

**Annual Newsletter 2007**

Welcome to the 2007 Newsletter for the Violence Research and Prevention program at Griffith University. The range of consequences stemming from violent crime and victimisation across our communities illustrates the importance of establishing a concentrated focus on violence research to further uncover the causes, precursors and best approaches for prevention. The Violence Research and Prevention program (VRP) at Griffith University was established in the later part of 2006. Over the course of 15 months, the research program has grown to include over 30 academic staff and 13 PhD students.



*Professor Paul Mazerolle  
Director, Violence Research and Prevention Program*

The objectives of the VRP include conducting research to:

- increase knowledge and understanding about the causes, consequences, prevention and control of violence;
- inform government departments about available evidence on effective policies and programs;
- raise public awareness and consciousness about the costs and consequences of violence, and effective prevention strategies;
- develop effective research collaborations and partnerships

Our focus includes conducting independent, rigorous research, including primary, secondary, evaluative, and applied research that enhances knowledge and informs policy and practice.

Whilst our program has only been in existence for a short time, over this period we have established important relationships with government departments, the community sector and researchers throughout Australia and other parts of the world. In this first issue of our annual newsletter, we introduce you to some of the key people in the VRP and describe some of the highlights and achievements across 2007. Into the future, I look forward to the continued growth and expansion of the Violence Research Program at Griffith as we work toward contributing to the further understanding and prevention of violence across our communities.

Professor Paul Mazerolle  
Director, Violence Research and Prevention Program  
Griffith University

## Violence Research and Prevention Program: Areas of Research Strength and Focus

Our program includes a number of world class scholars from various disciplinary backgrounds undertaking research on different types and dimensions of violence. The key areas of research concentration included below span ten distinct categories:

Youth violence	Drugs, alcohol use and violence
Child maltreatment and protection	Sexual violence
Victimisation studies	Intimate partner and domestic violence
Homicide studies	Elder Abuse
Violence in Indigenous communities	Workplace and school bullying

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### Building Links to Violence Research Centres in North America

In March 2007, Paul Mazerolle travelled through America and Canada to establish linkages with a series of violence research centres. The focus of this trip was both to better understand the structure and scope of various violence centres and to establish relationships to assist in future collaborative research projects. Into the future, there will be new opportunities to conduct cross national comparative research and to further promote staff and student exchanges. Building bridges to violence researchers across the globe provides great opportunities for collaboration and mutual understanding of the challenges and responses embraced to build knowledge about the causes, consequences and various responses to prevent violence.

During this visit, Paul met with officials from the following Universities:

- University of Minnesota
- University of Colorado
- Harvard University
- Northeastern University
- Columbia University
- University of New Brunswick
- University of Ottawa
- St. Thomas University

At present, formal establishment of relationships are being progressed with various universities.

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### Current Academic Researchers in the Violence Research and Prevention Program at Griffith

Paul Mazerolle, Ross Homel, Jen Sanderson, Sara Branch .....	KCELJAG
Sharon Dawe, Mark Kebbel, Analise O'Donovan .....	Psychology
Richard Wortley, Kathy Daly, Stephen Smallbone, Anna Stewart, Melissa Bull, Susan Dennison, Benoit Leclerc .....	Criminology
Marion Tower .....	Nursing
Lesley Chenoweth, Clare Tilbury, Julie Clark, Jennifer Osmond .....	Social Work
Boni Robertson .....	Indigenous Policy
Mark Finnane .....	CPCI/CEPS
Sue Trevaskas .....	GAI/LAL
Michael Balfour, Jonathan Richards .....	CPCI
Bruce Buchan, Bruce Burton .....	AMC
Huib Schippers .....	QCRC
Elena Marchetti, Zoe Rathus .....	Law
Cate Cameron .....	Medicine

