, Queensland Health, and an Associate Investigator in the Life Course Centre.

## Research Program 3: Social Transformations

This research program has focused on developing and testing evidence-based social interventions that can assist individuals, families and communities in overcoming deep and persistent disadvantage. The Life Course Centre has supported a range of targeted projects, spanning different research disciplines and methods and various industry partnerships and populations. All have shared a vision for achieving real impact and lasting positive change on life course outcomes. Here we showcase some research highlights in our Social Transformations program in 2020 in areas such as homelessness and child nutrition as well as lessons and opportunities arising from COVID-19 project disruptions.

## Providing permanent housing to the homeless

COVID-19 put the chronic problem of homelessness, and government responses to address it, firmly in the spotlight. Governments in Australia took quick, decisive action to house an estimated 33,000 rough sleepers, and others in inadequate or overcrowded shelters, in hotels and other temporary accommodation. A stable base, rather than being constantly on the move, allowed homeless people and social workers to engage with a range of transformative services. Put simply, the pandemic showed what is possible when the homeless are provided with the one thing they need above all other services – housing.

This ‘housing first’ approach is the focus of a Life Course Centre-supported research project on permanent supportive housing that is being undertaken by our researchers in partnership with not-for-profits Micah Projects and Common Ground Queensland. Led by Professor Cameron Parsell, this project builds on previous collaborations with Micah Projects, including an ethnographic study based on six months of qualitative fieldwork in Brisbane. A 2020 report on this study highlighted the “life-changing benefits” of permanent housing and supportive services and recommended homelessness be tackled through a combination of evidence-based approaches and increased advocacy for, and investment in, social housing.

---

*“The research findings presented in this report show that a coordinated and housing-focused response to rough sleeping has the capacity to end homelessness for some of the most vulnerable people on the street.”*

Clarke, A., and Parsell, C. (2020). *Responding to rough sleeping in Brisbane: An ethnographic study summary report*. The University of Queensland, School of Social Science.

---

While there have been encouraging moves from some state governments on social housing since COVID-19, such actions need to be replicated and coordinated nationally. The 2020 Australian Homelessness Monitor, of which Cameron was an author, showed an extreme shortage of social and affordable housing, which it described as a long-term policy failure. Further 2020 research demonstrated the benefits of a multi-disciplinary model, informed by housing first principles, piloted in Cairns in far north Queensland. It showed that combined clinical and psychosocial supports enabled homeless people to access and sustain social housing. The pilot of this model in Cairns, where homelessness is experienced at almost twice the national rate, included Indigenous mentors and enabled successful housing outcomes for chronically homeless Indigenous people.

Our researchers have also explored the role of family relationship breakdown in older people’s homelessness, one of the fastest growing groups in the homeless population. Separate research has examined the ways in which receipt of welfare is subject to meeting certain conditions and the ways in which this can impact marginalised people’s capacity to shape life on their own terms. These findings have been further extended through research on charity and shame, which advocates for transforming the receipt of charity by creating conditions for reciprocity that can mitigate feelings of shame.

### Other linked publications

- Parsell, C., Clarke A., and Vorsina, M. (2020). Evidence for an integrated healthcare and psychosocial multidisciplinary model to address rough sleeping. *Health & Social Care in the Community*, 28(1):34-41. doi:10.1111/hsc.12835
- Parsell, C., and Clarke, A. (2020). Charity and shame: Towards reciprocity. *Social Problems*. doi:10.1093/socpro/spaa057
- Parsell, C., Vincent E., Klein E., Clarke A., and Walsh, T. (2020). Introduction to the special issue on welfare conditionality in Australia. *Australian Journal of Social Issues*. doi:10.1002/ajs4.102
- Pawson, H., Parsell, C., Edgar, I., & Hartley, C. (2020). *Australian Homelessness Monitor 2020*. Launch Housing, Melbourne, Australia.

## Improving early eating habits at home and in care

The Life Course Centre-funded Mealtimes Matter project is focused on structuring early healthy eating habits in young children. Initial research has examined the impact of fussy child eating behaviours in low-income households and found that 'risk aversion' to food and economic waste in such households can limit a child's exposure to a variety of healthy foods.

A 2020 study extended this research by investigating associations between child temperament and parents' structure-related mealtime practices. Parents of more than 200 children, aged 2 to 5, in a disadvantaged community self-reported measures of child temperament, food fussiness and meal structures. The results found that more difficult temperament was associated with less mealtime structure and recommended promoting more mealtime structure, including consistent timing of meals and sitting together at a table for family meals, as an appropriate response to a child's fussy eating or difficult behaviour at mealtimes. Similar responses could be utilised by both mothers and fathers.

Further 2020 research specifically explored the role of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services in supporting child nutrition for families living at high risk of food insecurity. This study used data from ECEC services throughout Queensland and found that services in the most disadvantaged areas were less likely to provide food and more likely to have lower fees. Whilst higher market competition in metropolitan areas did increase the likelihood of ECEC meal provision, parents' ability to pay constrained fees. This situation raised questions about food quality, overall service provision, and offsetting costs in the small number of ECEC services in disadvantaged communities where food was provided.

The paper concluded that the competitive ECEC market is working contrary to its potential to promote public health and support child nutrition, as children living in disadvantaged communities where food insecurity is higher are the least likely to have meals provided by their service. This highlighted the need for fundamental change to ECEC funding models and service provision quality.

*"The findings indicate the need for systemic change to enable high quality food provision in Early Care and Education services located in communities at high risk of food insecurity."*

Thorpe, K., Searle, B., Van Halen, O., Lakeman, N., Oakes, C., Harris, H., & Staton, S. (2020). A market in mealtimes: Social and economic factors associated with meal provision in Early Care and Education (ECE) services. *Life Course Centre Working Paper Series: 2020-25.*

### Other linked publications

Searle, B. R. E., Harris, H. A., Thorpe, K., & Jansen, E. (2020). What children bring to the table: The association of temperament and child fussy eating with maternal and paternal mealtime structure. *Appetite*, 104680.

Thorpe, K., Westwood, E., Jansen, E., Menner, R., Houen, S., & Staton, S. (2020). Working Towards the Australian National Quality Standard for ECEC: what do we know? Where should we go?. *The Australian Educational Researcher*, 1–21.

This paper contributes to a broader Centre research agenda led by current and continuing Chief Investigator Professor Karen Thorpe, who will undertake research focused on education investments in our new Opportunities research program.



Karen Thorpe

## COVID-19 project disruptions

Social interventions targeting schools and families were particularly hard hit by the disruptions of COVID-19. The 2020 year saw students, firstly, undertake schooling remotely from home and, secondly, when schools reopened researcher access was constrained by social distancing measures. These measures also severely limited researcher access to families throughout the year. Life Course Centre-supported projects that felt the impact of these disruptions, and were subsequently delayed in their progress in 2020, included:

### Every Family

The Every Family: Australian Triple P System Population Trial is a flagship project of the Centre which is investigating the population-level effects of providing evidence-based positive parenting in disadvantaged communities. The impact of this large-scale project is being measured by multiple indicators of disadvantage, and then compared to similar communities where positive parenting support is not being systematically implemented.

Every Family is using a mix of administrative and survey data. The administrative data covers areas such as child protection, school attendance and achievement, and hospital and mental health reports. The survey data collects information on parenting practices and community circumstances. Restrictions on access to families has contributed to delays in survey data analyses. Administrative data analyses have also been delayed due to the time required to access and collate these data, but we anticipate results will be available by the end of 2021. Several papers on the research protocol, the conceptual basis of the trial, methodological issues and results are currently under review or in progress.

### Interventions to increase perseverance

This project is investigating interventions that can increase perseverance among socioeconomically disadvantaged adolescents, drawing on concepts such as the growth mindset and non-binding voluntary commitments. The project is based on school-based interventions and will be a proof-of-concept Randomised Controlled Trial designed to inform a future intervention at scale.

### The Alliance of Parents and Teachers

The focus of this project is to develop resources to accompany the Alliance of Parents and Teachers seminar. The seminar aims to assist parents to foster a positive home-school partnership with both their child's teacher and school, ultimately benefitting their child's learning and wellbeing.

### The Walk of Life program

This project is designed to be used in schools in partnership with police to provide a cost-effective means of targeting and reengaging youth at risk of entering the youth justice system or dropping out of school. The program incorporates principles of Bush Adventure therapy and identified risk and protective factors for youth deviance.

### Positive lessons

COVID-19 disruptions presented particularly big challenges in supporting school students more vulnerable to disengagement but there were also positive lessons to be learnt from projects adapting to the unique circumstances of 2020. One such project was a Life Course Centre-supported program using the concept of prosocial incentives to drive improved school attendance among Indigenous students. This program is run by the non-government Former Origin Greats (FOGS) through its Achieving Results Through Indigenous Education (ARTIE) Academy, which works with approximately 4,400 Indigenous students in schools across Queensland. Through a variety of mechanisms, ARTIE supports students to reach a minimum 90 per cent school attendance target, engage in learning, and complete Year 12.

## Social Transformations

Our researchers are working with ARTIE to test the effect of prosocial incentives on school attendance and engagement. This concept encourages a student to invest optimum effort in return for a reward that can benefit someone else via a charitable contribution, similar to 'paying it forward'. Our early research has shown promising results for reducing school absences, with further studies required to demonstrate its effectiveness. ARTIE coordinators are usually embedded in schools working and building relationships with students, but this was not possible in 2020. However, an article from our researchers that reviewed the year's experiences and outcomes highlighted how the ARTIE team responded quickly to the new circumstances and served as "an important bridge between school and home" for students.

Using online strategies, particularly social media platforms, led to increased communication between ARTIE coordinators, students, families and communities. The support provided during remote learning also positively impacted students' engagement when they returned to school. Even students who had not worked with ARTIE prior to COVID-19, but worked with them during remote learning, benefited from the communication and engagement strategies employed. The pandemic also increased awareness of the ARTIE program among families and communities more broadly. Overall, the COVID-19 experience provided important lessons for the design and delivery of evidence-based school intervention projects. These include the centrality of connection to families in engaging students, and the viability and value of online support and social media in connecting students, families and communities.

---

*"The COVID-19 delivery plan took the ARTIE program to a new level of engaging families and intensified the focus on students at risk of disengagement."*

Potia, A. H., Page, S., Mooney, R., Dennis, P., Menner, R., and Thorpe, K. (2020). We didn't plan for this - but we led and learned: ARTIE Academy and COVID-19. *Australian Educational Leader*, 42 (3), 53-55.

