



Researchers for Asylum Seekers

Spread Knowledge, Not Fear

REPRESENTATIONS OF REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

**Researchers for Asylum Seekers (RAS) Interdisciplinary
Postgraduate Conference**

Friday 20th September 2013, 9am – 5 pm

Gryphon Gallery

1888 Building, University of Melbourne



THE UNIVERSITY OF
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PROGRAM

9:00-9:10	Welcome: Nick Haslam
9:10 – 10:30	<p>Session 1 – Chair: Karen Block</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual Reality: Theorising Representation in the Australian Asylum Debate - <i>Melinda McPherson</i> • Cushioning the Hardship of Transiting Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Indonesia: The Role of International Refugee and Migration Organisation - <i>Antje Missbach</i> • Bhētōrē Āśun; Cōlē Jān (Come In; Go Away): Public Opinions about Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh - <i>Brandy Cochrane and Rashaam Chowdhury</i> • The Greedy, The Lewd, The Deceitful – Representing the Human Smuggler - <i>Gabriella Sanchez</i>
10:30 – 10.50	Morning Tea
10.50 - 12:30	<p>Session 2 – Chair: Elisha Riggs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transcending Borders: The Evolution of the Refugee Diaspora in 'Bounded' and 'Moebius' Space - <i>Andrew Slater</i> • Bearing Witness to Mandatory Detention: The Representation of Asylum Seekers in Immigration Detention In Australia - <i>Caroline Fleay</i> • A Developmental Account of Refugee Young People’s Engagement with and Mastery of their Challenges - <i>Abi Brooker and Jeanette Lawrence</i> • Resettlement and Mental Health of Bosnian Refugees in Austria and Australia: The Impact of Acculturation - <i>Dzenana Kartal</i> • Karen Learners in Transition: A Work in Progress - <i>Amanda Hiorth</i>
12:30 - 1:15	Lunch
1:15 – 2:00	<p>Keynote address Australian Asylum Seeker Policy: Where to from here? - <i>Savitri Taylor</i></p>

2:00 – 3:00	<p>Session 3 – Chair: Angeline Ferdinand</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remembering the Unknown and the Unwelcome: Memorial and Countermemorial Practices for Asylum Seekers in Australia - <i>Rebecca Cole</i> • ‘In Their Place’: Managerial Whiteness and the ‘Body-At-Home’ - <i>Tinonee Pym</i> • White Cult/ure Fantasy–Violent Borders and Ethnic Caging – <i>Odette Kelada</i>
3:00 – 3:15	<p>Afternoon Tea</p>
3:15 – 4:55	<p>Session 4 – Chair – Surjeet Dhanji</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lost Identities - <i>Monica Zaman</i> • Iranian Asylum Seekers: A Reflection on Iranian Cultural Identity - <i>Mammad Aidani</i> • Needs Assessment – Investigating Barriers to the Integration of the Burmese Migrant Community into Melton - <i>Natasha Wilton</i> • New Steps: A Screening and Treatment Program for Post Trauma Symptoms in Adolescent Refugees - <i>Ann Locarnini, Glenn Melvin and Louise Newman</i>
4:55 – 5:00	<p>Conference Close</p>

Foucault rejects the existence of any objective 'reality' instead theorising a relationship between representation and material effect. In the field of social policy making, government depends upon particular representations of social policy subjects in order to formulate the material outcome of policy. Harsh policy measures governing asylum seekers in 21st century Australia derive from marginalising representations privileged by government and the media. Understanding the operations of these representations, and mechanisms for their interruption, is an important social justice goal.

In this paper I explore operations of representation in the asylum debate through the lens of various theorists with an interest in social policy, language, politics, and the media. Arising out of Foucault's work on representation and material effect, I examine the problematic construction by government of social policy subjects in discourse, the ways in which language is harnessed to progress those representations, the role of discursive investment in increasing the traction of representations, and the material outcomes of representations in asylum policy. I raise questions about the mechanisms by which discourse might be shifted once it has become ossified.

Melinda McPherson is an Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Ballarat. She researches and writes principally in the areas of education, refugee studies, women's studies and social justice, drawing her theoretical and methodological perspectives from feminism, post-structuralism, and sociology. Melinda has published journal papers on the representation of refugee women in policy, gendered implications of the Refugee Convention, and representations of women in the media.