## Current PhD Students in the VRP

- **Brigitte Bouhours:** *Transitional Justice in Cases of Sexual Violence against Women*  
Supervisors: Kathy Daly and Janet Ransley
- **Lee Butterworth:** *Investigating Death: The Evolution of the Coroner's Office in QLD*  
Supervisors: Mark Finnane, Regina Ganter, and Jonathan Richards
- **Nicola Cheyne:** *Stalking: A Spatio-Temporal Analysis*  
Supervisors: Susan Dennison and Anna Stewart
- **Nada Ibrahim:** *Intimate partner violence in the diverse Australian Muslim community: exploring attitudes, beliefs and direct involvement*  
Supervisors: Mohammad Abdulla and Paul Mazerolle
- **Heather Nancarrow:** *Mainstream Justice Responses to Domestic and Family Violence: Aspirations and Realities for Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women*  
Supervisors: Kathy Daly and Elena Marchetti
- **Carleen Thomson:** *Etiology and Escalation Of Violence In Stalkers: An Analysis Of Risk*  
Supervisors: Susan Dennison and Anna Stewart
- **Nadine McKillop:** *Attachment Insecurity Among Adult Male Child-Sex Offender, and its Implications for Understanding Offending Onset*  
Supervisors: Steven Smallbone and Richard Wortley
- **Silke Meyer:** *Understanding Help-Seeking Behaviour of Female Domestic Violence Victims*  
Supervisors: Paul Mazerolle and Elena Marchetti
- **Dominique Murray:** *Violence in Paradise: The Physical, Social, and Perceived Environments in a Beachside Entertainment District*  
Supervisors: Ross Homel and Lorraine Mazerolle
- **Richard Parker:** *Shame and guilt in child sex offenders*  
Supervisors: Richard Wortley and Stephen Smallbone
- **Sally Robinson:** *Experiences of psychological abuse of people with disabilities who have lived in residential care*  
Supervisor: Lesley Chenoweth
- **Linda Shallcross:** *Workplace mobbing: Discrimination, social exclusion and psychological violence*  
Supervisors: Sheryl Ramsay and Michelle Barker
- **Marion Tower:** *Domestic violence and women's health*  
Supervisors: Marianne Wallis and Jennifer Rowe

## Dr Benoit Leclerc: A recent visiting research scholar from Canada

I am a Post Doctoral Fellow conducting research with Professor Richard Wortley and Associate Professor Stephen Smallbone on situational prevention in child sexual offences. I won funds to complete my research project from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (\$81,000, 2007-08). I joined both the Key Centre for Ethics, Law, Justice and Governance and the Violence Research and Prevention Program led by Professor Paul Mazerolle.



I attained my PhD degree in 2006 at the School of Criminology, Université de Montreal.

While completing my PhD, I worked as a clinical criminologist for more than 3 years at the Philippe-Pinel Institute of Montreal (i.e. sexual deviance assessment of individuals who committed a sexual offence). At that time, I was also involved as a research assistant in several projects completed in the

area of sexual violence with both adolescent and adult offenders in Montreal, Canada. Finally, I have lectured in criminology at the University of Montreal. In 2005, I won the first prize "Young Researcher" award for the best research on sexual offenders at the *Congres International Francophone sur l'Agression Sexuelle* (CIFAS - International French Annual Meeting on Sexual Offending). I have presented my work at the *American Society of Criminology*, *European Society of Criminology* and the *Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers* annual meetings. Recent articles have appeared in *Crime Prevention Studies*, *Aggression and Violent Behaviour*, *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment* and *Criminal Justice and Behaviour*. I am currently member of the *American Society of Criminology* and the *Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers*. My research interest includes criminal events and crime analysis, rational choice and decision-making of offenders, situational crime prevention, life-course offending patterns, sexual offences, and interpersonal violence. I enjoy being part of such a great team here in Criminology.

### *Visiting Fellows Program established*

In 2007, we established a visiting fellows program for the Violence Research and Prevention program. At present, we are considering a number of applications from national and international violence researchers to visit and engage with VRP researchers. Applicants are encouraged to seek funding from their parent organisations as well as discuss funding opportunities with the VRP Director. VRP visiting fellows receive access to office space, computers, and library facilities.

## PHD STUDENT FOCUS: SILKE MEYER

My name is Silke Meyer and I am a PhD student in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Griffith University. I have obtained a diploma in Social Work in Germany in 2002 and a Masters in Criminology in Belgium in 2005. In between obtaining these two degrees I worked as a social worker with victims of domestic violence as well as delinquent juveniles. My research interests are in the areas of domestic violence and homicide, organised crime, human rights and juvenile delinquency.

