



# Crime and criminal justice research at the University of Sydney

## Research brief 1

At the University of Sydney we're conducting exciting research into diverse crime and criminal justice issues.

This is the first in a series of briefing papers showcasing some of our projects and introducing you to our research staff. It looks at the work we're doing in psychology, law, social work, and data science.

### Thinking about domestic violence from different perspectives

**Can violent men be 'poor partners' as well as 'good fathers'? How does the parenting methods of a violent man affect women, children and young people in their lives?**

Interviews with Australian men in a behaviour change program revealed that gender, class, culture and health can affect fathering practices.

**Dr Susan Heward-Belle** is investigating the fathering experiences of violent men in Australia. Her work reveals that men's identity and masculinity influences practices around being a father, and a partner.

Susan's work breaks down stereotypes which assert that a man can be a 'good father', but a 'bad partner' – showing instead that there is continuity and interaction across these roles. This has different consequences for the types of risks that are likely to occur for women and children.

Susan is also involved in national research investigating and building the workforce capacity of child protection and family services working with fathers who have engaged in domestic and family violence.

**Find out more about Dr Heward-Belle and her work:**  
[http://sydney.edu.au/education\\_social\\_work/about\\_staff/profiles/susan.hewardbelle.php](http://sydney.edu.au/education_social_work/about_staff/profiles/susan.hewardbelle.php)

### Understanding eyewitness memory

**How reliable is eyewitness memory? Is it possible to improve its accuracy?**

**Dr Helen Paterson** is a Senior Lecturer in Forensic Psychology. Her main area of expertise is eyewitness memory. She looks at how best to question witnesses in order to elicit accurate and complete memory accounts – for both one-off and repeated events.

Helen is currently interested in examining how contemporaneous accounts (that is, accounts taken at the time or shortly after an event has occurred) can influence memory for the event, psychological responses, and legal processes.

Helen is also interested in investigating how the use of body-worn cameras can influence memory for an event.

**Find out more about Dr Paterson and her work:**

<http://sydney.edu.au/science/people/helen.paterson.php>

<http://sydney.edu.au/science/psychology/lab/forensic/>

### Applying techniques used in Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning to crime reduction and prevention

**What if you could create a computer program to tell you useful information for future crime policy? How about using data modelling to predict crime and criminal behaviour across time and space?**

**Dr Roman Marchant**, from the newly established Centre for Translational Data Science, is applying his knowledge of machine learning to help pioneer the next generation of statistical and probabilistic modelling to address criminal justice issues.

Roman is currently interested in predicting crime and criminal behaviour by using his expertise in stochastic models and quantitative analysis.

The application of fully probabilistic spatio-temporal models for crime and criminal behaviour allows a full quantification of the uncertainty which can transform the way policy decisions are made, allowing decisions makers to effectively allocate scarce resources.

**Find out more about Dr Marchant and his work:**

<http://sydney.edu.au/engineering/people/roman.marchant.php>

**Righting wrongs: Addressing miscarriages of justice in Australia Not Guilty: The Sydney Exoneration Project Did you know that we have no reliable data on how frequently wrongful convictions occur?**

Commencing in 2016, Not Guilty is a joint initiative between the psychology and law schools at the University of Sydney. It demonstrates how collaborations across disciplines can provide a stronger response to improving justice outcomes – but more importantly, seeks justice for people who were wrongfully convicted.

Under academic staff supervision, students are working together to review cases which relied primarily on eyewitness testimony and possible false confessions to gain a conviction.

**Find out more about the project:**

[http://sydney.edu.au/science/psychology/lab/notguilty/?page\\_id=22](http://sydney.edu.au/science/psychology/lab/notguilty/?page_id=22)

<http://sydney.edu.au/law/jurisdiction/leadership-in-research/sydney-exoneration-project.shtml>

**Supporting and promoting practitioner-led research in areas of social justice Community Justice Fellowship Program**

In 2014 the Sydney Social Justice Network (SSJN), a collaborative research hub established by the University, introduced the Community Justice Fellowship Program. The fellowships provide funding to organisations for 3 months full-time equivalent employee release.

During their time at the University, participants have access to academic research and support services, as well as resources such as the library and training programs. It's coupled with research guidance and support from leading academic mentors.

For practitioners, the program provides the chance to conduct relevant research with people who are well placed to identify and respond to issues in their sector.

Fellowships in 2017 have been awarded to investigate issues such as mandatory alcohol treatment in the Northern Territory and its effects on Aboriginal people; policies and programs addressing housing insecurity and homelessness for women prisoners on their release from gaol; and trauma informed bystander education in relation to domestic violence.

**Find out more about the program fellowships:**

[http://sydney.edu.au/arts/research/social\\_justice\\_network/about/research\\_fellows.shtml](http://sydney.edu.au/arts/research/social_justice_network/about/research_fellows.shtml)

For more information on these or other crime and criminal justice work at the University of Sydney, contact Dr Garner Clancey: [garner.clancey@sydney.edu.au](mailto:garner.clancey@sydney.edu.au)



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# Crime and criminal justice research at the University of Sydney

## Research brief 2

At the University of Sydney we're conducting exciting research into diverse crime and criminal justice issues.