Most boats containing asylum seekers and refugees en route to Australia leave from Indonesia. More than 300 boats with more than 18,000 people on board have arrived in Australia in 2013 alone. However, Indonesia is not only a frequently utilised place for embarkation, but in the last decade Indonesia has also become a transit country for asylum seekers from Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Burma and many other conflict-ridden countries. Although Indonesia is not a signatory of the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, it has seen the establishment of the non-state machinery to accommodate the basic needs of asylum seekers and refugees within its territory. As the Indonesian state does not assume responsibility for asylum seekers and refugees, assistance is first and foremost provided by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). While the UNHCR is mainly concerned with protection and status determination of transiting asylum seekers, the 'services' of the IOM range from material assistance, accommodation to 'assisted voluntary return' (AVR).

This paper seeks to elaborate in greater detail on the roles of the UNHCR and the IOM and how their services impact on the daily lives of current asylum seekers and refugees in Indonesia. By taking a rather critical stance, the paper hopes to contribute to an ongoing discussion that seeks a thorough improvement of the organisations' assistance.

Antje Missbach studied Southeast Asian Studies and Anthropology at Humboldt University in Berlin (Germany). In 2010, she obtained her PhD from The Australian National University in Canberra for a thesis on diaspora politics. Currently she is employed as a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Melbourne.

This paper attempts to theorize a continuum of public opinions on refugees and border crossing. Past studies have examined how certain indicators have influenced opinions about migration, such as education, news reporting, politicization, race and social class (Denemark, Ward, & Bean, 2007; Betts, 1999; Goot & Watson, 2011; Mckay, Thomas, & Kneebone, 2012; Mckay, Thomas and Blood, 2011). Existing research has focused overwhelmingly on public opinion of refugees in developed/western democratic industrialised nations. Drawing on a variety of sources regarding Bangladeshi citizens' opinions on Rohingya refugees who are attempting to cross the border into Bangladesh, the authors endeavour to examine how demographics, access to social media and mainstream news outlets, social class and geographical nearness to an active border crossing may affect public opinion in a developing nation. Evolving from this content analysis, the authors will attempt to form a framework which explains the continuum of civic opinions in a diverse context in comparison to more traditional studies which have taken place in the global north.

Brandy Cochrane is a PhD candidate at Monash examining how border hardening in the EU and Australia is affecting pregnant women who migrate irregularly. Brandy is research assistant to Professor Pickering and contributor to Border Crossing Observatory (BOb). In 2011, she was the first research intern at BOb where her work was foundation for journal articles and her Master's thesis at Portland State University.

Constructed as a predatory monster who takes advantage of the misery of the poor and vulnerable trying to reach the gates of the nation state, the human smuggler has captured our collective imagination. Quick online searches on smuggling reveal stories of dark-skinned Mexicans abandoning their victims in the desert, of cruel Muslim pirates forcing *their* veiled women and children off ferries and boats into the ocean, and of voracious rapists whose uncontrollable sex drive condemns virginal *female* victims to the calvary of prostitution. Most of these images reveal tensions over the presence of brown bodies in the West and reinscribe images of the male from the Global South as primitive and undisciplined --all characterizations scantily explored by scholars. Who are the human smugglers, and what is their role at facilitating extra-legal crossings? How do smugglers perceive themselves? What kinds of interactions exist between them and their customers? This presentation, based on ethnographic work conducted in one of the top U.S. smuggling hubs along the border with Mexico, explores the social dynamics of smuggling through the narratives of the men and women involved in facilitating extra-legal border crossings and provides important evidence of the roles played by smugglers, refugees and migrants at securing their journeys.

Dr Gabriella Sanchez is a post-doctoral research fellow at Monash University's Border Crossing Observatory. A graduate of Arizona State University, her dissertation explores the social organization of human smuggling along the U.S. Mexico Border. A Fulbright and Boren fellow, he has conducted work on smuggling operations in Mexico, South America, North Africa and the Middle East.

As we become increasingly inundated with images of 'desperate' asylum seekers crossing vast and uncompromising seas for the safety of foreign (and in many cases unforgiving) lands, the emergence of transnational refugee theory and the rubric of the refugee diaspora have elicited an exciting theoretical vantage-point from which to explore the prevailing (mis)conceptions of the 'refugee' and refugee movement.

Echoing Giddens' Structuration Theory, what is proposed is that the refugee exists not as an isolated and passive individual, but rather within a dynamic 'middle space' – a synthesis of both endogenous (individual refugees, families and socio-cultural community structures) and exogenous factors (state policies and the paradigms of the international migration regime) that together establish the 'boundaries' of the transnational diaspora space, and ultimately shape the activities of those refugee communities and individuals located within it.

