



# Dissertation project showcase

Projects commencing from 2024 onwards

# Contents

How to use this project directory	3
Criminology and Criminal Justice (Honours)	4
Master of Criminology and Criminal Justice (dissertation pathway)	5
Master of Forensic Mental Health (dissertation pathway)	6
CCJ Programmes and Dissertations	7
<b>Project List:</b>	
An application of crime script analysis to reconstruct the online funding process of right-wing extremist groups in Australia	8
Breaking the cycle of intergenerational maltreatment: A rapid evidence review	8
Changing Lives Through Peer Accountability: An Evaluation of the 'You Choose' Preventive Education Program for 11th and 12 <sup>th</sup> Graders	9
Contested or Cosmopolitan? Exploring the social dynamics of ethnically diverse neighbourhoods in Australia	9
Controlling and abusive behaviours in young adult intimate relationships: developmental pathways	10
Couchsurfing, criminal offending, and victimisation	10
Cyberdeviance among Australian adolescents	10
Delinquency in adolescent girls: gendered pathways	11
Delve into the world of financial crime	11
Developing a framework to improve cross-examination of child witnesses	12
Disrupting Online Markets for Stolen Goods	12
Exploring how punishment avoidance works for young drivers	13
Improving the Measurement of Intimate Partner Abuse and Coercive Control by Comparing Quantitative Surveys and Qualitative Interviews	13
Intimate partner violence perpetration and victimisation among post-secondary students	14
Leaving prison behind: Men in prison and asking for help	14
Media coverage and occupational homicide of taxi drivers and sex workers	15
Parent drinking and adolescent drinking: the roles of parenting, gender, and peers	15
The difficulties of sharing information	16
The effect of the imprisonment of a close family member on adolescents' transition into adulthood	16
Training witness intermediaries in interviewing best practices	16
What causes distracted driving and how to minimise driver distraction	17
What risk factors motivate and exacerbate conspiracy-fuelled extremism?	17
Understanding immigrants' willingness to empower the police*	18

# How to use this project directory

Are you passionate about criminology and criminal justice? Do you aspire to specialise in a specific area of criminology, or are you thinking about a career in research? Or are you looking to boost your project management skills to increase your competitiveness in the job market? These are all good reasons to do a degree with a dissertation.

The projects listed in this directory have been advertised by the academics in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice (CCJ) for a dissertation in one of the following CCJ degrees, specifically:

- [The Bachelor of Criminology and Criminal Justice \(Honours\)](#)
- [Master of Criminology and Criminal Justice \(dissertation pathway\)](#)
- [Master of Forensic Mental Health \(dissertation pathway\)](#)

If you have an interest in undertaking one of the projects in this directory, we recommend that you:

1. Contact the project's listed supervisor(s) to identify whether this project is available in the year you wish to start. If so, schedule a meeting to discuss the project and to find out more. Contact details are listed with each project in this directory.
2. Find out more about the research degree within which you would like to undertake this research. Use the links above to check each programme's application deadlines, entry requirements and degree details. Some project topics may not be suitable for all degrees listed above.
3. Contact the relevant programme director of the research degree to which you wish to apply. For more information about Master programmes at Griffith, contact Dr Li Eriksson: [l.eriksson@griffith.edu.au](mailto:l.eriksson@griffith.edu.au). For more information about the Bachelor of Criminology and Criminal Justice Honours programme, contact Dr Kirsten Besemer: [k.besemer@griffith.edu.au](mailto:k.besemer@griffith.edu.au).

*What if you want to pursue a research topic that is not in this directory?*

If you can't find a project that suits your interest, or if you already have a specific project in mind, you may be able to design your own dissertation project under the supervision of an academic staff member. If this is something you are considering, please contact the relevant programme director as early as possible.

# Criminology and Criminal Justice (Honours)

The Bachelor of Criminology and Criminal Justice (Honours) is a small-scale, on campus programme, designed to give high achieving students the opportunity to obtain more advanced criminology research training. An Honours degree can give you an employability advantage when entering the job market or set you up for further tertiary study. It may set you up to enter the criminal justice system in more senior roles, such as analyst or program design consultant - careers where the ability to manage projects, and to do independent research is key. This degree is the recommended pathway into a research postgraduate degree, such as an MPhil or PhD.