This is the second in a series of briefing papers showcasing some of our projects and introducing you to our research staff. It looks at the work we're doing in law, criminology, business and accounting.

### **Understanding the impact of new technologies in the criminal justice system** **Do audio visual technologies change the experiences of prisoners accessing justice?**

Is providing evidence via a video link from prison the same as giving evidence in person? Are there any unintended consequences of this approach?

Technological linkages between justice and law enforcement agencies are radically altering criminal process and access to justice for prisoners. For many criminal proceedings, New South Wales has reversed the traditional presumption of a prisoner's physical presence in court, to a presumption in favour of appearance by audio visual link. AVL studios in the state's prisons let prisoners access legal advice, and 'appear' in remote courtrooms. Approximately 70% of court appearances are now facilitated by AVL.

**Dr Carolyn McKay** has spoken to prisoners to find out how appearance by AVL affects their experience with the law. Identified benefits included avoiding prison trucks and strip-searches. Nevertheless, many prisoners still expressed a desire to be in court in person – as a human, not a 'generic prisoner' on a screen. The research has revealed that technologies can challenge procedural justice and profoundly recompose prisoners' legal experiences.

**Find out more about Dr McKay and her work:**  
<http://sydney.edu.au/law/about/people/profiles/carolyn.mckay.php>

### **Increasing our knowledge of private prisons in Australia – are they a better alternative to state-run prisons?**

**How accountable and effective are private prisons? Are they cost effective? How do they perform in relation to their quality of services?**

Australia has one of the highest rates of private incarceration per capita in the world, and yet research about private prisons has been limited.

**Associate Professor Jane Andrew** led a group of researchers from the University of Sydney Business School who investigated the impact of private prisons, and how they have evolved.

Drawing on her expertise in business and accounting, Jane and her team reviewed publicly available information on private prisons across Australia. They found a dearth of available data for an evidence-based case for increasing prison privatisation. They also found that while each state varied for each measure, any evidence of performance and efficiency gains remains patchy and opaque, systems of accountability vary significantly, public reporting remains poor, and the total cost of private prisons remains unknown.

The lack of public information on costs, performance and efficiency has a negative impact on public accountability. It also reduces the capacity to properly scrutinise the case for prison privatisation.

**Find out more about the research:**

[http://sydney.edu.au/business/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/269972/Prison\\_Privatisation\\_in\\_Australia-The\\_State\\_of\\_the\\_Nation\\_June\\_2016.pdf](http://sydney.edu.au/business/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/269972/Prison_Privatisation_in_Australia-The_State_of_the_Nation_June_2016.pdf)

### **Promoting justice**

**WrongTrac: A national registry of exonerations**

**How often do wrongful convictions occur? What are the causes? How can they be avoided and corrected?**

Wrongful convictions raise crucial questions about the effectiveness of the criminal justice system. But these questions are difficult to answer because the

underlying data has not been reliably and authoritatively gathered, particularly in Australia.

The university is seeking to remedy this by providing the University of Sydney Law School with funding to establish a national registry of exonerations.

WrongTrac's objective is to establish a comprehensive registry of post-appeal exonerations across all Australian jurisdictions, dating from 1984, the year of the Splatt Royal Commission report and the Chamberlain High Court appeal.

The WrongTrac registry will be published online in a searchable and accessible format. The website will also provide individual case summaries, links to published research, and news about cases and relevant law reform. Once established, WrongTrac promises to become a hub of wrongful convictions research in Australia and internationally.

This work complements the Not Guilty project (featured in research brief 1). WrongTrac will be launched in late 2017.

## Identifying the impact and outcomes of delayed reporting in child sexual abuse

### Are historical cases of sexual abuse less likely to be prosecuted than those reported closer to the offence? What factors make a case more likely to proceed to prosecution?

Victims of child sexual abuse may not disclose the abuse for a long time – sometimes decades. This can add layers of difficulty prosecuting historical cases. There are the challenges of understanding why the complaint was delayed, dealing with degraded evidence such as fading memories and lost evidence, or the death of witnesses.

Commissioned by the *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse*, the University of Sydney Law School academics conducted an investigation into whether prosecuting historical sexual assault cases had any particular effects on the prosecution and outcomes of the case.

The team reviewed trends in delayed disclosure and reporting of the abuse, and mapped the prosecution processes and outcomes, taking into consideration different characteristics of complainants.

A key finding was that historical matters were more likely to result in legal action, and are more likely to result in conviction and imprisonment. Reasons behind why a case proceeds vary, particularly between jurisdictions, however a person

was more likely to be prosecuted if they were in a position of authority over a child.

### Find out more:

<https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/getattachment/e3312f1c-d58f-490d-a467-221684c050c9/The-impact-of-delayed-reporting-on-the-prosecution>

## Learning lessons from death – advancing coronial justice

### How has coronial justice evolved in Australia? Do inquests only have a fact-finding purpose?

**Dr Scott Bray** and **Associate Professor Greg Martin** from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences have been exploring the many ways that coronial inquests have been, and can be used, to deliver justice.