This middle space is however, prone to mutation that undermines community socio-political and economic functioning, as evidenced by two comparative empirical case studies. Firstly, the 'bounded' space of Dadaab and Kakuma refugee camps in Kenya reveals how refugees strive to circumvent imposed geo-political boundaries that fail to acknowledge crucial endogenous variables, and secondly the fluid or 'moebius' space created by the Economic Community of West Africa (ECOWAS) which in contrast facilitates the transnational foundations of the refugee diaspora – as both a 'bottom-up' (endogenous) and 'top-down' (exogenous) process.

Such a reflexive refugee model clearly offers an invigorating alternative to the prevailing UNHCR containment and welfare framework – providing a truly durable 'solution' for individuals and communities dispersed across the refugee diaspora. Moreover, such a paradigm shift has immediate relevance for current Australian policy changes with regard to irregular maritime arrivals. Firstly, any conception of the refugee as a primarily *reactive* actor is erroneous and fails to acknowledge what is a complex and interconnected network of transnational linkages traversing both space and time. And secondly, isolating humanitarian arrivals from the diaspora 'middle space' negates a highly-effective safety net of transnational support mechanisms that are vital to successful settlement.

Interestingly, initiatives such as DIAC's Community Proposal Pilot appear to embrace the underlying mechanics of the middle space model, and reinsert the refugee as an active and empowered agent within the mechanics of the transnational diaspora.

Andrew Slater: Specialising in inclusive social research, community capacity-building and advocacy, Andrew Slater has worked alongside marginalised and disadvantaged communities in New Zealand, Australia, the UK, as well as Africa, India and across South East Asia. Returning to post-graduate studies in 2012, he completed a Master of International Relations (with Distinction) at Victoria University of Wellington, specialising in the dynamics of refugee communities under different humanitarian policy frameworks in sub-Saharan and West Africa. He is currently Coordinator of the Refugee Action Program and Community Proposal Pilot for the Brotherhood of St Laurence in Melbourne.

Given the limited monitoring of the immigration detention system in Australia conducted by formal bodies, there is a need for civil society actors to play a role. This includes academics who conduct research on the experiences of asylum seekers in immigration detention. This paper will reflect on this form of research by exploring it as an act of bearing witness. Visitors to immigration detention centres bear witness to the impacts of Australia's mandatory detention policy on asylum seekers. Research that is based on the experience of bearing witness can be understood as being accompanied by a responsibility to take action. That is, to witness an abuse means becoming responsible for taking some form of action in response, including attempts to broaden the sphere of felt responsibility. An important component of attempts to broaden this sphere involves how what is witnessed is communicated to others, and thus how asylum seekers are represented. The complexities and ethical issues involved in this type of research will be explored in this paper. In particular it will discuss the role of the researcher as witness, advocate and activist, and the implications of this for the representations of asylum seekers.

Caroline Fleay is Lecturer at the Centre for Human Rights Education, Curtin University. She teaches postgraduate courses in human rights and conducts research into the rights of asylum seekers in Australia. Caroline's research and advocacy currently focuses on the experiences of asylum seekers in both immigration detention and in the community.

Young people from refugee backgrounds undoubtedly face many difficulties in Australian education. However, researchers often treat these difficulties as threats and barriers that cannot be overcome. Taking a developmental approach, we consider these difficulties as challenges. A challenge is a special type of difficulty that elicits engagement and has the potential for change and growth. It involves an interaction between the person and the environment, and plays an important role in understanding developmental change. The positive developmental experiences for refugee young people, for example, involve their perceptions of, engagement with, and mastery over their challenges in education.

We followed 20 young people from recent refugee backgrounds through six months of their first year in Australian high schools, asking about their experiences of challenges (e.g., being unaccompanied minors, limited English skills). Responding to a computer-assisted interview twice over six months, the young people specified the relative sizes of 11 challenges using a concept map, described how they engaged with their biggest challenge, and any help they received from their environment. We focus on young people's experiences with three challenges (English, Family, and Money) to demonstrate that: (a) refugee young people's perceptions of their challenges are highly individualised and not as overwhelming or impossible as researchers perceive; (b) their interactions with their challenges provide a more detailed picture of their developmental experiences than the type of challenge on its own; (c) most of the young people engaged with their challenges, however their experiences of engagement varied in terms of their elaborations of how challenge affected school life, social supports, and hindrances; and (d) over time, young people's challenges became resolved, persisted, or exacerbated, as a result of their interactions with their environments. Rather than focusing on deficits or general difficulties that overwhelm and threaten, these data point to complex interactions that contribute to young people's experiences use of internal assets and environmental resources to master specific challenges over time.