---

## Opportunities

While COVID-19 produced project disruptions, delays and lessons, it also provided a major natural experiment of a size and scale that could never have been designed and delivered by any single intervention program. This, in turn, presented significant opportunities for rethinking, redesigning and reworking social, economic and health policies in light of the pandemic. In 2020, the Life Course Centre grasped this opportunity by bringing together its research leaders to focus on optimistic forward-looking counterpoints to the devastation of COVID-19. This collaborative research was published in 2020 as an Information Paper for the Committee for Economic Development in Australia (CEDA), as a Life Course Centre Working Paper and is being progressed to academic publication. It identified key opportunities to address long-standing problems and inequalities in health, labour markets, the tax and transfer system, gender, education, housing and the criminal justice system in Australia. COVID-19 shone a light on how government can change the rules of seemingly entrenched institutional frameworks overnight. A silver lining of COVID-19 is that innovative, previously unthinkable, fast-moving interventions can be achieved and widely accepted, opening the door for similar responses to address deep and persistent disadvantage.

### Linked publications

Baxter, J., Cobb-Clark, D., Cornish, A., Ho, T., Kalb, G., Mazerolle, L., Parsell, C., Pawson, H., De Silva, L., Thorpe, K., and Zubrick, S. (2020). *Never let a crisis go to waste: social policy opportunities from COVID-19*. Committee for Economic Development of Australia (CEDA).

Baxter, J., Cobb-Clark, D., Cornish, A., Ho, T., Kalb, G., Mazerolle, L., Parsell, C., Pawson, H., Thorpe, K., De Silva, L., and Zubrick, S. (2020). *Never Let a Crisis Go to Waste: Opportunities to Reduce Social Disadvantage from COVID-19*, *Life Course Centre Working Paper Series: 2020-30*.

# Retrospective

As the final year in our first round of ARC funding, 2020 provided an opportunity for us to look back at the progression of the Centre from 2014–2020. This special Retrospective section charts some of the main highlights over the past seven years and also includes reflections from our research leaders on key achievements to date and the platform that has been established for the continued evolution of the Life Course Centre.

# Key milestones



## November 2013

Life Course Centre 2014 bid team presentation to ARC in Canberra.

Professors Deborah Cobb-Clark, Steve Zubrick, Janeen Baxter, Matthew Sanders and Mark Western with UQ Deputy Vice Chancellor Research, Professor Max Lu (second from right), on way to ARC for interview for funding bid for Life Course Centre, 2014.

## July 2014

Establishment of Life Course Centre

## October 2014

Official launch of the Life Course Centre at the Brotherhood of St Laurence in Melbourne.



(from left) The Honourable Amanda Vanstone, Life Course Centre Advisory Committee Chair; Janeen Baxter, Life Course Centre Director; Tony Nicholson, Executive Director Brotherhood of St Laurence; Professor Max Lu, UQ Provost; Professor Anton Middelberg, UQ Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research); Professor Aidan Byrne, ARC CEO; Professor Mark Western, Life Course Centre Chief Investigator and Director of UQ Institute for Social Science Research; Professor Tim Dunne, Executive Dean UQ Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.

## March 2015

First stand-alone Life Course Centre Data for Policy workshop held in Brisbane (following on from a Data Resource Workshop held in conjunction with the Centre launch in 2014).



The Data for Policy workshop in Brisbane in 2015 brought together key data and government stakeholders with Life Course Centre researchers and data experts to identify and inform common research and policy questions for addressing socioeconomic disadvantage.

## July 2015

Professor Miles Corak Visit, UQ



Professor Miles Corak, Associate Investigator, University of Ottawa (now at City University of New York) visiting the Life Course Centre in July 2015.

## October 2015

Inaugural Life Course Centre Conference in Brisbane.



Partner Investigator Professor Greg Duncan, University of California, Irvine (USA) presenting a keynote lecture at the Life Course Centre Conference 2015 during his time as international visitor to the Centre.



The Honorable Bill English, Deputy Prime Minister of New Zealand (fourth from left) and UQ Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter Høj (third from right) at the Life Course Centre Conference 2015 with (from left) Centre Chief Investigators Professor Deborah Cobb-Clark, Professor Mark Western, Professor Janeen Baxter, Professor Stephen Zubrick, Professor Michele Haynes, Professor Lorraine Mazerolle and Research Fellow Francis Mitrou.

## October 2016

The Life Course Centre partnered in hosting the inaugural Longitudinal Data Conference in Canberra in partnership with the Australian Government Department of Social Services National Centre for Longitudinal Data.



Centre Research Fellows Dr Tina Rampino and Dr Jack Lam with Chief Investigator Professor David Ribar at the Life Course Centre booth at the Longitudinal Data Conference 2016. The conference also featured hosted workshops, panels and presentations by several Centre researchers and students.



Life Course Centre Chief Investigator Professor Mark Western delivering a keynote address at the Longitudinal Data Conference 2016. Fellow Chief Investigator Professor Steve Zubrick seated at left.

## December 2016

Early Career Researchers Workshop, UQ.



Attendees at Early Career Researchers Workshop, UQ

## February 2017

Life Course Centre research retreat, Werribee, Victoria.



Attendees at the Life Course Centre research retreat, Werribee, Victoria

## May 2017

Life Course Centre initiated and co-sponsored International Workshop on Government Administrative Data for Policy-Relevant Research at Stanford University in California, USA.



Francis Mitrou, Research Fellow UWA (left) with David Dennis of the Australian Government Department of Social Services at the Stanford University workshop.



(from left) Regan Foust, University of Southern California; Emily Putnam-Hornstein, University of Southern California; Janeen Baxter, UQ; David Grusky, Stanford University; Jonathan Fisher, Stanford University; Matthew Snipp, Stanford University; Sergi Vidal, UQ.

## September 2017

ARC Mid-Term Review, UQ.

Professor Shelley Mallet, General Manager, Research and Policy Centre, Brotherhood of St Laurence (partner organisation) at the Life Course Centre ARC Mid-Term Review at UQ (partner organisation representative and Advisory Committee member)



*“The (Mid-Term) Review Panel was impressed with the high-quality work being undertaken by the Centre’s researchers as well as the high degree of professionalism they displayed.. the excellent research achievements and collaborations to date have put the Centre in a strong position to provide even more significant outputs through its remaining funding period.”*

## October 2017

International Life Course Centre Conference in Sydney.



(from left) Professor Rebeka Levine Coley, Boston College; Professor Adrian Raine, University of Pennsylvania; Professor Fiona Steele, London School of Economics; Professor Janeen Baxter, UQ, at the International Life Course Centre Conference 2017.

## May 2018

Refugee Settlement and Wellbeing over the Life Course Symposium, UQ.

The Refugee Settlement and Wellbeing Symposium attracted a cross-section of academic, non-government and government attendees, including Centre partners the Brotherhood of St Laurence and the Australian Government Department of Social Services.



## June 2018

Researchers' Week, UQ.

Professor Kathy Edin, Associate Investigator, Princeton University, was Researcher in Residence during Researchers' Week, hosting a seminar, workshops, training and mentoring sessions.



(above) Attendees at Researchers' Week (right) Kathy Edin

## November 2018

Centre Planning Day, UQ.

(left to right) Centre Manager Dr Lucy Mills, Reporting and Analysis Coordinator Dr Lisa Pope, and Relationship Management and Events Coordinator Carla McCarthy at the Centre Planning Day November 2018.



## May 2019

Life Course Centre research retreat, Perth WA.



Attendees at the Life Course Centre research retreat, Perth WA.



## May 2019

Life Course Centre 2020 bid team presentation to ARC in Canberra.

Professors Nick Glozier, Donna Cross, Deborah Cobb-Clark, David Ribar and Cameron Parsell with UQ Deputy Vice Chancellor Research Professor Bronwyn Harch (second from left), on way to ARC interview for Life Course Centre 2020 bid.

## August 2019

Data for Policy workshop, Canberra.

The 2019 Life Course Centre Data for Policy Workshop brought together researchers and representatives of leading government agencies in Canberra.



## October 2019

Student Development Week, UQ.



Professor Rebekah Levine Coley, Partner Investigator, Boston College, provided mentoring to Centre students during Student Development Week in October 2019.

## October 2019

Anti-Poverty Week event, Brisbane.

(left to right) at our Anti-Poverty Week event in Brisbane in October 2019, Professor Lorraine Mazerolle, Professor Mark Western, Professor Rebekah Levine Coley (Boston College), Professor Janeen Baxter, Dr Matteo Sandi (London School of Economics & Political Science), Professor Karen Thorpe, and Professor Heather Zwicker, Executive Dean Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, UQ.



## October 2019

Announcement of Life Course Centre re-funding by Australian Government.

(from left) Professor Bronwyn Harch Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) UQ; Member for Ryan Julian Simmonds MP; Professor Janeen Baxter, UQ, at the October 2019 announcement at UQ of the Centre's re-funding.



## February 2020

Helping Families Change Conference, Brisbane.



Professor Matt Sanders delivering keynote at the Helping Families Change conference, Brisbane.



A full house at the conference.

## September 2020

Social Sciences Week



Professor Janeen Baxter presenting during Social Sciences Week on the Life Course Centre: Looking Back, Looking Forward.

## January 2021

Establishment of Life Course Centre 2021

# Reflections from our Chief Investigators

---

## Professor Janeen Baxter

Director and Chief Investigator 2014 – continuing

“It’s an honour and a privilege to lead the Life Course Centre. The idea of the Centre was seeded many years prior to the funding application and to see it develop, come to fruition and then achieve a further round of funding is amazing. These are truly collaborative endeavours and I am enormously grateful for the support of our university and external partners and the hard work and dedication of our investigators, research fellows, students and professional staff. We are tackling fundamental questions at the heart of the social sciences and aiming to develop solutions to some of the most intractable problems facing the world. It’s hard to imagine a more fulfilling way to spend my days.”



Janeen Baxter and Stephen Zubrick

---

## Professor Stephen Zubrick

Chief Investigator, Deputy Director (Research)  
2014–2020

“From the initial approach by Janeen, to the development, challenge and winning of the first ARC grant in 2014, I would rate it all as a career highlight. Naturally, I am delighted that the Life Course Centre has been extended funding for another seven years. It continues to address some really big questions: How do we tackle poverty and disadvantage? How do we create opportunities for more people to fully participate economically, socially and civically, and choose lives that they value? It has been an exhilarating experience and one that comes with enormous responsibilities, but it has been a great adventure.”

---

## Professor Lorraine Mazerolle

Chief Investigator 2014–2020

“From the outset, the Life Course Centre under Janeen’s leadership set out to tackle some really difficult theoretical and policy questions around deep and persistent disadvantage. With our international and industry partners, we drew strength from our different perspectives and academic backgrounds. We learned a lot along the way. But, more than anything, our collective journey was enjoyable because we were working with people who passionately believed in making people’s lives better through generating and using scientific evidence to gain theoretical insights and shape policy and practice. I know the new generation of Life Course Centre scholars share our passion to build a more inclusive and fair lived experience for all Australians.”