## Programme structure

An Honours degree can be done over 1 year (full time) or 2 years (part-time). It consists of four taught subjects in core research skills, as well as four units in which you work on your own specific research project, under the supervision of one or two supervisors. Commencement of the program is at the beginning of Trimester 1. The Honours program is available for on-campus study only.

## Admission into the Honours program

The Honours program is available to graduates from a Bachelor of Criminology and Criminal Justice or from related fields. Applicants should have attained at least a 5.0 average in their best twelve courses at second- and third-year level. Graduates in fields such as sociology, psychology, criminology, political science, etc. are encouraged to apply. It is a requirement of the program that all students have successfully completed two research courses in statistics and research methods at second- or third-year level. You should have finished all components of your undergraduate degree before starting your Honours degree. Contact your programme director for further details.

For more information, look for this degree on the Griffith website: [The Bachelor of Criminology and Criminal Justice \(Honours\)](#)

# Master of Criminology and Criminal Justice (dissertation pathway)

The Master of Criminology and Criminal Justice is an online, postgraduate programme designed to equip students for leading roles in criminal justice fields. You will have the opportunity to specialise through elective courses that focus either on specific agency or crime issues. The program also offers a unique opportunity for high-performing students to undertake a research dissertation on a topic of their choice. A master dissertation enables students to develop their research skills and to contribute new knowledge to the field of criminology and criminal justice. Graduates of this program will be equipped with the skills and knowledge to pursue careers in a range of criminal justice fields. Successful completion of a Master of Criminology and Criminal Justice with a dissertation can also provide a pathway to entry into an MPhil or PhD.

## Programme structure

The Master of Criminology and Criminal Justice can be done in 1.5 years full time, or 3 years part-time (120CP). The courses cover a range of topics such as criminology theories, criminal justice policy and practice, victimology, policing, and research methods. Students will undertake 2 core courses, 4 elective courses, and 3 methods courses, allowing them to tailor their studies to their interests. The program is entirely online. Students may start in either trimester 1 or trimester 2.

## Admission into the Master of Criminology and Criminal Justice and the dissertation

To be admitted into the Master of Criminology and Criminal Justice, students must have an undergraduate GPA of 4.0. After enrolment into the master programme, students will be able to enrol into the dissertation pathway if they have completed at least 40CP of the program with a minimum GPA of 5.5. They must also have completed the following courses: 7036CCJ, 7037CCJ or 7022CCJ. Enrolment in the dissertation pathway is subject to the availability of an agreed supervisor and approval by the Program Director. Contact your Program Director for further details.

For more information, look for this degree on the Griffith website: [Master of Criminology and Criminal Justice \(with dissertation\)](#)

# Master of Forensic Mental Health (dissertation pathway)

The Master of Forensic Mental Health is an online, postgraduate program designed to prepare students for leadership positions in this field. The program provides students with the opportunity to specialise in specific areas of forensic mental health through elective courses. Additionally, the program offers a unique opportunity for high-performing students to undertake a research dissertation on a topic of their choice, enabling them to develop their research skills and contribute new knowledge to the field. Graduates of this program will be equipped with the skills and knowledge to pursue careers in a range of forensic mental health fields. Successful completion of the program with a dissertation can also provide a pathway to entry into an MPhil or PhD.

## Program structure

The program structure for the Master of Forensic Mental Health (dissertation pathway) allows for full-time completion in 1.5 years or part-time completion in 3 years (120CP). The program consists of 6 core courses, 1 elective course, and 2 methods courses. Courses are focused on different aspects of forensic mental health, including interventions and recovery. The program is entirely online, and students may start in either trimester 1 or trimester 2.

## Admission

To be admitted into the Master of Forensic Mental Health, students must have an undergraduate GPA of 4.0. Once enrolled in the master program, students can enrol in the dissertation pathway after completing at least 40CP of the program with a minimum GPA of 5.5. They must also have completed one of the following courses: 7036CCJ, 7037CCJ, or 7022CCJ. Enrolment in the dissertation pathway is subject to the availability of an approved supervisor and approval by the Program Director. Students should contact their Program Director for further details.