Abi Brooker is completing her PhD in developmental psychology at Melbourne University, focusing on cultural and educational challenges of young people from refugee backgrounds. Her research uses interactive computer-assisted interviews. She has ten years experience working with refugee and homeless groups.

Jeanette Lawrence is a developmental psychologist and an honorary associate professor in the Melbourne School of Psychological Sciences and a research fellow at Victorian Foundation for the Survivors of Torture. She has expertise in personal and social development across the life-course, with a particular interest in the developmental experiences of young people from refugee backgrounds.

Traumatic stress brought by traumas such as war and displacement are found to have a long lasting impact on the psychological well-being of individuals, with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and depression particularly prevalent in refugee populations. Despite the high prevalence rates of mental health disorders research has infrequently investigated the role of acculturation stress. The current study examines the relationship between traumas, acculturation factors and mental health symptoms in Bosnian refugees resettled in Austria and Australia. It was postulated that apart from trauma exposure, different resettlement stressors and affiliations such as acquisition of language, discrimination, acculturation strategy and identification with one's own culture could influence or even mediate the relationship between trauma and mental health.

Using snow-balling strategy, approximately 100 data sets were obtained. Prevalence of depression, anxiety and PTSD symptoms were measured using the PSS-SR and DASS. Acculturative strategies, attitudes and behaviours towards the host and national cultures were measured with multiple scales (DIS, LIB). Additional questions were included to explore refugees' experiences of war, displacement, and the continuing stressors of resettlement. Hierarchical regressions were used to investigate the relationship between trauma, acculturation and mental health outcomes. The preliminary findings will be discussed.

Dzenana Kartal is currently completing her PhD at Monash University examining psycho-social factors impacting the mental health of Bosnian refugees in Australia and Austria. Her clinical and research experience includes working with victims of crime, refugees, culturally and linguistically diverse communities and pre-schoolers.

This study is investigating the experiences of newly arrived Karen learners as they transition from an intensive English language secondary school into the mainstream Victorian education system. Karen English as a Second Language (ESL) learners are one group of Australia's newest arrivals under the government's Humanitarian Program. Many students arrive as preliterate with disrupted schooling experiences, often requiring Extensions of Stay at language schools to better prepare them for the challenges of adapting to mainstream education. Whilst prior research has focused on common issues of low literacy ESL students and some specific cultural groups new to Australia, little has been documented about transition into mainstream education for similar ESL learners or about Karen learners in an educational context.

In tracking a small sample of Karen students in a qualitative case study throughout the process of preparation, transition and settling into mainstream education, it is the aim of this study to capture how the journey of transition is experienced by Karen students. The project focuses specifically on exploring the social, academic and institutional needs of students throughout their educational transition. In providing a platform for the cultural voices of Karen students and perspectives of key stakeholders, findings have the potential to contribute deeper understandings about Karen ESL learners, and insight into how educators and policy makers can enhance educational opportunities and experiences of Karen learners in Australian high schools.

Amanda Hiorth is a secondary teacher who has found great joy in teaching ESL at an English language school. Through this experience she came into contact with the Karen people, and has been inspired into research to find some answers on how to better cater for this special group of learners.

My PhD thesis will examine recent public art responses that seek to memorialise asylum seekers and refugees in Australia. Although grounded in art history, the research will be interdisciplinary. Works thus far identified for inclusion in the research include two memorials to those who perished in the SIEV X disaster in 2001 (one in Canberra the other on Christmas Island); a memorial to Vietnamese asylum seekers and refugees in Footscray and a mosaic in a memorial park in Noble Park.

Analysis of these memorials and counter-memorials prompts consideration of multiple questions relating to: the relationship between art, politics and activism; the place of public art and community-based art/design within the art-historical canon; the subjective experiences of the works; the relationship between viewer and artwork; the changing meaning and polyvalency of the works; the ephemeral elements of the works and the implications of this for their meaning and conservation; and the nature of memory and memorialisation. This conference paper will present work in progress, focussing on the SIEV X Canberra memorial.

Rebecca Cole is in the first year of her PhD candidature in Art History in the School of Culture and Communication. Her MA thesis examined the experience of medieval pilgrimage in France and Spain. She was a sessional tutor and lecturer at Monash University for 10 years until 2011.