Mark Western (third from right) and Michelle Haynes (fourth from right)

---

### **Professor Mark Western**

Chief Investigator 2014–2020

“The ongoing success of the Life Course Centre is an almost unparalleled achievement in the social sciences in Australia. To receive a second round of ARC funding is even harder than winning the first one, because the starting point on which you have to build is an exceptional established Centre that is already meeting the ARC objectives. The Life Course Centre has clearly demonstrated that they are world-leaders in social science addressing disadvantage. Janeen and the whole team are to be commended for outlining a compelling vision and ambition that will now take the Centre to a whole new level.”

---

### **Professor Michele Haynes**

Chief Investigator 2014–2017

“A great achievement of the Life Course Centre has been its enabling capacity to bring government and non-government organisations together with researchers to share awareness of their rich longitudinal data resources and how these can be brought together in collaborative partnerships to provide much needed evidence for life course research and policy. It has been extremely rewarding to participate in the early development of the Centre’s Data for Policy initiative and the continuing opportunities to engage with our partners in the linking and analysing of unique sources of data, to address the problems that arise with social disadvantage. These initiatives have now gained a large momentum and it is wonderful that these opportunities and skills will be further enabled and continue to grow in the next round of the Centre.”



Lorraine Mazerolle (left) and Deborah Cobb-Clark (right)

---

### **Professor Deborah Cobb-Clark**

Chief Investigator 2014 – continuing

“I think one of the things the Life Course Centre has been really successful at is opening up and making use of administrative data and linking it in creative ways to ask really important policy questions. Part of that is assessing what the impact of various policies are. It is not enough to just know if something is working or not. You really need to know: Is it working better than something else that could have been done and, if so, how much better? The Life Course Centre is constantly asking: Is this best practice? Is there a better way?”

**Professor Cate Taylor**

Chief Investigator 2017–2020

“A highlight of the Life Course Centre has been the opportunities we have had to develop strong and enduring partnerships with colleagues from government, non-government and not-for profit organisations to strengthen human service systems to better meet the needs of all Australian children and families.”



Guyonne Kalb (left) and Cate Taylor (right)

**Professor Guyonne Kalb**

Associate Investigator 2014–2019

Chief Investigator 2020 – continuing

“I have thoroughly enjoyed being part of the Life Course Centre, from the early preparations in 2012, to joining the retreats to participating in the conferences and workshops, and collaborating with cross-nodal and cross-disciplinary colleagues on projects. Janeen has ably led a diverse group of researchers from a range of disciplines to form a cohesive centre contributing to policy with a focus on seeking to understand, and prevent, disadvantage. Being a part of this has been an extremely rewarding experience. I am excited to continue learning over the next seven years.”

**Professor Colm Harmon**

Chief Investigator 2014–2019

“The Life Course Centre represents the best of how great science is completed. From a coffee in the fringe of a conference in Brisbane with Janeen, to the shaping of a proposal where nothing was off the table and only big ideas were allowed in the room, and onto the roll-out of a magnificent research agenda. It also changed how our institutions worked. The Centre was reflected in who we hired, what we taught, and careers developed. It now has alumni in Australia and beyond and the extension of support will empower very long-term impact. Some children will grow up with a better life because of the Life Course Centre, but children not even born yet will reap even bigger rewards.”



Colm Harmon



David Lawrence

**Professor David Lawrence**

Chief Investigator 2014–2016

“The Life Course Centre provides the opportunity to integrate Australia’s existing population data resources to research the transmission of disadvantage over time and across generations, and to build a platform that can be used to evaluate new approaches in policy and practice to effectively break cycles of disadvantage. The transformational power of large-scale linked administrative datasets could be used to cost effectively address key policy issues central to reducing the burden and scale of deep and persistent disadvantage in Australian society.”

(quote from 2014 Annual Report)



Karen Thorpe (centre)

### Professor Karen Thorpe

Chief Investigator 2017 – continuing

“The Life Course Centre has been an amazing collaboration across a diversity of exceptional academics, students, industry partners and professional staff, all driven to tackle the challenging social problem of intergenerational disadvantage. The shared vision of a better future and our achievements toward this goal in research outputs and impacts are tangible highlights of the Centre. Yet for me, the greatest highlight is the everyday relationships that have been built. The mentorship and shared learning with our students and collaborators, the relationships of trust with government and non-government agencies, and the supports of our professional staff who quietly enable our achievements. These relationships are central to our ongoing energy and vision to deliver a more equitable Australian society.”

### Professor David Ribar

Chief Investigator 2016–2019

“Conducting and leading research within the Life Course Centre has been the opportunity of a lifetime for me personally and for each of the fellows, affiliates, and graduate students at the University of Melbourne. United through the life course perspective and through an abiding desire to improve the well-being of Australians, the Centre has nurtured action-oriented research collaborations across academic disciplines and across stakeholder groups. As we have developed deeper understandings of the drivers of intergenerational disadvantage and the policies to ameliorate it, we have also learned so much from each other. I am immensely proud, and lucky, to have been part of such a wonderful and ground-breaking organisation.”



David Ribar (front centre)



Matt Sanders (right)

### Professor Matt Sanders

Chief Investigator 2014 – continuing

“One of the things I have learnt over the years is that working in partnerships, and collaborating with multiple disciplines, hugely strengthens the quality of the research process. It is this collaboration, the concentrated focus on disadvantage from a multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary research perspective, that makes the Life Course Centre special and really sets it apart. Each of the disciplines contributes, both individually and collaboratively, to investigating through the lens of disadvantage and building the critical evidence base to deliver real-world benefits to children and families.”

# Impact

An ARC Centre of Excellence is about enabling outstanding research over long periods of time. But it is also about much more than research. It is about having real impact on the community by informing and influencing government and industry, developing practical tools and resources to achieve better outcomes on large-scale problems, and building capacity by developing the next generation of research leaders.

# Informing and Influencing

Today in Australia, children and families are benefiting from a life course and longitudinal approach to disadvantage that has been advanced by the Life Course Centre. We have successfully embedded the concept of ‘the life course’ into public policy discourse and have seen our findings considered and recommended at the highest levels of government. This impact continued in 2020 with our research featured across several prominent reports and inquiries.

## Final Report of Inquiry into Mental Health

### Productivity Commission

A large cross-section of Centre research, from across all four of our Australian university nodes, was referenced in the Productivity Commission’s Final Report of its Inquiry into Mental Health. This report was handed to the Australian Government in June 2020 and released publicly in November. It follows a two-year inquiry process starting with Terms of Reference in 2018, a Draft Report in 2019 and ongoing consultation.

The inquiry examined influences on people’s mental health, and the wider economic and productivity implications. Life Course Centre research informing the inquiry report covered family dynamics, parental and child associations, and child and adolescent mental health. This research covered issues such as welfare dependency, parental and child mental health, social and emotional well-being, and self-harm and suicidal behaviour in young people.

### Centre research cited included:

Cobb-Clark, D.A., Dahmann, S., Salamanca, N. and Zhu, A. 2017. Intergenerational disadvantage: Learning about equal opportunity from social assistance receipt, Life Course Centre Working Paper, 2017:17.

Johnson, S., Lawrence, D., Perales, F., Baxter, J. and Zubrick, S.R. 2018. Prevalence of mental disorders among children and adolescents of parents with self-reported mental health problems, *Community Mental Health Journal*, 54 884–897.

Johnson, S., Lawrence, D., Perales, F., Baxter, J. and Zubrick, S.R. 2019. Poverty, parental mental health and child/adolescent mental disorders: Findings from a national Australian survey, *Child Indicators Research*, 12 963–988.

Zubrick, S.R., Hafekost, J., Johnson, S.E., Lawrence, D., Saw, S., Sawyer, M., Ainley, J. & Buckingham, W., J. 2016a. Self-harm: prevalence estimates from the second Australian child and adolescent survey of mental health and wellbeing, *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 50(9) 911–921.

Zubrick, S.R., Hafekost, J., Johnson, S.E., Lawrence, D., Saw, S., Sawyer, M., Ainley, J. and Buckingham, W., J. 2016b, ‘Suicidal behaviours: prevalence estimates from the second Australian child and adolescent survey of mental health and wellbeing’, *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 50(9) 899–910.

The report provides recommendations for governments in the areas of health, schools, communities and more, and estimates these would deliver economic and productivity benefits of up to \$20 billion a year, achieved through reform expenditure of \$2.4 billion. A priority reform is early prevention and help for children, which provides the greatest potential for improving outcomes. With strong links between parental and child mental health, the report highlights the need for more support for parents at the transition to parenthood.

*“The mental health of children and families should be a priority, starting from help for new parents and continuing through a child’s life.”*

Productivity Commission Final Report of Inquiry into Mental Health 2020.

## Cheaper childcare: A practical plan to boost female workforce participation

### Grattan Institute

Life Course Centre research was strongly featured in a major report released by the Grattan Institute in August 2020 that calls for improved childcare availability and quality as a key economic reform for Australia. The report recommends removing the barriers to increased female workforce participation in Australia by boosting both childcare access and quality and enabling more equal caring responsibilities between mothers and fathers.

Chief Investigator Professor Guyonne Kalb was acknowledged for her contributions to the report, which also referenced studies from other Centre researchers on topics such as paid parental leave, family dynamics, female labour supply and employment outcomes.

### Centre research cited included:

- Baxter, J., Buchler, S., Perales, F. & Western, M. (2015). A life-changing event: First births and men's and women's attitudes to mothering and gender divisions of labor. *Social Forces*, 93 (3) 989–1014.
- Broadway, B., Kalb, G., McVicar, D. & Martin, B. (2016). The impact of paid parental leave on labour supply and employment outcomes. Institute for the Study of Labor. Discussion Paper No. 9801.
- Kalb, G. (2018). Paid parental leave and female labour supply: A review. *Economic Record*, 94 (304) 80–100.
- Ruppner, L. & Squires, S. (2020). The future of women at work report. The University of Melbourne, The Policy Lab.

The report concludes that Australia can no longer afford to leave childcare reform 'on the shelf' as it would yield significant social and economic dividends. The Grattan Institute estimates that increased workforce participation from an additional \$5 billion a year in childcare spending would boost Australia's GDP by \$11 billion a year. It would also improve women's economic security by reducing the lifetime earnings gap between women and men.

Specific recommendations in the report include: boosting the childcare subsidy for low-income families, undertaking market studies to identify areas where lack of competition is pushing up fees, introducing price monitoring, funding regular quality assessments of national standards, monitoring childcare availability and developing targeted solutions, promoting flexible work arrangements, and offering paid parental leave for both parents.

---

*“A more equal sharing of the physical and mental load from unpaid work would allow greater balance in the paid workload.”*

Grattan Institute, *Cheaper childcare: A practical plan to boost female workforce participation 2020*.