They found that Australian coronial reform has often had a unique, progressive 'rights-attuned focus'. This has evolved, remarkably, even in the absence of specific human rights legislation in all but two Australian jurisdictions (ACT and Victoria). Reform has also centred on managing the deceased and related coronial practices, the place of prevention in the legislative framework, and how recommendations are made and followed up.

Australian coroners tend to use their recommendatory functions to adopt a proactive rather than a reactive approach to death investigations. They often use a narrative form to present coronial findings, which provides crucial insights into the circumstances of a person's death.

The researchers found that contemporary coronial inquiries have multiple functions, and can play a significant role in 'setting the record straight' and delivering justice. However, coronial outcomes can also challenge justice expectations. The researchers identified critical needs – including ensuring that the lessons learnt from coronial investigations are not lost, and how to best incorporate rich coronial insights into better prevention and enforcement strategies more broadly.

### Find out more about the researchers and their work:

<http://sydney.edu.au/arts/staff/profiles/rebecca.scottbray.php>

For more information about crime and criminal justice research at the University of Sydney, contact Dr Garner Clancey: [garner.clancey@sydney.edu.au](mailto:garner.clancey@sydney.edu.au)



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# Crime and criminal justice research at the University of Sydney

## Research brief 3

At the University of Sydney we're conducting exciting research into diverse crime and criminal justice issues.

This is the third briefing paper showcasing some of our projects and introducing you to our research staff. It looks at the work we're doing in psychology, law, philosophy, economics and gambling research.

### Memory for people and events

**Dr Celine van Golde** is an Associate Senior Lecturer in Forensic Psychology. Her main area of expertise is memory for people and events in adults and children. She is particularly interested in interviewing techniques in forensic settings, such as those used by police, lawyers and judges, and how those techniques can affect memory accuracy for people we have seen, or events we have experienced or witnessed.

Celine is currently looking into factors that might cause misidentifications during criminal investigations and legal proceedings. She intends to use these findings to improve identification accuracy within forensic settings. Additionally, she is looking at how our memories of events can be influenced by subsequent information from different sources (for example, news reports) and the use of technology (for example, taking photos on mobile phones). She applies these research questions both to adults and children.

**Find out more about Dr van Golde at:**

<http://sydney.edu.au/science/people/celine.vangolde.php>

### Formal approaches to legal reasoning

**What is the appropriate role for statistical evidence in criminal trials? What's the best method and organisational structure for group decision making – for instance, for juries?**

**Professor Mark Colyvan** is a Professor of Philosophy. His main areas of expertise are decision theory, logic, mathematical philosophy, and philosophy of science.

**Dr Brian Hedden** is a Lecturer in Philosophy. His main areas of interest are in formal epistemology, especially decision theory and rational belief theory.

Mark and Brian are conducting a project that uses formal (i.e. mathematical, statistical and logical) epistemological methods to improve our understanding of existing legal practices, and to propose recommendations for improving the consistency and accuracy of legal proceedings.

Since judges and juries rarely know all the relevant facts, they must make the best decisions possible in the face of uncertainty. Formal epistemology employs probabilistic reasoning to advance our understanding of how to form beliefs and make decisions in response to uncertain evidence. In particular, the project addresses the use of statistical evidence in trials and the aggregation of individuals' beliefs to reach group decisions in juries and judicial panels.

**Find out more about Professor Colyvan's and Dr Hedden's research work at:**

<http://colyvan.com>

<http://brian-hedden.com/>

### Protecting whistleblowers in the corporate sector

**Do whistleblowers in the public and private sector have the same protections? Are statutory protections the only option?**

Whistleblowers are incredibly valuable in the fight against corporate corruption and misconduct. Whistleblower protections exist in Australia; however, this is concentrated in the public sector, with limited comprehensive legislation encompassing the private sector. While improving statutory protection is an important goal, there has been limited progress in this area.

**Dr Olivia Dixon**, from the University of Sydney Law School, is an expert in corporate law, particularly corporate crime. Olivia examined over 200 whistleblower policies in Australia and concluded that there's scope for improving how whistleblowers can be protected in the private sector.

Olivia found that company codes of conduct often require employees to report misconduct, and state that the company will not retaliate against whistleblowers. Whistleblowers might therefore deter retaliation with breach of contract action that enforces the company's obligations.

**Find out more about Dr Dixon and her work:**

<http://sydney.edu.au/law/about/people/profiles/olivia.dixon.php>

## Using economics to understand crime Spotlight on Professor Deborah Cobb-Clark

**Deborah Cobb-Clark** is Professor of Economics at the University of Sydney. Joining the university in 2016, Deborah brings her extensive expertise in applying economic modelling skills to gain greater insights into youth delinquency. She often conducts her research by linking information from large administrative datasets to surveys.

Deborah has driven research projects that have investigated:

- the role of father figures in influencing a child's delinquent behaviour,
- the relationship between early marijuana use and educational outcomes, and
- how growing up on welfare can influence the risky behaviour of young people.

Deborah has found that father figures are likely to be a protective factor against delinquency, particularly for males. She also found links to early marijuana use and poorer education outcomes, which is often amplified by high-intensity use, being part of a large family and living in a family with a history of income support receipt. However, Deborah's research has found no evidence that growing up on welfare causes risky behaviour in a young person.