The stories told by asylum seekers, and how they are interpreted by those in power, have a direct influence on their claims to legitimacy in Australia. Popular culture texts which engage with this issue also hinge on these peoples' narratives of traumatic experience. This paper will offer a critical reading of the SBS docu-reality series *Go Back to Where You Came From* (2011), which aimed to put six 'ordinary' Australians through a typical asylum seeker journey. Drawing on Critical Race and Whiteness scholarship, this paper will examine to what extent the series reinscribes white privilege by positioning its audience as an armchair national jury, who possess what Ghassan Hage (2000) calls "governmental belonging". In *Go Back*, this kind of belonging marks out those who are entitled to determine which groups of people have suffered 'enough' or 'too much', and are thus worthy of white Australian benevolence.

As such judgements involve assessing the degree of trauma experienced by asylum seekers, this dynamic relies on testimonial narratives which are produced for white consumption. Following Sara Ahmed's (2007) notion of the "body-at-home", this paper will explore how 'managerial' whiteness is reified in *Go Back* through the staging of these narratives, as well as examine the uses and limitations of empathy in shifting public opinion regarding asylum seekers.

Tinonee Pym is currently completing a PhD in the School of Culture and Communication at The University of Melbourne. My thesis examines the intersection of race, gender and sexuality in the regulation of asylum seeker bodies, as represented in a range of recent cultural texts.

This paper explores connections between historical ideas of whiteness and the white Australia Policy and the current treatment and representations of refugees. Excerpts from the archival film 'The Birth of White Australia' map the longstanding narrative and fears of paranoid nationalism (Hage).

The paper also examines ideas of the Anglosphere and western assertions of trespass and border protection in relation to Indigenous sovereignty and dispossession, highlighting how Indigenous activism has subverted the State's response to asylum seekers.

I draw strongly on Ghassan Hage's influential work on white nation fantasy and 'ethnic caging' in juxtaposing historical footage and current popular culture with dehumanizing depictions of caged and exiled 'brown bodies'. Questions include whether whiteness can work in a similar way to cults, enabling the shock of enacting cruelty to diminish- indeed to be converted to 'kindness', the containment of innocent peoples to be tolerated while asserting the values of democracy and liberalism integral to Australian identity.

Odette Kelada is a lecturer in Australian Indigenous Studies, School of Culture and Communication at the University of Melbourne. Kelada researches and publishes on whiteness, race and gender. Key interests include the constructions of nation, body and identity in creative representations and the teaching of Racial Literacy. She has co-presented with Nyoongar artist Dianne Jones in the U.S. on race pedagogy and Indigenous art in the classroom to promote antiracist learning.

Why asylum? Asylum is not a choice, no one want to leave their own homeland and their love one's. People migrate or take asylum for many reasons but no one can understand their problems and situation. How asylum seekers feel when people introduced them to other person, meet this person he/she is refugee/asylum seeker.

Asylum seekers lose their identities, culture, food, religious ceremonies, folks, dressing and their professional identity.

In this paper you can found when a person take asylum how he/she face problems in a new country, social, economic and psycho somatic disorders.

Objectives

- Skilled and educated refugees /asylum seekers are in search of their lost professional identities
- Why not equal opportunities for all asylum seekers?
- Fear of persecution, strange land, split family leads to deviant behavior and psycho-somatic disorders
- Asylum seeking is not a choice.

Summary: As I am an asylum seeker, I have lost my identity; I am facing many problems which people can't understand. Through this paper I want to present my own experiences and other asylum seekers whom I know.

Monica Zaman, PhD in Social Work having 16 years teaching experience in a university (Pakistan), Present many research papers at national and International conferences. Came to Australian in 2010, worked for 6 months as assistant researcher in education department ACU, worked as volunteer more than 1 ½ year and in search of job, want to do research on asylum seeking.

Iranians asylum seekers in Australia have become a divisive issue in the current political landscape. It is now very typical for the bureaucracy as well as politicians to express a deep opprobrium towards Iranian asylum seekers or in everyday Australian parlance “Iranian boat arrivals.” Typically Iranians have been disparaged and scorned and brushed as ‘illegitimate asylum seekers’ and a Parliamentary inquiry was told of their ‘contumacious behaviour, wilful disobedience.’ More recently, the Foreign Affairs Minister, Bob Carr, described them as ‘middle class Iranians’ who were leaving Iran because of ‘economic pressures’ and not persecution.