---

## Inquiry into Homelessness in Australia

### House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs

In June 2020, the Life Course Centre provided a co-ordinated submission to the Inquiry into Homelessness in Australia. This inquiry was established by the Australian Government House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs.

The inquiry's Terms of Reference sought evidence on the incidence of, and factors affecting, homelessness in Australia, the adequacy of support services, opportunities for intervention and prevention, and examples of best-practice approaches in Australia and internationally. In addition, the inquiry welcomed submissions on the impact of COVID-19 on homelessness.

Our Life Course centre submission to the inquiry drew heavily on the research of Professor Cameron Parsell, Associate Investigator from UQ and ARC Future Fellow, whose interests include homelessness, poverty, social services and charity. Taking a life course perspective to this issue, our submission also included other research from across the Centre in areas such as poverty, disadvantage, unemployment, family relationships, state care, incarceration and childhood, youth, women's and old age homelessness. A total of 24 pieces of research from 15 Centre researchers across three of our university nodes informed our submission.

In relation to COVID-19, our submission highlighted that governments took swift action on homelessness by moving people off the streets into accommodation, and there was now the opportunity to capitalise on these positive steps by enacting long-term systemic change. The inquiry received 196 submissions, and it was pleasing to see our submission directly quoted in the inquiry's Interim Report published in October 2020. The inquiry will further consider the submissions for its forthcoming Final Report, which will also provide recommendations.

### Long term solutions post-COVID-19

Life Course Centre submitted:

---

*The positive steps taken on homelessness during COVID-19 have been transformative for homeless people and social workers... It also reinforces that what homeless people need more than anything is housing... Providing permanent supportive housing must be the centrepiece of any plan to tackle homelessness. It is the springboard from which all other services can launch. It is also more cost-effective than leaving people on the streets.*

**Shelter in the storm. COVID-19 and homelessness Interim Report of the Inquiry into Homelessness in Australia, October 2020, p 36.**

---

## Informing and Influencing

## Informing Government

### The Life Course Centre made three submissions to the Australian Government in 2020:

Life Course Centre (2020). **Submission on Exposure Draft of the Data Availability and Transparency Bill 2020**, Office of the National Data Commissioner, Australian Government Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Life Course Centre (2020). **Submission to Inquiry into Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence**, Australian Government House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs.

Life Course Centre (2020). **Submission to Inquiry into Homelessness in Australia**, Australian Government House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs.

### Victorian inquiry into disadvantaged jobseekers

Our research was included in a report tabled in the Parliament of Victoria in August 2020 by the Legislative Assembly Economy and Infrastructure Committee following an inquiry into sustainable employment for disadvantaged jobseekers. The report referenced a key paper from the Life Course Centre Working Paper Series on intergenerational welfare receipt and other research from Centre researchers on best-practice job-seeking programs. Associate Professor Leah Ruppanner appeared as a witness at the inquiry hearings.

### 25 Years of the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth

Life Course Centre researchers were featured in a special publication released in 2020 to mark 25 years of the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY). These surveys, administered by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research for the Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment, commenced in 1995 and follows over 10,000 young Australians aged 15 to 25. It is one of the few longitudinal surveys in the world with multiple cohorts, providing rich insights into the

diverse pathways that young people take and how these change over time. The 25-year publication showcased the value and broad utility of LSAY, with our researchers contributing two chapters:

- Initial outcomes from VET in Schools programs in Australia. Lead author Dr Cain Polidano, University of Melbourne
- Schools and career guidance key to widening university participation. Authored by Associate Professor Wojtek Tomaszewski, Associate Professor Francisco Perales, Dr Ning Xiang, University of Queensland

### Department of Education, Western Australia

Professor Stephen Zubrick and Dr Kirsten Hancock of the Telethon Kids Institute at The University of Western Australia presented to the Department of Education, Western Australia in September 2020. They presented data analysis and research into the links between school attendance patterns and outcomes for students, and provided insights into monitoring and assessing data for characteristics and early-indicators of at-risk students, which enables educators to identify and offer additional student supports.



Kirsten Hancock



Stephen Zubrick

# Toolkits for Practice

As well as informing and influencing public policy, our researchers are also involved in the development of practical hands-on resources that can have a real impact on assisting children and families to overcome disadvantage. In 2020, this included the launch of two new evidence-informed toolkits to unlock better educational outcomes for children.

## Parent Engagement Toolkit

Our research has underpinned a new website providing free resources to enhance parental engagement in children's schooling. The Parent Engagement Toolkit was launched on its own website in October 2020 through a project funded by the Life Course Centre Social Transformations Portfolio, the Queensland Government Department of Education and P&Cs Qld. Research has shown that when parents are engaged in their child's schooling, children are more likely to have better academic, social and emotional outcomes. Our research, led by Associate Professor Jenny Povey, features strategies and practices to encourage and support parents as co-educators of their children. The resources in the toolkit are designed for staff and parents from socially disadvantaged schools, with strategies including: building parents' capabilities, having school staff dedicated to parent engagement, creating welcoming places and opportunities for listening and responding to parents, and providing multiple channels of communications, including digital platforms. Data collected through the website will be used to further improve the toolkit over time.



Parent engagement in children's learning is a key research focus for Jenny Povey, who has led the development of the Life Course Centre-supported parent Engagement Toolkit. Jenny is pictured here (left) reading to her daughter Isabella Povey when she was in prep, along with Jenny's mother and Isabella's grandmother Carol-Anne Stuart.

## Early Childhood Education Toolkit

Life Course Centre researchers Professor Karen Thorpe and Dr Sally Staton informed the development of the Early Childhood Education Toolkit, which provides evidence-based oral language resources for young learners. The toolkit, launched by education not-for-profit Evidence for Learning in February 2020, is the result of a systematic review of global research on early education. It provides free resources and tip sheets for early educators on communication

and language approaches that benefit children aged 2-5. These strategies include creating spaces for children’s talk, suggestions for questions to prompt longer conversations, and tips for keeping these conversations going. Oral language development is an important early predictor of a child’s success at school, and broader life course trajectories, and this toolkit aims to give all Australian children the best chance of successes, regardless of their background.



Sally Staton (second from left) at the launch of the Evidence for Learning Early Childhood Education Toolkit.

# Working Paper Series

The Life Course Centre Working Paper Series has consistently demonstrated high levels of impact and has a proven track record of shaping important social and economic policy debate in Australia. Our pre-publication series has been a great success of the Centre, both in ensuring the very latest research on disadvantage reaches key non-academic audiences in a timely manner, and in progressing papers to academic publication. In 2020, we introduced a number of initiatives that will drive new levels of impact for the series.

## 185

Working Papers  
since the Centre's  
inception in 2014

## 32

Working Papers  
published in 2020  
(record number in a single year  
for the Life Course Centre)

## Growing our reach

A major initiative in 2020 was having our 2020 Working Papers published on the Social Science Research Network (SSRN), a global online repository for pre-prints focussed on the rapid and widespread dissemination of academic research in the social sciences and humanities. SSRN's eLibrary has over 950,000 research papers from more than 500,000 researchers across more than 55 disciplines. Our agreement with SSRN, owned by Elsevier, saw all 2020, and future, Working Paper published on the network. As part of the SSRN publishing process, our Working Papers are now also assigned Digital Object identifiers (DOI), a unique and permanent identifier of online content. Having a DOI enables accurate citation and tracking of our Working Papers, enhancing visibility and impact.

SSRN has provided extra value by announcing our newly published Working Papers and distributing a special Centre-themed eJournal across their network. SSRN also regularly distributes themed eJournals on particular areas of research, further amplifying a paper's reach and impact. Our Working Paper, Never let a crisis go to waste: Opportunities to reduce social disadvantage from COVID-19, published in December 2020, made the Top 10 download list for SSRN's Labor: Public Policy & Regulation eJournal. This paper, a highly collaborative effort from research leaders across the Life Course Centre, has recoded 458 abstract views and 63 paper downloads on SSRN.

In addition to SSRN's global reach, we continue to successfully target strategic public policy outlets in Australia with our Working Papers, including Analysis and Policy Observatory (APO), The Mandarin and The Bridge.

## Thank-you to our editors

A big thank-you to our Working Paper Series editors who have steered the series into the success it is today. Associate Professor Francisco Perales edited the series from its start in 2014 through to end of 2019 and was responsible for much of the early establishment work and growth. Dr Sarah Johnson and Dr Jack Lam took over as co-editors at the start of 2020 and have overseen many new initiatives to drive greater levels of reach and impact. Our Working Paper Series has enabled researchers throughout the wider Life Course Centre network, nationally and internationally, to share their findings in a timely, accessible, and high-impact way, while also progressing their work to publication in peer-reviewed journals. We now have a critical mass of Working Papers that have contributed substantially to the knowledge base on deep and persistent disadvantage for children and families over the life course. The time, skills, contacts, experience and dedication of our editors have been fundamental to achieving this. We also thank all authors for engaging with the series.



Sarah Johnson



Jack Lam



Francisco Perales

## Honouring our authors

In June 2020, we announced the inaugural winners of the Life Course Centre Working Paper Series Awards. All 30 Working Papers published in 2019 were eligible for the awards. The winning papers were determined by a nine-member panel of judges in a thorough, two-stage assessment process. A total of four awards were judged for best researcher and best student contributions in two categories: scholarship, and policy, practice or engagement. The four award-winning papers were:

### Category 1.

**Best contribution to scholarship on children and families over the life course**

#### Researcher award

**Nathan Deutscher, Australian National University, and Bhashkar Mazumder, Reserve Bank of Chicago.**

Working Paper: Deutscher, N., & Mazumder, B. (2019). Intergenerational mobility in Australia: National and regional estimates using administrative data. Life Course Centre Working Paper Series: 2019-02 (this paper has subsequently appeared in Labour Economics, 2020, Vol 66).

#### Student award

**Nicole Kapelle, University of Queensland.**

Working Paper: Kapelle, N., & Baxter, J. (2019). Marital dissolution and personal wealth: Examining gendered trends across the dissolution process. Life Course Centre Working Paper Series: 2019-22 (this paper has subsequently appeared in Journal of Marriage and Family, 2021, Vol 83:1).

Note - Nicole's supervisors were Professor Janeen Baxter, Dr Philipp Lersch and Dr Sergi Vidal. Professor Baxter was co-author on the paper but as Centre Director was not on the selection panel and did not receive any benefit from the prize.

### Category 2.

**Best contribution to policy, practice or engagement for children and families over the life course**

#### Researcher award

**Melisa Bubonya, Productivity Commission.**

Working Paper: Bubonya, M., & Cobb-Clark, D.A. (2019). Pathways of disadvantage: Unpacking the intergenerational correlation in welfare. Life Course Centre Working Paper Series: 2019-28 (this paper has subsequently appeared in Economics of Education Review, 2021, Vol 80).