**Find out more about Professor Cobb-Clark and her work:**

<http://sydney.edu.au/arts/economics/staff/profiles/deborah.cobb-clark.884.php>

## Investigating emerging problems: virtual reality gambling

**Can virtual reality gambling lead to actual harms? What are the potential risks? How should we respond?**

Unlike online gambling, in virtual reality gambling people can see and interact with others. Incredibly seductive, people immersed in this artificial world risk believing that losses are merely virtual, with no real-world connection or consequences.

Given the predicted increase in this activity, **Dr Sally M. Gainsbury** and **Professor Alex Blaszczynski** from our Gambling Treatment and Research Clinic have delved into the possible implications and risks of virtual reality gaming. They've found that virtual reality gambling appears to bring together some of the most problematic elements of gambling that have the potential to lead to gambling problems: availability, accessibility, and rapid and continuous play.

Internet technology could help with harm minimisation. Strategies could include sending problem gamblers personalised messages or private approaches by avatars, alerting them to the continued risks of playing; or displaying prominent time notifications alerting gamblers to how long they have been gambling; and including virtual areas where there is no gaming stimuli.

Without being alarmist, Sally and Alex stress that current gambling regulators have yet to develop – and possibly have not even considered – policies needed to protect consumers and ensure appropriate harm minimisation strategies.

**Find out more about Professor Blaszczynski's and Dr Sainsbury's research work at:**

<http://sydney.edu.au/science/people/sally.gainsbury.php>

<http://sydney.edu.au/science/people/alex.blaszczynski.php>

For more information on these or other crime and criminal justice work at the University of Sydney, contact Dr Garner Clancey: [garner.clancey@sydney.edu.au](mailto:garner.clancey@sydney.edu.au)



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# Crime and criminal justice research at the University of Sydney

## Research brief 4

At the University of Sydney we're conducting exciting research into diverse crime and criminal justice issues.

This is the fourth in a series of briefing papers showcasing some of our projects and introducing you to our research staff. It looks at the work we're doing in mental health and domestic violence, child sexual assault, and health and wellbeing for Indigenous Australians.

### Enhancing collaboration between mental health and domestic violence service providers

**How can we improve outcomes for people affected by domestic violence? What are the barriers to collaboration?**

Healthcare providers tend to address undetected domestic violence issues by introducing training to help their staff better identify possible victims. However, to respond effectively to the victims, there also needs to be collaboration between health services and government, non-government, legal and housing services outside the health sector.

Given the links between mental illness and domestic violence, **Emeritus Professor Jude Irwin, Honorary Associate Professor Lesley Laing and Senior Researcher Cherie Toivonen** from the Sydney School of Education and Social Work conducted research to provide guidance on how to improve collaboration between sectors.

Using focus groups with domestic violence and mental health practitioners, they discovered that collaboration between the sectors is often hindered by their different histories, knowledge bases and organisational cultures. Despite this, they identified the following factors that improved collaboration:

a commitment to improve collaboration from both sectors, particularly at the management level; a shared sense of purpose; both sectors recognising each other's efforts to improve collaboration; fostering personal relationships between members of each sector; understanding the constraints each sector faces; taking ownership of the collaboration; and recognising that women dealing with domestic violence and mental health issues have benefitted from the collaboration. They also found that the action research process was an important way to create a structure for facilitating the collaboration.

**Find out more about Emeritus Professor Irwin, Honorary Associate Professor Laing and Senior Researcher Toivonen and their work:**

[http://sydney.edu.au/education\\_social\\_work/about/staff/profiles/jude.irwin.php](http://sydney.edu.au/education_social_work/about/staff/profiles/jude.irwin.php)

<http://fdp.edsw.usyd.edu.au/users/llaing>

<http://fdp.edsw.usyd.edu.au/users/cherie>

### Improving the experience of child sexual assault victims

**How can we reduce attrition rates of child sexual offences in the courts? What can be done to support child victims of sexual abuse when they have contact with the criminal justice system?**

Child victims of sexual abuse are extremely vulnerable, and there are high attrition rates of sexual assault matters in the criminal justice system particularly when the complainant witness is a child. The attrition rates have in part been attributed to the limited services available to children to access the support they need at each part of the process – from initially talking to police, through to giving evidence to the court. To address this problem, in March 2016 a pilot program was introduced in NSW to reduce the stress and duration of court proceedings for child witnesses, while also maintaining the defendant's rights to a fair trial. The main features of the pilot include the introduction of witness intermediaries during police investigatory interviews with the child

and also at trial, the appointment of specialist District Court judges with expertise in child sexual assault matters, and an expanded use of pre-recorded evidence to include cross-examination.

**Professor Judith Cashmore** and **Associate Professor Rita Shackel** from the University of Sydney Law School, in collaboration with the Social Policy Research Centre at the University of New South Wales, have been engaged to evaluate the success of these new initiatives in a two-stage process: an initial process evaluation, which they completed in July 2017, and a final outcome evaluation, which they will conduct in 2018. The process evaluation aimed to see if the pilot was on track to achieve its aims, and whether anything has hindered or supported successful implementation. The professionals involved who were consulted supported what the pilot is trying to achieve, and highlighted the value of witness intermediaries when children are questioned by the police and at court. While the design and implementation of all aspects of the pilot were perceived as effective, external resource constraints were considered a primary risk to its broader implementation. There were concerns about the use of recording technology – its image and clarity could vary depending on location, which can adversely affect the quality of the evidence. Furthermore, describing witness intermediaries as ‘Children’s Champions’ in the legislation was viewed warily, as it belies the neutral role these people hold in the court processes.