My interest in domestic violence was raised during my social work studies in Germany. After I obtained my degree in Social Work in 2002, I started working for a governmental victim service provider that offered support and advice to victims of domestic violence in cooperation with the local police. At that stage, legislation for victims of domestic violence had just been improved in Germany and many of the newly available forms of support and protection for this type of victimisation were still greatly underutilised. In addition, the police had only just started to shift their focus from a purely offender-orientated to a more victim-orientated approach.

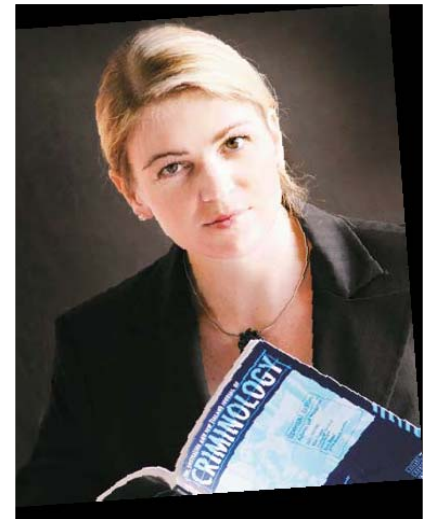
Working in one of these cooperative projects was a great experience, which provided insight into abused women's lives and made it very obvious that making support and protection available is a great step forward in empowering abused women. Although I looking into other fields (e.g. juvenile delinquency) during my practical work as a social worker, as well as during my Masters studies, my

research interest in domestic violence and how to break the cycle victims seem to be trapped in always remained. After finishing my Master in Criminology I decided to pursue that interest in more detail in the context of a PhD.

After doing my Master in an international environment, I decided to do the PhD abroad as well. I wanted to conduct my research in an English speaking, stimulating environment, with a strong criminological interest and a national as well as an international focus on different criminological and victimological themes. After discussing different options with my former supervisors from Germany and Belgium, I decided to go for the Australian option, which offered the opportunity of working with an internationally renowned supervisor who has done significant work in my field of research interest.

I have been in Australia for over two years and I am very satisfied with my decision. Griffith University offers a great environment for PhD students in the field of Criminology and Criminal Justice with its large number of different experts in the school and its large number of PhD students. The different areas PhD students are working on guarantee stimulating discussions on recent criminological issues as well as different inputs on one's own research.

My own PhD research focuses on the help-seeking behaviour of female domestic violence victims. Little research has been done on the actual help-seeking behaviour of domestic violence victims in Australia in the past and this study is expected to contribute to current



understanding in this area. Key aims of my study are to identify factors that influence victims' decisions on whether they do or do not seek help and how satisfied they are with the accessibility and effectiveness of formal responses to domestic violence.

The PhD comprises two separate studies. My first study utilises a large national community survey of over 6000 female respondents to explore their experiences and predictors of help seeking behaviour. My second study includes a survey of approximately 500 female victims of domestic violence in Queensland who are affiliated with a shelter or a domestic violence service in Queensland. I am planning to finish my PhD research by the end of 2008 and I expected findings from this study to be beneficial to policy makers as well as service providers, including the police, courts and different social services as well as domestic violence victims themselves.

*(pictured below, Griffith University Mt Gravatt campus)*



# Griffith University, School of Human Services: CURRENT RESEARCH ON VIOLENCE

Violence research and prevention at Griffith University has a multidisciplinary focus and in the School of Human Services, which includes a number of social work scholars, there are several research projects underway in the child protection field, examining issues of direct practice, policy and organisational levels. Some of our current projects include:

## *Assessing the Knowledge of Foster Carers Regarding Abused and Neglected Children*

Jennifer Osmond is undertaking a study of foster carers' knowledge of caring for abused and neglected children. Improving the quality of out-of-home care placements is a major challenge for government. Children placed with foster carers are often traumatised and their behaviour can be very difficult to manage. As foster carers are an important component of the therapeutic response to maltreated children, they need a sound knowledge base and skills to effectively care for children. A two-stage strategy has been used to collect data from a small sample of experienced carers through in-depth, semi-structured interviews about the nature, extent and forms of knowledge they utilise. By clarifying carers' knowledge, it is expected the research will generate recommendations about training curriculum and benchmarks for essential carer knowledge and skills.