Note - Professor Deborah Cobb-Clark was co-author on this paper but as a Chief Investigator was not on the selection panel and did not receive any benefit from the prize.

#### Student award

**Steve Yeong and Suzanne Poynton, NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research.**

Working Paper: Yeong, S., & Poynton, S. (2019). Can pre-recorded evidence raise conviction rates in cases of domestic violence? Life Course Centre Working Paper Series: 2019-18.

Note - Steve's supervisors are Dr Katrien Stevens, Professor Deborah Cobb-Clark, Professor Donald Weatherburn and Dr Mario Fiorini.

The Judging Panel came from a range of disciplines and institutions and consisted of Professor Tim Reddel, UQ; Professor David Ribar, Georgia State University; Dr Sarah Johnson, UWA; Dr Jack Lam, UQ; Dr Alfredo Paloyo, University of Wollongong; Associate Professor Christa van Kraayenoord, UQ; Dr Xianbi Huang, La Trobe University; Dr Anna Zhu, RMIT University; Leah Cave, UWA.

# Capacity Building

In the final year of our first grant, it was appropriate that our Capacity Building activities were strongly focused on student transitions to post-graduate careers. There was a strong emphasis on providing practical support to graduating students and students under pressure from COVID-19, and positive practical results can already be seen. COVID-19 also meant much of this training was successfully delivered in new formats online.

## Transition scholarships

The Transition Scholarships provided the opportunity for PhD students to gain experience outside their thesis topic through short-term Research Assistant positions. Ten students were given Research Assistant positions across UQ's Institute for Social Science Research, School of Social Science, and School of Psychology, as well as one University of Sydney student working on a project at the University of Melbourne. This innovation delivered new skills for our students, and also valuable supervisory experience for our early career researchers.

*"I was able to gain new skills on the requirements for a grant application and knowledge on a new subject area (diversity and inclusion in workplaces) and the publication process. This gave me the opportunity to co-author a paper with Associate Professor Francisco Perales, Associate Professor Wojtek Tomaszewski and the CEO of Pride in Diversity, Ms Dawn Hough."*

Christine (Tin) Ablaza, student

*"I have been able to get to know Tin's work, skills and academic profile much better through this opportunity. I was very impressed with Tin's approach to work and subsequently invited her to apply for a Postdoctoral Research position that I was advertising in another project. Tin was the successful candidate and started working with us in February 2021."*

AProf Francisco Perales, Project Supervisor

## Preparing for transitions

Our 2020 Student Development Days were delivered via a hybrid model, with students physically attending in Brisbane and Sydney and joining online from Melbourne and Perth. The 'Preparing for Transitions' program was run over short blocks of time on five separate days across a two-week period in December. We surveyed students to get their input on how best to deliver the event, and designed the program to follow their suggestions. Students attended a range of training offerings, including: How to get published – an editor's perspective, delivered by Professor David Ribar of Georgia State University, a job interview tips panel, CV workshop and presentation skills. The training was followed by a student symposium, where students presented their research in a combination of live and pre-recorded 1–3-minute talks for an interdisciplinary audience.

## Capacity Building



Participants at UQ in the Journal writing mentoring program, led by Laetitia Coles (bottom right).

## Journal writing

This program was introduced to encourage and support PhD students and early career researchers to progress an unpublished piece of work for academic publication. Research Fellow Dr Laetitia Coles was awarded funds to buy copies of Wendy Laura Belcher's book, *Writing your journal article in twelve weeks: A guide to academic publishing success* (second edition, 2019). Laetitia is hosting the training program by following the guidelines outlined in the book. There are 13 Centre participants in the program from UQ, Sydney and Melbourne, and it is envisaged that at the end of the 12 sessions all will have a manuscript ready to submit to an academic journal. As well as the structured writing program, participants benefit from regular group meetings with peers and access to senior researchers for mentoring and feedback.

## Mentoring

A move to online mentoring in 2020 was hugely successful for the Centre, with two major group mentoring sessions held in June and August 2020 attracting a total of more than 70 attendees. The first featured Professors Mark Western, Deborah Cobb-Clark and Lorraine Mazerolle, who shared their insights on managing research agendas and career trajectories post-2020. The second group mentoring session featured Professor Deborah Cobb-Clark and Dr Juliana Silva Gonçalves on the topic of thinking about future careers, planning and setting goals. In other mentoring activities, Dr Jenny Povey and Ms Elizabeth Kennedy facilitated a discussion with students on survey design, testing and delivery. The group mentoring program was supplemented by our one-on-one mentoring scheme, with nine mentees matched up with senior mentors across the Centre in 2020.



Participants in online mentoring sessions.



## Capacity Building

## Bridging scholarships

The Bridging Scholarships were made available to students after submission of their thesis to encourage paper writing and submission. Two bridging scholarships were awarded in 2020 to Angelina Tang and Madonna Boman of UQ. As with the Transition scholarships, good results were immediately apparent.

Tang, A., Perales, F., Rowe, F. & Baxter, J. (2021). The Going Gets Rougher: Exploring the Labour Market Outcomes of International Graduates in Australia'. Life Course Centre Working Paper Series, 2021-04 (submitted to Studies in Higher Education, February 2021).

*“With the COVID-19 pandemic creating uncertainty in academic and government jobs, the scholarship allowed me to be productively engaged in writing while I waited for thesis examination and looked for a job, and I secured a postdoctoral position beginning February 2021.”*

**Madonna Boman**

## Research impact

The Centre aims to deliver high-quality applied training from recognised experts wherever possible. In 2020 we were able to offer an online training program delivered by Dougal Edwards, Founder and CEO of Bright Arena, a consultancy dedicated to helping researchers embrace entrepreneurial practices and accelerate translation and commercial success. The training was delivered across several group, workshop and one-on-one sessions in October and November 2020 and was attended by 12 Centre members from our UQ, Sydney and Melbourne nodes.

*“The program opened up an entire new way of thinking for me. Understanding the true reason I do what I do (the “why”), rather than what I do, is most important to discover first. A simple concept, but something I never thought about within the context of my work. Coming to this realisation has been a life-changing experience.”*

**Participant in The Impactful Researcher training program**



Angelina Tang (centre) with Janeen Baxter and Paco Perales.



Madonna Boman and Lisa Pope. Lisa supports all of the Centre's students, and is responsible for the Capacity Building Program.

## Capacity Building

## Three Minute Thesis

It was a different style of Three Minute Thesis (3MT) competition in 2020 with virtual events held via video submissions. That didn't deter Life Course Centre student Ella Kuskoff who progressed through three levels of the UQ competition. Ella was the winner of the 3MT heat at the Institute for Social Science Research in July, was judged the Runner-Up and People's Choice winner at the UQ Humanities & Social Sciences Faculty Final in August, and also competed in the UQ-wide Wildcard Round in August. Ella's 3MT presentation was titled: 'The Road to Inequality is Paved with Good Policy Intentions'.

*"Good intentions are not enough to pave the way for gender equity. Policies need to be doing much more to consciously question and challenge the problematic cultural and structural conditions that continue to underpin gender inequality."*

Ella Kuskoff

## Student training awards

While COVID-19 disrupted our usual program of student travel awards in 2020, several students still received student training awards for, mostly, online training opportunities. These included: Laura Simpson Reeves, who attended design, analysis and representation training on qualitative research by the Australian Consortium for Social and Political Research Incorporated (ACSPRI) and Vicky Sullivan, who attended an ACSPRI Masterclass on collecting, managing and analysing qualitative interview data. Nikita Sharma participated in training in remote coursework in policy evaluation methods, and Suady Mohan undertook training in applied computer-assisted qualitative data analysis.

*"Due to COVID-19 qualitative data collections are now significantly different. This masterclass spent time training participants on how to effectively hold interviews and focus-groups over video call. This directly relates to my thesis as my last data collection requires the use of Zoom to hold qualitative interviews."*

Vicky Sullivan

## Thank-you Cain

A special thank you to Dr Cain Polidano, Associate Investigator, University of Melbourne, who was the Capacity Building Portfolio Leader in 2020. Cain worked closely with our Analysis and Development Coordinator Dr Lisa Pope and the Capacity Building Committee to deliver a wide range of development opportunities for students and early career researchers throughout the year. The disruptions of COVID-19 made this very challenging, but the adaption of online technologies and a flexible, responsive mindset ensured the Centre continued its focus on building capacity and developing the next generation of life course research leaders.



Cain Polidano

## Capacity Building

## Summer scholars

The Summer Scholars program ran from November 2020 to February 2021 and featured 14 scholars working across 11 projects at UQ's Institute for Social Science Research. The scholars had diverse disciplinary backgrounds in fields such as psychology, education, economics, arts, public health, geographic information systems, and business. Two scholars were inaugural recipients of the Life Course Centre equity and diversity awards to provide additional places for disabled and Indigenous students. This was the first time the Institute had hosted Indigenous scholars. The Summer Scholars program also enables the Centre to support the development of our early career researchers by supervising a scholar for the first time, and in 2020 we had seven first-time time advisors.

---

*“I enjoyed meeting people and learning about the dynamic career pathways within research. The culture also inspired me to look into non-traditional pathways and cross-discipline research and I feel more confident in my direction as a result.”*

Amy Fanning, Summer Scholar

---



---

*“Scholars bring a wealth of enthusiasm, ask topical questions, and provide fresh insight and reflection on the world of research. Mentoring a scholar expands research horizons and inspires the ongoing commitment to search the frontiers for knowledge.”*

Dr Peter Rankin, Summer Scholar supervisor

---



Front row: Robert, Ramzy, Li, Alexis, and Nathan, Back row: Dipanshu, Amy, Mina, Loni, Luke, Harry, Sara, and Fei (absent: Tianyi)

# Engagement

Responsiveness, flexibility and innovation were pillars of our Engagement approach in 2020 as the Centre quickly adapted to the unique circumstances of COVID-19. We upskilled in new areas of online events and communications and engaged with our stakeholders in new ways. These capabilities will be valuable additions to our suite of engagement channels moving forward.

# Communications

We continued to pursue a highly targeted approach to our communications activities in 2020 in line with our commitment to ensuring our research is easily accessible to wider audiences where there is the greatest chance to enact real change. As the Centre continues to grow over its new funding period, we are focused on maximising our communications resources, prioritising actions and initiatives, enabling agility, and delivering the strongest possible communications efficiencies and effectiveness. Work commenced in 2020 on a new Communications Strategy that not only details all activities and channels but also seeks to highlight their efficiency, reach and impact. The strategy will be complemented by the development of a Communications Analytics Framework. These initiatives will help to steer our communications activities to a new level and will be further progressed in 2021, including within the Centre's new Knowledge Transfer portfolio.