**Find out more about Professor Cashmore and her work:**

<http://sydney.edu.au/law/about/people/profiles/judith.cashmore.php>

**Find out more about Associate Professor Shackel and her work:**

<http://sydney.edu.au/law/about/people/profiles/rita.shackel.php>

## Enhancing health and wellbeing outcomes for Indigenous Australians who have been incarcerated

### Spotlight on Professor Juanita Sherwood

**Professor Juanita Sherwood** from the National Centre for Cultural Competence at Sydney University is a registered nurse, teacher, lecturer, researcher and manager with over 30 years of experience in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and education. Her research frequently explores social and criminal justice issues, with the capacity to approach the issues via an Indigenous health and wellbeing perspective.

Juanita has collaborated on numerous research projects that examined the experiences of Indigenous Australians who have been incarcerated by using collaborative, Indigenous-informed research methods. These projects included: investigating how to improve the health outcomes of incarcerated Aboriginal mothers and carers; identifying best practice in primary health care when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people leave prison; and determining whether being pregnant while imprisoned affects pregnancy and birth outcomes for mothers and babies from Indigenous Australian backgrounds.

Recently, Juanita partnered with researchers from across Australia and the United States to determine if Australian Indigenous cultural identity and engagement could be a protective factor against violent offending and recidivism. After interviewing 122 Indigenous prisoners in Victoria, they found that cultural engagement – but not cultural identity – had a significant association with delaying violent recidivism. However, cultural engagement was only significant if participants also reported a strong Indigenous cultural identity.

**Find out more about Professor Sherwood and her work:**

<http://sydney.edu.au/nccc/people/profiles/juanita.sherwood.php>

For more information on these or other crime and criminal justice work at the University of Sydney, contact Dr Garner Clancey: [garner.clancey@sydney.edu.au](mailto:garner.clancey@sydney.edu.au)





# Crime and criminal justice research at the University of Sydney

## Research brief 5

At the University of Sydney we're conducting exciting research into diverse crime and criminal justice issues.

This is the fifth in a series of briefing papers showcasing some of our projects and introducing you to our research staff. It looks at the work we're doing in young offenders and detention, economics and crime, drug addiction and emotion.

### Evaluating risk of young offenders in detention

**Understanding the security risks juvenile detainees pose while in custody is important for maintaining the good order of juvenile justice centres. Classification instruments now routinely attempt to assess such risks – but how accurate are they?**

At any one time there are between 250 and 300 young people detained in NSW. Each young person entering a juvenile justice centre is assessed according to their security risks. Classifying a young person's security risk helps staff decide where they will be accommodated, their ability to participate in programs, and their ability to be granted leave from custody. In NSW, young people are classified using the Objective Detainee Classification System (ODCS). However, after 12 years of operation, is the ODCS still the best approach to classifying young people in detention?

**Dr Garner Clancey** (University of Sydney Law School) and **Dr Roman Marchant** (University of Sydney's Centre for Translational Data Science) were commissioned by Juvenile Justice NSW to determine if the ODCS is still fit-for-purpose. They are using a variety of qualitative and quantitative methods to review the ODCS, including focus groups and interviews with Juvenile Justice staff, and are reviewing the current policy and procedure documents that inform how young people are classified. They are also conducting exploratory data and trend analyses of the ODCS's administrative datasets by using sophisticated statistical modelling techniques. Their findings will inform how Juvenile Justice NSW continues to classify its young offenders, and identify any areas for improvement.

**Find out more about Dr Clancey and his work:**

<http://sydney.edu.au/law/about/people/profiles/garner.clancey.php>

**Find out more about Dr Marchant and his work:**

<http://sydney.edu.au/engineering/people/roman.marchant.php>

### Using economics to understand crime (Part 2)

**Spotlight on Dr Kevin Schnepel**

**Dr Kevin Schnepel** is a lecturer from Sydney University's School of Economics who applies his extensive skills in economics to critically examine criminal justice issues. His particular interest involves investigating causes of criminal offending and antisocial behaviour.

Recently, he estimated the impact of employment opportunities on recidivism over a 15 year period for 1.7 million offenders released from a California prison. He found a significant association between reductions in recidivism with opportunities for construction and manufacturing jobs, but not jobs with low wage employment opportunities such as in retail and food services, or even positions that require higher education. These findings are more pronounced with people aged 35–45 years old, and those with drug offences.

Kevin is currently part of a study to understand the long term effects of the 2001 heroin shortage, a phenomenon which resulted in drugs being more unaffordable and harder to obtain. The project will evaluate the impact of the shortage, using more than 20 years of administrative data from criminal justice and health agencies in NSW, and a sample of more than 10,000 individuals known to have used heroin between 1994 and 2001, either through being arrested for heroin possession or through their drug treatment history. The study will look at the effects across a wide variety of outcomes including mortality, hospital admissions, methadone prescriptions, incarceration, property and violent crime, and substitution to other drugs. The results will provide insight into whether major disruptions to illicit drug markets affect users' overall health and criminality.

