

**Deakin University
Faculty of Health, Medicine, Nursing
and Behavioural Sciences**

**Centre for Mental Health and Well Being Research
(C-MHWBR)**



solutions-focused research into conditions of mental ill health

General Population

**Substance Abuse
and Criminality**

**Disability and
Disadvantage**

**Ageing and
Dementia**

addressing issues of inclusion and improved mental health interventions



Our Purpose

Our overarching purpose is to be international leaders and major contributors to the enhancement of mental health within the broad community through our research and research training. Our objectives are to conduct solutions-focused research that promotes mental health and to produce high quality trained researchers who contribute to expanding and extending research within our Centre's area of interest.

World Health Organization calculations of the burden of disease to 2020 predict a continuing increase in mental ill health to the extent that mental illnesses together are expected to comprise the largest proportion of the burden of disease (2001, *The World Health Report*, Chapter 2). The trend in Australia is consistent with the global trend. Yet, approximately 60% of people in need of mental health treatment do not currently get any in Australia (McGorry, 2005, *Australasian Psychiatry*, 13(1), 3–15).

The work of the Centre for Mental Health and Well Being Research takes a comprehensive focus on issues of mental health by combining research into the mental health of the general population with research into the mental health of socially marginalised and disadvantaged groups. Taken as a whole, the Centre's research embraces a lifespan approach to mental health. It investigates mental health system performance as well as individual access to and engagement in treatment. Improved access and improved treatment for people in need is at the basis of our research and our research training. We maintain a special interest in those who are less likely to access treatment and are, therefore, at risk of chronic and severe mental ill health.

Our People

The Centre for Mental Health and Well Being Research comprises several senior members (6 professors and 4 associate professors) who provide leadership within the Centre, together with a number of solid and developing mid-career researchers, several early career researchers, and a large, high quality research training program that currently includes 100 higher degree by research students. Between 2004 and 2006, the Centre produced more than 60 doctoral graduates, which is another way in which it contributes to its field of work. There is an active mentoring system within the Centre that has been in place for several years and promotes continuing development and upward movement of its members.

Our Home

The Centre for Mental Health and Well Being Research is located within the School of Psychology at Deakin University. We have one of the largest and best psychology programs in Australia. We are located on four campuses (Burwood, Waterfront, Waurm Ponds, and Warrnambool), and we are the only large truly multi-campus psychology program in Australia. Our undergraduate courses are very popular with heavy over-subscription for all of our courses including Honours and our Graduate Diploma of Psychology. Our postgraduate program is growing with 3 Master degrees offered, all at Geelong. Expansion of the postgraduate component of our program is an important part of our development plan for the next 3 years. We also have a large and very successful research training program that currently produces between 25 and 28 doctoral graduates per year through our professional doctorate, the Doctorate of Psychology, and through our Ph.D. course.

Our Output

The Centre has a large and growing body of research characterised by substantial research income and publications annually, supported by national competitive grants, government-funded research, and contracted industry research. Our funding comes from international and Australian research funding bodies, government departments and industry. Much of the Centre's research is facilitated through the support and collaboration of several strong community partnerships. The substance and structure of the Centre, together with the strength of its community partnerships, provide a powerful mix of sustainability and dynamism for this research centre.

Our Research Concentrations

Within the Centre for Mental Health and Well Being Research, there are 4 concentrations. Our research within these concentrations is informed by specific knowledge within the sub-disciplines of health, clinical, forensic, and industrial/organisational psychology.

Our research addresses issues of healthy development, conditions of mental illness and co-morbidity, and mental health system delivery of care across a fairly wide range of specific conditions. Our research training program is aligned with our research concentrations. Because the majority of our research is applied, we have a large network of active partnerships with community organisations including government departments, peak bodies, regional mental health services and regional community health services.

General Population Mental Health and Well Being – This concentration includes research into the subjective mental health and well being of individuals within Australia and cross-culturally, child development and mental health implications, body image and its behavioural implications, workplace mental health and well being, and mental health and associated service system change. There are 7 senior researchers working on general population mental health research together with 8 developing researchers, and 7 early career researchers. Since 2004, 27 students have completed doctoral studies in this concentration.