## 200+

attendees at our co-sponsored Helping Families Change conference

## 300+

attendees at our Social Sciences Week and Anti-Poverty Week webinars

## 500+

listens to our Families Under Pressure podcast series

## 550+

opens of our themed newsletters in Homelessness Week and Anti-Poverty Week

## 1000+

followers mark passed by our Twitter account @lifecourseAust

## Newsletters

Newsletters are a central component of our communications. In 2020, we distributed a total of eight Centre newsletters, matching our 2019 level. Our newsletters are produced in two distinct styles and formats. Digest newsletters summarise the very latest published research from across the Centre, maximising reach to wider audiences in a timely manner. Themed newsletters synthesise Centre research on a specific topic, adding value and enhancing accessibility for non-academic audiences. In 2020, our Themed newsletters were most successful when themed and distributed to coincide with high-profile awareness weeks. Newsletters in Homelessness Week in August and Anti-Poverty Week in October both achieved open rates in excess of 550 people and high levels of social media engagement.

## Social Media

We continue to grow our social media presence, passing the 1000 follower mark on Twitter in 2020. Twitter is our main social media outlet for engaging with our research communities, partners, policymakers and practitioners. We are also growing our presence on LinkedIn, Facebook and You Tube through sharing of our Twitter, and other, content.

## Communications

## Podcasts

Podcasts were an important innovation in our communications in 2020. We previously had no experience in producing podcasts but, from a standing start and with technical assistance from The University of Queensland, Chief Investigator Professor Matt Sanders hosted a total 26 podcasts across two series. This was a significant achievement and a direct response to COVID-19. Social distancing meant our audiences were online, and that's where we had to go too.

There was no playbook for parenting in a pandemic. Parents and children were anxious, isolated and in need of advice. The 20-episode Parenting in a Pandemic podcast series, supported by the Life Course Centre, provided practical tips to help families through COVID-19 lockdowns, including managing new routines, working and schooling at home, financial stress, uncertainty and conflict, and maintaining connections. Hosted by Professor Sanders and featuring a range of other family researchers, the podcast series was complemented by a 12-episode television series presented by 7News.

Following on from Parenting in a Pandemic, the Life Course Centre launched its own podcast series, Families Under Pressure. Also hosted by Professor Sanders, this series took a wider view of the personal and structural challenges facing families, both before and after COVID-19. The series featured interviews with several of our Chief Investigators, including Professors Janeen Baxter, Steve Zubrick and Deborah Cobb-Clark, to gain insights into the life course perspective on disadvantage, key Centre research findings, and recommendations for policy and practice to assist families and ensure existing inequalities are not further entrenched by COVID-19. The first six episodes in the eight-part Families Under Pressure series were produced and released in 2020, with the remaining two episodes completed in early 2021.



Lorraine Mazerolle and Matt Sanders recording a episode for the Families Under Pressure podcast.

## Visual Communications

Visual communications is another key area of innovation for the Centre. In 2020, we appointed a specialist Visual Communications Officer, Heidi Minchin, who has been working on new imagery, design, translation and other initiatives. During the year, Heidi refreshed the Life Course Centre visual identity in preparation for the commencement of the new refunded Centre in 2021. She also refreshed our website to reflect the new Centre and began developing a suite of new Centre materials, including banners, templates and research program visuals, for release in 2021.

Another important component of Heidi's role is research translation that represents Centre research in new visually appealing and engaging ways. Heidi worked closely with our Communications Officer, Matt MacDermott, in 2020 on progressing new initiatives in this area. This included one-page Research Snapshots showcasing key Centre research findings. Production of these snapshots, which had been a long-term goal of the Centre, required extensive consultation with Centre researchers and external parties via our Advisory Committee. Two Research Snapshots were finalised and distributed in 2020, and our work in this area will inform and feed into our major translation projects on Life Course Centre 2014–2020 to be released in 2021.

## Events

The Life Course Centre was involved in staging one major event at the start of 2020 before COVID-19 put a stop to travel and large-scale, in-person gatherings. This meant we had to engage with our stakeholders in new ways by transitioning to online formats. Webinars were a key platform for this, and our online Social Sciences Week and Anti-Poverty Week events were particularly successful, drawing a combined audience of more than 300 participants.

### Helping Families Change Conference

The 20th biennial Helping Families Change Conference (HFCC), co-sponsored by the Life Course Centre, was held over three days in the Brisbane CBD in February 2020. Under the leadership of Chief Investigator Professor Matt Sanders, who instigated the first HFCC in 1995, this event has grown into one of the world's largest evidence-based parenting events. The 2020 conference attracted more than 200 researchers, practitioners and policymakers from 25 countries.

Professor Peter Høj, former UQ Vice-Chancellor and President, and the Hon. Di Farmer MP, Queensland Minister for Child Safety, Youth and Women, and Minister for Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence opened the conference, and keynote speakers included Professor Matt Sanders, Life Course Centre Director Professor Janeen Baxter, Dr Theresa Betancourt from the Boston College School of Social Work and Dr Brian Bumbarger from the Prevention Research Center at Colorado State University.

The conference took a wide-ranging view of the benefits of improved child and family development and well-being, not just directly to children and parents, but also to wider communities by helping address issues such as natural disaster resilience, climate change, and meeting the UN sustainable development goals. "The impact that positive parenting can have has been vastly underestimated... parenting can provide a common pathway to major societal change and addressing many of the world's biggest and most complex problems," Matt said.

In her address, Professor Baxter highlighted how parenting and family relationships are crucial over every stage of the life course. Janeen said it was not enough to just help families change, it was also

important to "change the disadvantage systems" such as government policies, labour market cultures, and outdated gender narratives, norms and expectations that still exert undue influence on the transmission of disadvantage within families.

The HFCC featured a session on the Life Course Centre flagship project, the Every Family: Australian Triple P System Population Trial as well as presentations by a range of Centre researchers, including Associate Professors Karen Turner and Alina Morawska and Dr Kylie Burke, and students Madonna Boman, Carys Chainey and Cari McIllduff.



Savannah Palmer, Kylie Burke, Zayna Karam-Simmond, Janeen Baxter, Lena Krause, Matt Sanders and Denise Clague at the Helping Families Change conference. All are part of the Centre's flagship project, Every Family.

The Hon. Di Farmer MP, (Queensland Minister for Child Safety, Youth and Women, and Minister for Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) welcoming attendees at the Helping Families Change Conference.



## Events

## Social Sciences Week 2020

Professor Janeen Baxter presented a webinar in Social Sciences Week in September titled: The Life Course Centre, Looking Back, Looking Forward. Janeen showcased key Centre findings in areas such as early childhood development, welfare receipt and family dynamics, and outlined future research directions. Janeen also explained how the social impact of COVID-19 was “making the work of the Centre even more important and the issues we are addressing even more urgent”.

## Anti-Poverty Week 2020

The Life Course Centre was a major sponsor of Anti-Poverty Week in 2020 and hosted two webinars during the week. The first, Factors associated with meal provision in Early Care and Education (ECE) services, was presented by Professor Karen Thorpe and Dr Sally Staton from UQ. Their team is investigating the potential for ECE services to support children and families at risk of food insecurity. By examining ECE meal provision in communities with varying risks of food insecurity, they have found that Australia’s competitive ECE market is operating in a way that children at highest risk of food insecurity are the least likely to receive meals. Our second Anti-Poverty Week webinar, Normal stresses and additional challenges arising from COVID-19, was presented by researchers from the University of Melbourne and the Brotherhood of St Laurence, Dr Dina Bowman, Dr Matthew Curry, Dr Barbara Broadway and Associate Professor Leah Ruppner who shared insights on the financial and mental stress on parents, the impact on children, structural drivers of poverty and inequalities, and the need to take the opportunity of the COVID-19 crisis to rebuild society in a more equitable manner.



(clockwise) Karen Thorpe, Sally Staton, and Janeen Baxter at an Anti-Poverty Week webinar.

## Women in Research webinars

The Centre continued its connections with the ARC-funded Women in Research project in 2020. Professor Janeen Baxter and Professor Lorraine Mazerolle, who both featured in the Women in Research website launch in 2019, participated in the project’s “Small Wins” webinar series in 2020. Lorraine was involved in the first webinar in October on ‘Managing health and well-being during COVID-19’. She provided advice on finding the right outlet for switching off, which in her case is golf. Janeen was involved in the third ‘Small Wins’ webinar in December on ‘Resilience in research’. She nominated kick boxing as her outlet for switching off and recharging, and urged women researchers to pursue their ambitions and never give up.

## Data Research Showcase

Collaborative Life Course Centre research projects with the Australian Government were on show at an Integrated Data Research Showcase in November hosted by the Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE). Associate Professor Wojtek Tomaszewski presented on a DESE-Life Course Centre project on higher education and equity groups that seeks to better understand the social and health factors preventing Australians from completing tertiary studies and transitioning to employment. Professor Karen Thorpe presented on another joint DESE-Life Course Centre project on the first five years of child development that aims to improve understanding of the health and socio-economic factors driving disadvantage in early childhood and identify interventions that can improve outcomes. The showcase also featured presentations by Centre partners, the Australian Government Department of Social Services, the Australian Institute of Health & Welfare, and the NSW Department of Customer Service.

## Visitors

While COVID-19 disrupted our usual incoming international visitors program in 2020, our UQ node was fortunate to fit in a visit in February by Dr Carmel Hannan from the University of Limerick in Ireland. Professor Curt Hagquist of Karlstad University in Sweden also visited in February at our UWA node, where he presented a roundtable discussion on the mental health of Swedish adolescents.

### How Irish families 'do' resilience

Unpacking the puzzle of why Irish families stuck together during the recession of 2008–2011 is a key research question for Dr Carmel Hannan from the Department of Sociology at Ireland's University of Limerick. Carmel was a funded Life Course Centre visitor to UQ in February 2020, hosting a workshop on causality in life course research and presenting a seminar on her research with colleague, Professor Ross MacMillan.

This research, which compares the recession experiences of Irish families with those in Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England, highlighted much lower rates of family dissolution. "While the recession was most severe in Ireland, Irish families were largely immune from the negative consequences of income loss," Carmel said. "What is it about the Irish context that made families resilient?"

This 'Irish exceptionalism' was likely the result of many interrelated factors, such as higher levels of home ownership and women returning to work to help maintain family mortgages. This entrenched the family home as 'the glue' binding Irish families together. Other factors at play could include an underlying Catholic ethos of 'sticking together' and an accumulation of 'ideology, habits and rituals' passed through generations that influence how the Irish 'do' families.