**Find out more about Dr Schnepel and his work:**

<http://sydney.edu.au/arts/economics/staff/profiles/kevin.schnepel.php>

## Treating drug addictions... with cannabis?

### The Lambert Initiative and its research into addiction treatment using cannabis

The Lambert Initiative is an Australian first in the field of medicinal cannabinoids – both in its breadth and depth of research innovation. Its aims are to advance cannabinoid-based treatments in mainstream medicine. The Initiative is based in the University of Sydney's Brain and Mind Centre.

**Professor Iain McGregor, Associate Professor Jonathon Arnold, Associate Professor David Allsop and Associate Professor Jennifer Cornish** – who is partnering from Macquarie University – are leading a team of researchers from the Institute into whether cannabinoids can help in the treatment of addiction to other drugs such as alcohol, opiates and methamphetamine.

There are anecdotal reports supporting this idea, and the ability of cannabinoids such as cannabidiol to reduce anxiety, prevent seizures and treat psychotic behaviour may be relevant in addiction medicine. Promisingly, initial research by the team has found that cannabidiol strongly inhibits the intravenous self-administration of methamphetamine in rats (an animal model that models 'ice' addiction in humans).

The study team also plans to examine whether cannabidiol, or cannabidiol-containing hemp extracts, may be a useful adjunct in the treatment of alcohol withdrawal, where anxiety and seizures are prominent symptoms. Discussions regarding the feasibility of such a study are under way with leading clinical researchers in the addictions field.

The team is also keen to recruit PHD students to work on this project.

### Learn more about the Lambert Initiative for Cannabinoid Therapeutics and its work:

<http://sydney.edu.au/lambert/>

### Learn more about the current study:

<http://sydney.edu.au/lambert/our-research/addiction/novel-cannabinoids-for-addiction.html>

### Learn more about PhD opportunities to join the research team:

<http://sydney.edu.au/research/opportunities/opportunities/2220>

## Exploring the role of emotion in contemporary law

### Does emotion have a place in law making? What can we learn from studying the role of emotions in law over time?

Emotion has not always been considered an important area of study in law. However, understanding its role in legal decision making can broaden our understanding of the law and how it operates, particularly over time.

**Dr Kimberley-Joy Knight** is an historian and postdoctoral research fellow with the Sydney branch of the Centre for the History of Emotions based at Sydney University. She also co-convenes an international and interdisciplinary research network on the History of Law and Emotions. Kimberley's research highlights that emotions and rational thought in law cannot be clearly delineated. Despite this, emotion's role in how law is interpreted and practiced is often downplayed. Part of this is attributed to the perceived shift from passionate, cruel and emotional forms of justice exercised in the Middle Ages to a more cool, rational and civilised law-making process. As a result, dispassionate law making may signify a more 'civilised' society.

Paradoxically, Kimberley's work highlights while law-making evokes perceptions of cool and rational thinking, decisions are often made based on judgements of a person's demeanour or suffering. For example, victims may be judged on whether they fit the perceived mould of how a victim should act on the stand, and the perceived emotional suffering of a person can influence how compensation in tort law is determined. In addition, a person's emotional state at the time of offending – such as acting 'in the heat of the moment' – can influence sentencing decisions. Kimberley, with her collaborators, is particularly interested in making use of the work on Law and Emotions in the field of Continuing Professional Development for practising lawyers.

### Find out more about Dr Knight and her work:

<http://sydney.edu.au/arts/staff/profiles/kimberley.knight.php>

For more information on these or other crime and criminal justice work at the University of Sydney, contact Dr Garner Clancey: [garner.clancey@sydney.edu.au](mailto:garner.clancey@sydney.edu.au)



# Crime and criminal justice research at the University of Sydney

## Research brief 6

At the University of Sydney we not only conduct diverse and innovative research projects, we encourage our students to do the same.

The following brief is the sixth in a series of briefing papers. This brief showcases the work of some of our university's doctoral candidates in the fields of juvenile justice, policing, violent extremism and the treatment of homicide victims in the media.

### **Reviewing risk: juvenile justice risk assessment tools and their impacts on young people**

**How do juvenile justice risk assessments shape how young people are categorised as offenders? How do they justify the supervision, control and imprisonment, of young offenders?**

#### **Lobna Yassine**

Young people who come into contact with the justice system are guaranteed two things: to be assessed for their risk of reoffending, and then to be treated for their offending behaviour, based on their predicted risk.

A young person's risk is typically assessed by the use of a standardised risk assessment tool. However, the use of risk assessment tools is often taken for granted, and is an often overlooked aspect of the juvenile justice system.

In NSW, the tool administered and implemented by Juvenile Justice NSW is the Youth Level of Service Inventory Case Management, Australian Adapted (YLS/CMI-AA). Lobna is conducting a study of the YLS/CMI-AA and how it is implicated in the way that juvenile offending is understood. Her study suggests that

although the YLS/CMI-AA tool relies on specific understandings of causes of youth crime and is promoted globally as an accurate and objective tool, it is in fact gendering, classing, and racializing, and contributes to the overrepresentation of some kinds of young people in the juvenile justice system.