Substance Use and Abuse, Criminality, Mental Health and Well Being – This concentration includes research into adolescent and adult use of alcohol and other drugs, drug and alcohol dependence and criminality, mental health implications for criminal reintegration/rehabilitation, and broader issues of forensic psychology. There are 5 senior researchers working on research into mental health and substance abuse and criminality. They are joined by 4 developing researchers, and 1 early career researcher. Since 2004, 12 students have completed doctoral studies in this concentration.

Disability and Disadvantage, Mental Health and Well Being – This concentration includes research into mental health status and implications for people with a disability, prisoners and offenders, people who are HIV-positive, long term unemployed people, rural and isolated communities, and economically disadvantaged people (noting the associated co-morbidity). There are 5 senior researchers together with 4 developing researchers, and 3 early career researchers working on research into mental health implications of disability and disadvantage. Since 2004, 23 students have completed doctoral studies in this concentration.

Ageing, Dementia, Mental Health and Well Being – This concentration includes research into assessment and treatment of dementia, depression and anxiety among people with dementia, innovations in mental health interventions for people with dementia, and innovations in psychogeriatric interventions generally. There are 3 senior researchers working on research into mental health implications of ageing, dementia, and psychogeriatric disorders generally. They are joined by 1 developing researcher, and 2 early career researchers. Since 2004, 2 students have completed doctoral studies in this concentration.

Our Leaders

The 6 professors who provide leadership within our research centre have each achieved national and international reputations. They tend to work across the 4 concentrations as do many of our members.

Professor Joe Graffam is Director of the Centre for Mental Health and Well Being Research. Joe is recognised nationally and internationally in disability employment research and is gaining recognition in prisoner reintegration research. His research investigates employment and mental health conditions of people with a disability or mental illness, offenders and prisoners, and older workers. His mental health service system research investigates mental health 'literacy' and pathways of care for socially marginalized people. Joe's employment-related research has had policy and service delivery system implications on a national level within Australia.

Professor Marita McCabe is Foundation Director of the Health and Well Being Research Priority Area within the Faculty of Health, Medicine, Nursing and Behavioural Sciences. Marita is recognised nationally and internationally in the areas of body image, psychological adjustment to disability, and ageing and depression. She conducts research in the areas of human sexuality, body image, disability and depression across the life span. She has a particular interest in sexual dysfunction and body image among males. Marita has also done research into obesity prevention and intervention, eating disorders and depression and dementia among older people.

Professor Bob Cummins is recognised internationally as a leader in subjective well being and quality of life research. Bob conducts research focused on quality of life, most particularly subjective well being. His current research program is directed toward theory development concerning the quality of life construct, and how such understanding can be used to improve the life experience of people who are medically or socially disadvantaged. Bob's major current project involves a quarterly index of subjective well being for the Australian population.

Professor Martine Powell is recognised nationally and internationally in children's testimony and forensic interviewing. Martine has published in a broad range of areas. Her primary research focus is on eyewitness testimony and forensic interviewing of vulnerable groups (e.g., children, persons with an intellectual disability). The focus of her research has been identification of factors which make witness testimony reliable, as well as training strategies that improve the competency of forensic interviewers. Martine's work has led to improvements internationally in the way that police and investigators conduct interviews with children.

Professor John Toubourou is recognised nationally and internationally in adolescent health and substance abuse research. John conducts research in the area of adolescent health, undertaking a number of studies looking at what contributes to the healthy development of young people and factors that can contribute to problematic drug use. John's research focuses on family and community influences in adolescent health promotion; positive social behaviour as a moderating influence on social development; and substance abuse prevention.

Professor Sing Kai Lo is recognised internationally as a health statistician. Kai is experienced in providing mentorship support to less experienced researchers, especially those in developing countries; his special interests are in international health, especially health services research in low middle income countries. Kai's current research areas include: international health, in particular health care in low middle income countries; critical appraisal, systematic reviews, and quantitative research methods; alternative and complementary medicine; clinical epidemiology; quality of life of minority / disadvantage groups and people with disabilities; and occupational and rehabilitation sciences.