### A vision for ethical big data use

Data science and analysis will be an important focus for the Life Course Centre moving forward. In line with this, it was timely for UQ to host a February 2020 visit by Dr Divesh Srivastava, Head of Database Research at AT&T Labs, part of the world's largest telecommunications company AT&T. Divesh presented a lecture to the UQ School of Information Technology & Electrical Engineering, hosted by Professor Helen Huang and supported by the Life Course Centre. From 2021, Helen is a Chief Investigator and Divesh an Associate Investigator in the Centre, and their skills will boost our capacity to link and analyse large, variable data sets from multiple sources. In his UQ lecture, Divesh said big data must 'complement' what humans do, and the goal of responsible data science rested on achieving the 'Six Vs' – Volume, Velocity, Variety, Variability, Value and Veracity.



Janeen Baxter with Carmel Hannan (right) of the University of Limerick

## Visitors



A snake crossing the road at UQ Long Pocket campus. Photo: Matthias Kubler.

## Sliding, Flying and Hopping visitors

COVID-19 travel restrictions and social distancing measures may have limited human visitors to the Life Course Centre in 2020 but the natural inhabitants of our leafy Long Pocket campus at UQ made their presence felt throughout the year. This slippery visitor was spotted slithering away from the coffee shop and managed to navigate crossing the road under the watchful eye of our ever-present local magpies, Max and Maxine. Our unofficial Centre mascots, Max and Maxine were extremely pleased to see staff members, and food crumbs, returning to Long Pocket following the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions. Their dedicated carers Dee Dearing and Yanshu Huang were among those to receive an extra special 'welcome back'.

While there was lots of great parenting and families research on show at the Helping Families Change Conference, co-presented by the Life Course Centre in Brisbane in February 2020, this cuddly little visitor stole the most hearts. The seven-month-old wallaby was rescued from Australia's bushfires at the start of 2020, and its wildlife carers dropped into the conference to help raise funds for rehabilitation and eventual return to the wild.



A wallaby joey at the Helping Families Change Conference.

# Remembering Harvey Goldstein

In April 2020, we were saddened by the death of internationally renowned statistician and social science researcher, and dear friend of the Life Course Centre, Professor Harvey Goldstein. Professor of Social Statistics at the School of Education at the University of Bristol in the UK, Harvey passed away aged 80 years.

Harvey's research covered an incredibly broad range of social science topics, primarily around statistical methodology and software, and he published well over 350 journal articles. He is best known for his contributions to multi-level modelling methodology, developing the MLWin software, and research and policy advice on educational assessment and school league tables.

Harvey was actively involved with the Life Course Centre, in which he was an Associate Investigator, and he twice visited our administering node at UQ. He was always generous with his time, hosting seminars and mentoring our researchers and students. He was a close collaborator of Professor Michele Haynes and he regularly connected with our researchers at international conferences.

*"I am privileged to have worked closely with Harvey and to have benefited from his incredible knowledge on statistical methods for analysis of longitudinal social data. I last visited Harvey in London and Bristol in May 2019 where we progressed work for a publication (Goldstein et al., 2020) on improved estimation of reliability statistics for education test scores using longitudinal data. In addition to his academic pursuits Harvey was an avid walker and enjoyed a good bush walk when in Brisbane. I have fond memories of trying to keep up with Harvey as we walked through Springbrook National Park in 2018, marginally avoiding a spring storm, and again on walks through Hampstead Heath and other London parks in 2019. Harvey brought a great deal of statistical expertise and enthusiasm on his visits to the Life Course Centre that many of the researchers and students looked forward to – he was a wonderful colleague of the Centre."*<sup>1</sup>

**Professor Michele Haynes**



Professor Harvey Goldstein (second right) on a visit to the Life Course Centre at UQ in 2015 with (from left) Professors Mark Western, Janeen Baxter and Michele Haynes.



Professor Harvey Goldstein mentoring Centre researchers Melanie Spallek, Wojtek Tomaszewski and Danilo Bollano

1 Goldstein, H., Haynes, M., Leckie, G., Tran P. (2020). Estimating reliability statistics and measurement error variances using instrumental variables with longitudinal data. *Longitudinal and Life Course Studies*. 11(3), 289-306, DOI:10.1332/175795920X15844303873216.

# Performance

**Table 1**  
**Income and Expenditure Statement 2014–2021**

The table represents the actuals and budget for the Life Course Centre 2014–2020. All ARC funding was expended by 31 December 2020, and the 2021 budget represents non-ARC funds carried forward for the completion of projects under the new Centre. Many project completions were affected by COVID-19 in 2020, and the carry forward has increased by a further \$572,112 since the last projection in mid-2020. The majority of the surplus is now directed towards salaries, which is a relatively stable expenditure category, with the additional expenditure being project-specific. If there is no further radical change in 2021, then we anticipate that we will be on track to expend all carry forward by late 2021.

IN AUD\$	ACTUALS							BUDGET
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
<b>INCOME</b>								
Australian Research Council	2,943,492	2,996,205	3,047,140	3,092,847	3,139,239	3,198,884	3,256,463	–
Partner Contributions	1,291,975	1,203,175	1,458,350	942,050	1,367,200	1,439,000	1,110,000	–
Other Income		68,026	-2,818	12,983	–	23,940	120,000	
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>4,235,467</b>	<b>4,267,406</b>	<b>4,502,672</b>	<b>4,047,880</b>	<b>4,506,439</b>	<b>4,661,824</b>	<b>4,486,463</b>	<b>–</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>								
Salaries	362,575	2,943,600	3,372,746	3,916,336	3,546,396	3,938,225	5,853,711	2,215,913
Scholarships/Stipends	1,500	52,734	88,543	81,263	97,428	155,337	127,457	35,110
Equipment	–	20,282	13,563	9,588	1,191	8,600	11,373	–
Maintenance	7,427	2,143	10,602	3,869	–	–	–	–
Travel	22,841	219,376	287,442	260,760	283,269	333,890	55,619	57,045
Other	30,433	292,174	142,378	292,144	187,853	1,026,193	237,326	106,915
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>424,776</b>	<b>3,530,309</b>	<b>3,915,274</b>	<b>4,563,960</b>	<b>4,116,138</b>	<b>5,462,246</b>	<b>6,285,486</b>	<b>2,414,983</b>
<b>ANNUAL SURPLUS/DEFICIT</b>	<b>3,810,691</b>	<b>737,097</b>	<b>587,398</b>	<b>-516,080</b>	<b>390,301</b>	<b>-800,422</b>	<b>-1,799,023</b>	<b>-2,414,983</b>
<b>CARRY FORWARD</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>3,810,691</b>	<b>4,547,788</b>	<b>5,144,842</b>	<b>4,604,076</b>	<b>5,019,063</b>	<b>4,209,005</b>	<b>2,414,983</b>
Adjustments **			4,656	-24,686	24,686	-9,636	5,001	–
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,810,691</b>	<b>4,547,788</b>	<b>5,139,842</b>	<b>4,604,076</b>	<b>5,019,063</b>	<b>4,209,005</b>	<b>2,414,983</b>	<b>0</b>

\*\*Corrections to opening balances

**Table 2**  
**Income and Expenditure Statement 2021–2027**

The table represents the new Centre budget as outlined in the Centre bid. We are anticipating that travel expenditure will be impacted in 2021 and have projected a reduced travel budget accordingly, with a surplus to be carried forward to 2022. We are not anticipating major movement in other categories, but will review again in November 2021.

IN AUD\$	ACTUALS			BUDGET				
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
<b>INCOME</b>								
Australian Research Council	4,673,640	4,591,001	4,591,000	4,591,001	4,591,001	4,591,000	4,591,001	
Partner Contributions	–	1,377,750	1,377,750	1,367,750	1,367,750	1,367,750	1,367,750	1,367,750
Other Income								
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>4,673,640</b>	<b>5,968,751</b>	<b>5,968,750</b>	<b>5,958,751</b>	<b>5,958,751</b>	<b>5,958,750</b>	<b>5,958,751</b>	<b>1,367,750</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>								
Salaries		4,564,915	4,537,680	4,631,437	4,571,978	4,716,072	4,726,071	4,888,594
Scholarships/Stipends		195,576	230,172	230,172	230,172	230,172	223,172	223,172
Equipment		140,026	36,000	72,475	68,934	6,000	1,000	1,000
Maintenance		21,500	30,500	25,500	25,500	25,500	25,500	25,500
Travel		91,208	270,667	238,667	236,667	237,506	222,508	237,087
Other		813,063	863,731	760,500	825,500	743,500	760,500	813,500
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>5,826,288</b>	<b>5,968,750</b>	<b>5,958,751</b>	<b>5,958,751</b>	<b>5,958,750</b>	<b>5,958,751</b>	<b>6,188,853</b>
<b>ANNUAL SURPLUS/DEFICIT</b>	<b>4,673,640</b>	<b>142,463</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>-4,821,103</b>
<b>CARRY FORWARD</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>4,673,640</b>	<b>4,816,103</b>	<b>4,821,103</b>	<b>4,821,103</b>	<b>4,821,103</b>	<b>4,821,103</b>	<b>4,821,103</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,673,640</b>	<b>4,816,103</b>	<b>4,816,103</b>	<b>4,821,103</b>	<b>4,821,103</b>	<b>4,821,103</b>	<b>4,821,103</b>	<b>0</b>

**Table 3**  
**New Funding**

Granting Body	Project	LCC Member(s)	Value (AUD)
<b>Australian Federal Police</b>	Review of the Triage Referral and Investigative Support Tool (TRIST)	Lorraine Mazerolle, Renee Zahnow	\$49,168
<b>Australian Research Council (ARC)</b>	Linkage Project: Enhancing Children's Journey in Out-of-Home Care: A Multi-perspective Study	Janeen Baxter, Jenny Povey, Peter Walsh (Benevolent Society)	\$1,123,000
<b>Australian Research Council (ARC)</b>	ARC Linkage Grant Scheme: Insecure work and the mental health of workers and their families	Deborah Cobb-Clark	\$191,595
<b>Australian Research Council (ARC)</b>	ARC Linkage Grant Scheme: Waithood: The experience of being on the social housing waiting list	Cameron Parsell, Andrew Clarke	\$277,600
<b>Australian Research Council (ARC)</b>	Linkage Project: Women in Local Government: Understanding their Political Trajectories	Leah Ruppanner	\$227,010
<b>Australian Research Council (ARC)</b>	Linkage Project: Linking for Life: Enhancing pathways to well-being for all Australians	Francis Mitrou, Stephen Zubrick	\$1,357,136
<b>Australian Research Council (ARC)</b>	2020 Special Research Initiative for Australian Society, History and Culture	Irma Mooi-Reci	\$268,000
<b>Children's Hospital Foundation</b>	Feeding Families in Tough Times (FFiTT), rising to the challenge of food insecurity	Cameron Parsell, Karen Thorpe	\$382,364
<b>European Consortium for Sociological Research</b>	European Consortium for Sociological Research - Network Workshop Grant	Nicole Kapelle	\$8,000
<b>Health Innovation, Investment and Research Office, Office of the Director-General and System Strategy Division, Queensland Health</b>	Queensland Advancing Clinical Research Fellowship program	Arvind Ponnappalli	\$146,313
<b>Micah Projects, Common Ground Queensland and the Life Course Centre</b>	Parents as Teachers: Permanent Supportive Housing	Cameron Parsell, Ella Kuskoff, Andrew Clarke, Paco Perales	\$58,500