### **Dealing with the digital: police accountability in the social media age**

**Does social media make the police more accountable and in what ways? Is social media a suitable platform through which to educate the public about police accountability?**

#### **Justin Ellis**

Direct police access to the public through a range of social media platforms has enhanced police connectivity and the ability to prevent and solve crime. It has also enhanced police capacity to respond in real time to crises and the co-ordination of major public events. At the same time, amateur video distributed through social media has increased the capacity to expose and scrutinise police transgression.

Justin's research interrogates the impact of social media and amateur video on the policing of the 2013 Mardi Gras Festival, which generated a scandal. Through close to 40 interviews with LGBTQ community and police, Justin's research analyses community, complainant and police expectations of police accountability in relation to the scandal.

Notably, his research includes interviews with 20 sworn and unsworn current and former police employees, providing a rare insight into the impact that such incidents have on police who work closely within the NSW Police Force Gay and Lesbian Liaison Officer Program.

## Managing public representations of homicide victims

**How are homicide victims represented in the media? How does the digital age affect the construction of the news story and the public's engagement with it?**

**Laura Wajnryb McDonald**

Laura is researching the media treatment of homicide. Her study is interested in how the media use representations of victims – such as CCTV footage, family photographs and personal Facebook photos – in crime reporting. These images saturate contemporary mainstream crime reporting so that the public's engagement with crime is increasingly mediated through a proliferation of images and videos.

While these images arguably have immense power to shape the public's understanding of crime, law, and justice, their use can be problematic, especially when it comes to victims' rights. Laura is examining the way these kinds of images are managed in the digital age by three main groups: the bereaved, the criminal justice system, and the media. This research seeks to address the ethical and policy implications of contemporary media practice for victims and the bereaved.

## Analysing interplay between online and offline worlds: the role of the internet in violent extremism

**Do internet-based extremist activities have more impact than face-to-face activities? Does improved internet accessibility by extremists facilitate an increase in violent attacks?**

**Saimum Parvez (Department of Government and International Relations)**

Saimum's research is centred on investigating whether internet availability is positively correlated with increasing violent attacks, and if the use of the internet is likely to make violent organisations more violent – in terms of recruitment, propaganda, mobilization of resources, planning and coordination, nature and number of attacks, diffusion of ideology, communication strategy, organisational structure, and establishing networks with local and transnational groups.

Saimum will also explore to what extent and how the

internet has brought changes in violent extremist groups, in particular whether in-person or internet-based interactions have greater influence in promoting extremist group activity.

To investigate the issue, Saimum will conduct interviews of convicted/former extremists along with government officials, journalists, and security experts. The research project selects Bangladesh as its main case, which will be compared with the cases of Indonesia and the USA.

## Employment and the law in Australian policing: options for the development of a new police collective bargaining dispute resolution law model

**Is the current industrial relations system for police fit-for-purpose? Can the current system be tailored to reduce uncertainty and stability for police?**

**Giuseppe Carabetta**

Police industrial relations in Australia are ripe for review. Police officers are working citizens, entitled to fair employment conditions; however the new Australian collective bargaining system which permits protected strikes is ill-suited to police employment. The demise of arbitration, combined with differences between State systems, has created uncertainty and potential instability in police industrial relations.

Giuseppe's study examines options for the development of a new collective bargaining dispute resolution model for police, by identifying best-practice methods for police collective bargaining and dispute resolution; and making recommendations on when and how those methods can be adapted to the existing Australian system.

The current phase examines problems arising from the existing Australian regime, assesses international solutions applying results from recent field-work research, and considers challenges for any proposed recommendations arising from the research.

Giuseppe Carabetta is a Senior Lecturer at The University of Sydney Business School. His research expertise lies in the field of employment law, particularly, public sector employment law.

For more information on these or other crime and criminal justice work at the University of Sydney, contact Dr Garner Clancey: [garner.clancey@sydney.edu.au](mailto:garner.clancey@sydney.edu.au)



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# Crime and criminal justice research at the University of Sydney

## Research brief 7

This is the seventh in a series of briefing papers showcasing some of our projects and introducing you to our research staff. It looks at work we're doing in witness accounts of crime, social inequality, socio-economics and problem gambling.

### Improving how witness accounts of a crime are collected: iWitnessed App

Witness recall of an event can sometimes be unreliable; however it can be relied on as a key piece of evidence during court cases. To minimise this problem, eyewitness memory experts **Dr Helen Paterson** and **Dr Celine van Golde** from the University of Sydney, and Professor Nicholas Cowdery (Former Director of Public Prosecutions, NSW) developed 'iWitnessed'. This is an innovative smart phone app designed to help witnesses and victims provide a detailed account of any event, in a way which helps preserve and protect their memory for the event. The app is free, available to anyone in Australia, and can be recorded in any language.

iWitnessed uses a guided recall procedure and can be used for any type of event, including one-off or recurring events. The app can store a range of information including text, voice recordings, voice-to-text, and images, and be time-stamped. There are also additional security protections, where PIN codes can be used prior to accessing the information. iWitnessed also provides direct links to support services and information about the psychological effects of trauma.