These assertions do not display any form of knowledge of who Iranians are and in what context they are seeking asylum in Australia but minister Carr opined nevertheless that one needed to make a judgement as to “whether people coming from a majority ethnic and religious group are always to be found as refugees.”

In this paper I will provide an overview of the political context in Iran and situate Iranian asylum seekers in a cultural context to describe who they are and how perceptions and current political debate in Australia affects their sense of identity and belonging as well as their well-being. Furthermore, I argue that the cultural heritage of Iranian asylum seekers can shed important insights into how Iranian asylum seekers represent themselves and narrate their stories of persecution. Understanding the cultural context of Iranian notions of identity and self is critical to grasping the way Iranians confront and grapple with the complex refugee processing system in Australia.

Mammad Aidani is an interdisciplinary scholar specialising in phenomenological hermeneutics philosophy, cultural theory and narrative psychology based in the School of Historical and philosophical Studies at the University of Melbourne. His current research focuses on trauma and suffering amongst Iranian diaspora men in Australia. His most recent books include: *Welcoming the Stranger: Narratives of Identity and Belonging in an Iranian Diaspora* (Common Ground Publishing, 2010) and *Narrative and Violence: Ways of Suffering amongst Iranian men in Diaspora* (Ashghate Publishing, 2013). Mammad is also a playwright and his works have been performed both in Australia as well as overseas.

Djerriwarrh Health Services, in partnership with Deakin University's Masters of Nutrition and Dietetics students, conducted a needs assessment with the Burmese community in the City of Melton. The aim was to understand the needs of the Burmese Migrant community to inform project planning and service delivery for the health and wellbeing of the Burmese population.

The Normative, Expressed, Comparative and Felt needs were investigated via literature reviews, interviews with local stakeholders, Wyndham and Brimbank refugee focused organisations and three focus groups with the Burmese community.

Five common themes were identified as barriers the Burmese migrants face when integrating into Melton; employment, language, education, health and transport. Employment was viewed as the most important factor to help settle into Melton. Many men reported difficulties in finding local jobs. Language was of high importance as it would allow the community to express their wants and needs to others and improve access to services. Many women desired a home tutoring service. Education was observed as being important for their interpretation of mail, important documents and helping children with their homework. Participants expressed the benefits of a homework support program to further enhance their children's education. They also expressed difficulties with accessing health care, requiring more interpreters, reliable transport and availability of 24 hour emergency services in Melton.

Effective communication between organisations and the input from the Burmese community is fundamental for culturally and linguistically diverse groups to successfully integrate into the population. Future directions for Djerriwarrh Health Services include partnership with the Burmese community to guide health promotion projects and ongoing research into the barriers and enablers to successful integration of newly arrived communities.

Natasha Wilton is a Community Dietitian working in Melbourne's west at Djerriwarrh Health Services. She has been working with newly arrived refugees and migrants for over 4 years. Recently, her work has focused on Melton's growing Burmese population. Her passion for working with CALD communities stems from her interest in teaching others about nutrition and cooking.

NEW STEPS: A SCREENING AND TREATMENT PROGRAM FOR POST TRAUMA SYMPTOMS IN ADOLESCENT REFUGEES

ANN LOCARNINI, DR GLENN MELVIN, PROFESSOR LOUISE NEWMAN

Currently there is a lack of validated psychological trauma measures and treatment programs for adolescent refugees. This lack of representation limits the capacity of the field to advance care for this population. This presentation will describe our aim to cross culturally validate an established Western measure of trauma (The Trauma Symptom Checklist for Children) with adolescent refugees. By verifying understanding of the items the content and construct validity of the measure will be verified. By employing a diagnostic interview criterion validity can be defined. Qualitative interviews that accompany the screening process discuss representations of identity and meaning of life following resettlement.

The second part of the research is a pilot trial of a modified Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioural Therapy. The treatment program called 'New Steps' includes cultural modifications that have been introduced to make the treatment program more acceptable for young people from different cultures. This strengths focused program aims to increase a sense of agency in young people, and attends to questions of identity in helping young people to overcome their traumatic pasts and move toward an enriching future. The program is free and is offered within participating schools and in a multicultural agency for youth in Dandenong.

Ann Locarnini is a registered psychologist and PhD student. Ann's PhD project is to validate trauma measures for use in detection of post trauma symptoms and to evaluate an adapted Trauma Focused Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (TF-CBT) for adolescent refugees.