## *Support for Indigenous Carer in the Child Protection System*

Clare Tilbury is finalising a study on support for Indigenous carers in the child protection system. The research was undertaken in partnership with the Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council Child Protection Partnership. Much child welfare research does not differentiate between the needs of Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations and is not informed by Indigenous perspectives. This qualitative research explores the support needs of Indigenous carers, in the context of the increasingly detailed regulatory framework for out-of-home care.

Findings indicate that current regulatory mechanisms are concentrated on approval, re-approval and investigating allegations of inadequate care, whereas insufficient attention is paid to ongoing support and monitoring. More personal contact between the statutory department and carers after a placement is made would fulfil many purposes: support for carers with attendant benefits such as improved satisfaction and retention; better meeting the needs of the child; and the regulatory function of monitoring placement quality for accountability purposes.

## *Attracting and Retaining Practitioners in Child and Family Services in Rural Queensland: Generating a Model for Improved Practice*

Lesley Chenoweth and Donna McAuliffe have recently completed a study which was funded by the Australian Research Council as a collaborative Linkage Project with the Queensland Department of Child Safety. Filling rural-based child protection and related positions is increasingly difficult, with staff retention an entrenched problem in many areas. The study was conducted in two phases. The first explored the experiences and perceptions of potential social work and human service graduates about rural practice. A survey of 177 students found there was a lack of educational preparation for practice in rural areas, and little awareness of the advantages and disadvantages of living and working in rural communities. However, most students did consider that rural practice would provide opportunities for career advancement, and would consider a rural position if the right opportunity arose. The second phase of the study involved in-depth interviews and focus groups with child safety practitioners and others in two regions. From this data, typologies were developed according to the characteristics of practitioners, which will be useful in targeting strategies and incentives for recruitment and retention, in combination with the needs of local communities. A number of themes were identified that impact on retention, such as organisational issues (e.g. culture, workload, safety), practice issues (e.g. supervision and support), and geographical issues (e.g. safety, isolation, community inclusion).

### Other VRP news:

- VRP PhD students continue to impress. Dominique Murray and Nada Ibrahim recently received Smart State scholarships from the Queensland State Government in support of their dissertation research on violence.
- Strong linkages have been established with research centres in parts of the USA, Canada and Australia. Of note is that some VRP researchers are now part of an international observatory examining justice responses to domestic violence. This initiative will involve comparative data collection efforts to consider cross-national court based responses to domestic violence.
- In November 2007, VRP members completed their work on the Queensland State Government's Youth Violence Taskforce. Overall, VRP members remain involved in a range of service related activities aimed toward reducing and preventing violence.

## Significant Funded Projects from our Members

Many of the members of the Violence Research and Prevention program are heavily engaged in nationally competitive grants on various aspects of violence research. Below we describe one interesting project currently underway by one of our members.

### Responses to violence in Australia: historical studies and explorations

#### Professor Mark Finnane

ARC Australian Professorial Fellow  
ARC Centre of Excellence in Policing and Security

Violence is a focus of public policy and governmental intervention in ways that are constantly evaluated and renewed. In the last 20 years we have seen major official inquiries into Aboriginal deaths in custody, the abuse of children in state and private institutions, racist violence and domestic violence. These inquiries into the violence occasioned by institutions were accompanied after 1988 by the establishment of a Commonwealth-initiated National Committee on Violence, which sponsored research and education on violence issues over a number of years. The Port Arthur massacre in 1996 prompted an unprecedented commitment of Commonwealth and state governments to gun law reform and an associated buy-back scheme funded through the tax system. Repeated agitation over the abuse of children in Indigenous communities over recent years has prompted seemingly unprecedented changes in government programs and interventions, with outcomes still unclear.

Using historical methodologies, this project seeks to deepen understanding of where these actions, approaches and programs come from. It addresses a key question: what changes in the ways of governing the population have shaped the way in which violence is named, or ignored, and then made the subject of policing, legal or social interventions? The project is concerned first with distinguishing the government of inter-personal violence from the

deployment of force in defence of the state itself. There is a history of violence in Australia since 1788 that is predicated on the defence of authority and public order. That story has a vital place in the historical memory of Australians and demands attention in any consideration of the subject of violence. The deployment of military and policing force, the uses of martial or emergency law, the survival of a law of sedition into the twenty-first century, will be examined through a narrative archive-based study drawing on the extensive historiography of these events, but re-assessed through a focus on the decision-making in relation to the use of force or its alternatives. This study is being undertaken in the ARC Centre of Excellence in Policing and Security.