The app has been downloaded nearly 12,000 times since its launch in early 2018.

#### Find out more about the iWitnessed app:

<http://sydney.edu.au/science/psychology/iWitnessed>

Email: [app.iWitnessed@sydney.edu.au](mailto:app.iWitnessed@sydney.edu.au)

### Understanding the social inequalities faced by people with disabilities

#### Spotlight on Professor Eric Emerson

**Eric Emerson** is Professor of Disability Population Health at the Centre for Disability Research and Policy, where he leads on the Centre's stream of work on disability and disadvantage. He is an expert on issues related to the wellbeing and social inequalities faced by people with disabilities, especially children with disabilities and adults with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

Eric has led and contributed to research projects which seek to understand and address health and social inequalities faced by people with disabilities. In 2015 he led a team which examined perceptions of safety and exposure to violence in public places among adults with a disability in the UK. The team found that these people were more likely to have been made to feel unsafe, or be attacked or insulted in a public place, and that the risk increased among women and people living in poverty. However, this did not mean that people in the study who reported being victimised were more likely to avoid public places as a result.

Eric also contributed to an Australian population-based study into the prevalence and risk of violence against people with and without disabilities. Similar results to the UK were found; men and women with disability had double the chance of experiencing physical and sexual violence than non-disabled peers of the same sex. However, men with disabilities were more likely to experience physical violence, while women with disabilities experienced greater likelihood of sexual violence, partner violence, and stalking and harassment.

#### Find out more about Professor Emerson and his work at:

<http://sydney.edu.au/health-sciences/about/people/profiles/eric.emerson.php#publications-by-year>

## Identifying the association between adverse childhood experiences and lifetime economic outcomes

### Can adverse experiences in childhood affect a person's economic outcome later in life? Is there a difference between those with low or high socio-economic backgrounds?

Despite the existence of many studies that look at poverty and a child's access to education and financial resources, it is not often distinguished whether socio-economic disadvantage when the child becomes an adult is due to the lack of resources, or if the type of adversities a child faces – which disproportionately occur in poorer households – have more influence (eg parental abuse, neglect, unstable relationships).

In 2017 a study conducted by **Associate Professor Stefanie Schurer** and Honours student **Kristian Trajkovski** from the University of Sydney's School of Economics attempted to quantify how much early-life adverse childhood experiences were associated with economic outcomes later in life. They conducted a longitudinal study on the cohort using existing data collated on 18,558 children in the UK. They examined their net individual earnings, welfare dependency and the cohort's own subjective experience of poverty at 55 years of age, and compared this information to whether individuals had any adverse childhood experiences (ACE) between 7 and 16 years of age.

They found that children who came from economically disadvantaged families were twice as likely as those from privileged families to have experienced ACE. Despite this, they also discovered that irrespective of a child's socio-economic background, ACE were strong predictors of economic outcomes – indeed, affecting a child's earning potential by 7.3%, increasing the chance of welfare dependence, and increasing the chance of subjective poverty. In particular, neglect was considered a strong factor in later economic earnings. They suggest that targeting household dysfunction could help alleviate childhood poverty and reduce the economic and social burden of ACE within the community.

#### Find out more about Associate Professor Schurer and her work at:

<http://sydney.edu.au/arts/economics/staff/profiles/stefanie.schurer.php>

## Reducing the harms of problem gambling

### Spotlight on Professor Alex Blaszczynski

The harms of gambling are well known, and Sydney University is a leader in how to research and treat people afflicted with problem gambling. **Professor Alex Blaszczynski** is the Director of the Gambling Treatment and Research Clinic located in the University's Brain and Mind Centre. He is leading expert in this field, whose research interests include pathological gambling, impulse control behaviours, and internet addiction.

Alex has undertaken extensive research in partnership with other leading experts. In 2016 Alex and Lia Nower from Rutgers University in the United States developed and validated the 'Gambling Pathways Questionnaire' to use as a screening tool for treatment-seeking gamblers. Recently, he contributed to a study which examined whether there is a relationship between gambling behaviour and fantasy sports (FS) play – an online gaming platform whereby players can 'manage' fictional teams using real-life athletes in sports such as football, with players earning points based on the performance drawn from actual game statistics using a pre-defined scoring system. The study found that daily FS players gambled more frequently, with more severe gambling issues and comorbid problems such as suicide ideation than gamblers who didn't play daily FS.

Alex has also partnered with Sydney University colleague **Melanie Hartmann** to review existing studies on the relationship between psychiatric disorders and gambling disorders over time. They found evidence to suggest psychiatric disorders could be either a precursor or the result of problem gambling. However, individual and environmental characteristics play a key role in this process. They conclude that problem gambling initiatives should therefore target both gambling disorders and the psychiatric conditions associated with it.

#### Find out more about Professor Blaszczynski and his work at:

<http://sydney.edu.au/science/people/alex.blaszczynski.php>

#### And read a recent systematic review he co-authored on crime and gambling disorders -

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs10899-018-9794-7>



For more information on these or other crime and criminal justice work at the University of Sydney, contact Dr Garner Clancey: [garner.clancey@sydney.edu.au](mailto:garner.clancey@sydney.edu.au)