**Table 3**  
**New Funding *continued***

Granting Body	Project	LCC Member(s)	Value (AUD)
<b>National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education, Curtin University</b>	Student Equity in Higher Education Research Grants Program : Investigating the relevance of mental health for the current equity groups framework using multi-agency linked-administrative data	Wojtek Tomaszewski, Tomasz Zajac, Paco Perales	\$36,700
<b>New Zealand Government</b>	National Science Challenges. Lifecourse Project Investment Proposal 2019–2024 Life-course Impact of Chronic Health Conditions: a Whānau (Family) Perspective	Janeen Baxter	\$1,500,000
<b>Queensland Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women</b>	Rapid Evidence Reviews	Elizabeth Eggins, Lorraine Mazerolle	\$18,062
<b>Social Ventures Australia / Department of Education Queensland</b>	Evaluation of KindyLinQ	Karen Thorpe	\$377,000
<b>St Vincent de Paul Society Queensland</b>	St Vincent de Paul Queensland: Systematic Empirical Investigation, 2020–2023	Cameron Parsell, Andrew Clarke, Paco Perales	\$264,000
<b>The University of Melbourne</b>	R.I. Downing Fellowship, “Parental Investment and Socioeconomic Inequality in Australia”	Nicolás Salamanca	\$25,000
<b>The University of Sydney</b>	Faculty Teaching Innovation	Marian Vidal-Fernandez	\$5,000
<b>University of Melbourne – University of Toronto Joint Research Program</b>	Changing Times: Parents' Re-evaluations of Work-family Boundaries and Time Allocations in a Pandemic Era	Leah Ruppanner	\$31,000
<b>University of New South Wales</b>	Launch Housing Limited: Australian Homelessness Monitor 2020	Cameron Parsell	\$50,700
<b>Western Australian Department of Health</b>	WA Department of Health COVID-19 Emergency Fund	Francis Mitrou	\$897,000
<b>Western Australian Department of Health</b>	Western Australian Department of Health Merit Award	Francis Mitrou	\$75,000

\* Funding commenced in 2020, total amount of funding awarded shown

# Key Performance Indicators

## Background

The Life Course Centre's performance against our KPI targets in 2020 clearly tells the story of an extraordinary year in which the Centre responded strongly to the needs of society. Our indicators that were reliant on travel, visits and face-to-face activities are below target. Our public-facing indicators have exceeded target strongly. There was a great appetite for social science analysis and advice on society's response to the pandemic, and we were able to provide this.

The Life Course Centre reached our research outputs target in 2020. We delivered double the number of reports estimated and produced our highest number of non-academic articles. In addition, in end-user and industry reports we more than doubled our target – this replaced activity in traditional academic output areas such as conference papers, where we did not publish any outputs. The quality of our academic outputs remains very high.

Training courses for stakeholders were not run in 2020. Our stakeholders did not have the capacity to undertake these courses, and we required time to pivot to online delivery. We ran a reduced number of Centre training courses for staff and students, however attendance at the delivered training was high and we exceeded our target for the number of attendees. We also responded nimbly to the actual needs of our researchers, with the students in particular under considerable pressure from the changed circumstances. To supplement training opportunities, the Capacity Building Committee provided training grants to staff and students, and four students were able to attend training run by other providers specific to their thesis needs, including students who had to pivot their thesis topic and/or methods due to the COVID pandemic. We also re-directed training and travel funds to offer new scholarships to students, with concrete positive results, as outlined in the Capacity Building section.

Centre workshops, conferences, named conference sessions, academic seminars and international visitors were all below our target due to the impact of the pandemic. To compensate for this, several international academics spoke online at training events and in informal group discussions. We exceeded our target in public talks by a very notable amount, with many Centre researchers delivering podcasts or online webinars that were open to the public. In part this was facilitated by the absence of travel and opportunities to give traditional academic talks, but it was also a considered response to the need from the public for information and analysis around the unique circumstances of the year. The Linkages Research Network was intended to be an additional mentoring program, offering readers for students and ECRs. This has not eventuated, largely because the effort in setting up the network was judged by Executive to be disproportionate to the potential return: students and ECRs gain the same benefit from our other mentoring activities and extensive academic networks. We had fewer opportunities to engage with industry and NGO partners, most of whom were operating under considerable pressure, but we exceeded our target for government briefings.

The number of additional researchers in the Centre was higher than anticipated. This was partly due to the funding of a second Centre which allowed future planning for many of the Chief Investigators in the current Centre but considering that the number of Honours students was also much higher than anticipated, we might also speculate that the desire for engagement reflects the increasing profile and status of the Centre. Similarly, the number of new organisations collaborating with the Centre was higher than expected, and many of these organisations were responding to our increased profile and secure funding base.

Information to support these key performance indicator values can be found in the Appendix available on request.

## Key Performance Indicators

**Table 4**  
**Standard Key Performance indicators for ARC Centres of Excellence**

Key Performance Indicator	Actual 2014	Actual 2015	Actual 2016	Actual 2017	Actual 2018	Actual 2019	Actual 2020	Target 2020
<b>Number of Research Outputs</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>167</b>
Journal articles	46	84	122	121	175	131	126	125
Books	1	1	4	0	5	2	1	2
Book chapters	7	14	14	10	17	12	12	15
Conference publications	3	4	6	10	2	7	0	10
End-user and industry reports	4	4	13	21	17	25	33	15
<b>Quality of research outputs</b>								
Papers in peer reviewed outlets	82%	90%	89%	85%	100%	100%	99%	95%
Papers in top 25% of top tier journals*	72%	72%	71%	68%	82%	84%	76%	75%
Prizes, fellowships and other recognition for research excellence					21	24	14	15
Publications in non-academic outlets	–	–	–	–	22	23	32	20
Submissions to reviews	–	–	–	–	7	3	3	2
<b>Number of training courses offered by the Centre</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>20</b>
Professional training courses for staff and/or students	–	–	–	–	12	15	8	15
Professional training courses for stakeholders	–	–	–	–	6	6	0	5
Number of Centre attendees at all professional training/development courses offered by the Centre	–	39	67	111	352	241	92	80

## Key Performance Indicators

**Table 4**  
**Standard Key Performance indicators for ARC Centres of Excellence**  
*continued*

Key Performance Indicator	Actual 2014	Actual 2015	Actual 2016	Actual 2017	Actual 2018	Actual 2019	Actual 2020	Target 2020
<b>Number of workshops/conferences held/offered by the Centre</b>								
National and international workshops/conferences held/organised by the Centre	2	14	11	11	13	12	3	12
Named Centre sessions at national and international conferences	–	–	–	–	5	2	2	5
Seminar presentations	18	41	61	45	38	34	15	30
Number of international visitors	9	42	25	14	26	25	2	–
Number of international visitors presenting	–	–	–	–	23	23	2	15
<b>Additional researchers working on centre research</b>								
New Postdoctoral researchers	3	8	4	8	9	8	11	0
New Honours and Masters students	0	1	2	8	5	7	13	6
New PhD students	10	8	9	16	15	7	4	0
New Associate Investigators	–	–	–	–	6	6	0	2
Early Career Researchers working in the centre <sup>#</sup>	12	13	12	16	20	25	21	0
<b>Number of postgraduate completions</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>15</b>
Honours students	–	–	–	–	5	6	12	2
Masters students	–	–	–	3	1	1	1	2
PhD students	–	–	–	4	2	3	11	11

## Key Performance Indicators

**Table 4**  
**Standard Key Performance indicators for ARC Centres of Excellence**  
*continued*

Key Performance Indicator	Actual 2014	Actual 2015	Actual 2016	Actual 2017	Actual 2018	Actual 2019	Actual 2020	Target 2020
<b>Mentoring programs<sup>~</sup></b>		<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	
Mentoring and career development programs for students					12	10	5	5
Mentoring and career development programs for staff					5	7	5	5
Centre participants in formal mentoring relationships		6	92	65	74	66	80	40
Participants in Linkages Research Network					0	0	0	150
<b>Number of presentations / briefings</b>								
Public talks	38	16	25	48	63	99	65	25
<b>Number of government, industry, business and community briefings<sup>^</sup></b>	<b>34</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>90</b>
Briefings and presentations to government	-	-	-	-	50	53	48	40
Briefings and presentations to NGOs	-	-	-	-	18	18	10	20
Briefings and presentations to industry, professional, business and community groups	-	-	-	-	36	27	21	30
<b>Number of new organisations collaborating with, or involved in, the Centre</b>								
Number of new organisations collaborating with, or involved in, the Centre	13	26	27	34	33	36	17	10

\* Based on 105 indexed journal articles in SciVal, top quartile journals by SCImago Journal Rank, data retrieved 12 March 2021.

# This is the total number of early career researchers working with the Centre, including in-kind. The number of new early career researchers paid by the Centre in 2020 = 7.

~ Where both staff and students attend a mentoring session it is counted against both categories, so the total number of mentoring programs will be less than the sum of staff and student programs.

<sup>^</sup> Where a briefing includes NGOs, Government and/or industry/professional/community groups, that meeting is counted against each category, meaning the total number of briefings will be less than the sum of all categories of briefing.

## Key Performance Indicators

**Table 5**  
**Centre Specific Key Performance Indicators**

Key Performance Indicator	Actual 2014	Actual 2015	Actual 2016	Actual 2017	Actual 2018	Actual 2019	Actual 2020	Target 2020
New interventions developed	1	0	4	3	5	7	6	5
New policies and programs informed by Centre findings	3	6	12	17	16	24	14	15
New statistical models developed	2	1	8	4	4	3	3	3
Working papers published	13	42	41	30	35	35	50	50
Review of family friendly practices	–	–	–	–	1	1	1	1
Initiatives to improve participation by Indigenous, low SES and other disadvantaged groups in pathways to research: participants in undergraduate internships	–	–	–	–	0	0	5	4
Initiatives to improve participation by Indigenous, low SES and other disadvantaged groups in pathways to research: participants in Honours programs	–	–	–	–	0	0	0	2

## Life Course Centre

Institute for Social Science Research (ISSR)  
The University Of Queensland  
Long Pocket Precinct  
Level 2, Cycad Building (1018)  
80 Meiers Road  
Indooroopilly Queensland 4068 Australia

**Phone** +61 7 3346 7477

**Fax** +61 7 3346 7646

**Email** [lcc@uq.edu.au](mailto:lcc@uq.edu.au)

[lifecoursecentre.org.au](http://lifecoursecentre.org.au)



**Australian Government**  
**Australian Research Council**