The project will then proceed through a sequence of studies that provide a means of exploring the conditions and characteristics of a changing government of violence in Australia over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These studies will include research on the following areas:

[Abolition of the death penalty in Australia](#)  
[Firearms control as a response to homicide](#)  
[Responses to violence in Aboriginal communities](#)  
[Sexual assault and the law](#)  
[The corporal punishment of children](#)

Through these studies, the project seeks to understand our contemporary responses to violence through appreciation of the historical transformation of government from a narrow concern with security to an expansive concern with the domestic lives of its citizens.

### Australian Research Council Grants Received

VRP program members were successful in securing funding from the ARC (Discovery) in the latest 2007 round.

#### Kathy Daly

*Innovative justice responses to sexual violence: A global analysis*  
(\$432,000 over 4 years)

#### Paul Mazerolle, Richard Wortley, and Holly Johnson

*Developmental pathways to intimate partner homicide: Understanding Individual and situational dimensions*  
(\$405,000 over 3 years)

#### Clare Tilbury

Promoting successful further education and work transitions for your people in state care.  
(\$141,424 over 3 years)

# SIGNIFICANT EVENTS DURING 2007

## Research contracts received

VRP program members were successful in securing funding from various research contracts in 2007.

### Paul Mazerolle and Jennifer Sanderson

*Understanding remand in the Juvenile Justice System Queensland* (Qld Department of Communities - \$50,000)

### Paul Mazerolle

*Understanding and responding to female juvenile offending in Queensland* (Qld Department of Communities - \$50,000)

### Paul Mazerolle

*Understanding serious assaults and fatal incidents on licensed premises in Queensland* (Qld Department of Treasury - \$50,000)

### Paul Mazerolle and Jennifer Sanderson

*Elder abuse review* (Qld Department of Communities - \$11,000)

## Presentation series

VRP members continued to participate in the seminar series. Presentations across the year included:

### Mark Finnane

*Making violence governable*

### Richard Wortley and Stephen Smallbone

*Onset and persistence in child sexual abuse: Implications for prevention*

### Benoit Leclerc

*Offender-victim interaction and crime event outcomes: modus operandi and victim effects on the risks of intrusive sexual offenses against children*

### Sara Branch

*The bullied boss: exploratory research into the nature of upwards bullying*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Youth Violence Symposium: Causes, consequences, and prevention (July 9)

Please join us for our one day symposium examining youth violence. Symposium speakers will address various aspects of youth violence including how best to prevent and control this social problem. Confirmed speakers include David Fergusson, Sheryl Hempill, Michael Tansky, Ross Homel, John Toumbourou, Alfred Blumstein, and Paul Mazerolle.

### Research on Domestic Violence: Precursors and prevention (date TBA)

We are organising an event for later this year, which addresses current research underway on domestic violence. Confirmed speakers include Nada Ibrahim, Silke Meyer, and Paul Mazerolle

### Justice Modelling Workshop (July 10-11)

This workshop will include presentations examining how various research methodologies and advanced computational and analytical techniques have been

used to inform decision making in social and justice organisations. Previous workshops have included presentations on how simulation, spatial, temporal, trajectory, policy, economic, and resource allocation models have assisted decision-making.

The workshop will also provide a forum for participants to network with other practitioners, researchers and policy makers who are interested in the development and use of models to provide an evidence base for decisions in justice organisations.

The keynote speaker will be Professor Alfred Blumstein who was the recipient of the prestigious Stockholm Prize in 2007 for his research into criminal careers. Alfred Blumstein is the J. Erik Jonsson University Professor of Urban Systems and Operations Research at the Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh (USA).

For more information on this event, contact Associate Professor Anna Stewart ([a.stewart@griffith.edu.au](mailto:a.stewart@griffith.edu.au)).

**For further information about the Violence Research and Prevention Program at Griffith University, please contact:**

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