For more information, look for this degree on the Griffith website: [Master of Forensic Mental Health \(with dissertation\)](#)

## CCJ Programmes with Dissertations

Programme	Bachelor of Criminology and Criminal Justice (Honours)	Master of Criminology and Criminal Justice (dissertation pathway)	Master of Forensic Mental Health (dissertation pathway)
Director	Dr. Kirsten Besemer <a href="mailto:k.besemer@griffith.edu.au">k.besemer@griffith.edu.au</a>	Dr Li Eriksson <a href="mailto:l.eriksson@griffith.edu.au">l.eriksson@griffith.edu.au</a>	
Mode	On campus only (MG or GC campus)	Online only	
Programme length	1-year full time, 2 year part-time (80CP)	1.5-year full-time, 3-year part-time (120CP)	
Intakes	Trimester 1 only	Trimesters 1 and 2	
Taught components	<p><b>Qualitative Social Research</b> - 6007CCJ (10 CP)</p> <p><b>Quantitative Social Research</b> - 6006CCJ (10CP)</p> <p><b>Managing Research Projects</b> - 6008CCJ (10 CP)</p> <p><b>Contemporary Perspectives on Crime</b> - 6009CCJ (10CP)</p>	<p><b>Coursework</b> (20CP core + 40CP elective)</p> <p><b>Methods courses</b> (30CP core)</p>	<p><b>Coursework</b> (60CP core + 10CP elective)</p> <p><b>Methods courses</b> (20CP core)</p>
Research	Dissertation - 15,000 words all-inclusive (40 CP)	Dissertation - 12,000-15,000 words all-inclusive (30 CP)	
Advantages	Being on campus makes it easy to make friends. Small cohort (usually 8-12 students) who stay together throughout the programme. Get to know your project and supervisors before you start.	You get to complete additional coursework and choose between a wide range of electives. You need not have decided on project or supervisor when commencing your programme. Diverse student cohort, including many mature aged students with professional work experience.	
Entry requirements	Have 1-2 supervisors, a Bachelor of Criminology and Criminal Justice or equivalent and 5.0 GPA in core second- and third-year courses and completion of statistics and research methods courses with 5.0 GPA See <a href="#">programme website</a> for details.	To complete the dissertation pathway, students need to be enrolled in the Masters (GPA >5.5), have completed 40CP of the program, including all of the following courses: 7036CCJ, 7037CCJ or 7022CCJ. Enrolment in the dissertation pathway is subject to the availability of an agreed supervisor and approval by the Program Director.	To complete the dissertation pathway, students need to be enrolled in the Masters (GPA >5.5), have completed 40CP in the program, 10CP of which must be <u>one</u> of the following courses: 7036CCJ, 7037CCJ or 7022CCJ. Enrolment in the dissertation pathway is subject to the availability of an agreed supervisor and approval by the Program Director.

# **An application of crime script analysis to reconstruct the online funding process of right-wing extremist groups in Australia**

*Supervisors: Professor Benoit Leclerc (b.leclerc@griffith.edu.au), Dr Andrew Childs (a.childs@griffith.edu.au), Associate Prof Jacqueline Drew (j.drew@griffith.edu.au)*

A common challenge raised in South-East Asia and Australia is the routine use of financial intelligence to follow terrorism financing (TF) money trails by operational and investigating authorities (AUSTRAC, 2016). In Australia, it has been reported that many potential TF channels were considered high risk of funds being transferred for terrorist activities including cross-border movement of cash and BNIs (e.g., money orders and traveller cheques), the banking system, and alternative remittance and money service businesses. As mainstream social media companies have increased their scrutiny and moderation of right-wing extremist (RWE) content and groups, alternative online content platforms, such as Telegram, have experienced a surge of RWE activities (Australian Strategic Policy Institute, 2021). The fundraising activities facilitated by these platforms arguably grows resources linked to RWE as well as boost the RWE community both within Australia and with overseas groups, which can further spread RWE propaganda (Australian Strategic Policy Institute, 2021).

In this context, a complementary range of methodologies is essential to examine and identify how offenders operate to address this phenomenon more efficiently including how offenders set up, obtain, and move money online to fund RWE activities. One relevant methodology to identify, understand and reconstruct in-depth the funding ecosystem related to online fundraising activities that could fund RWE is crime script analysis. Crime script analysis emerged as a critical method to identify and understand the operating processes of offenders in its details for prevention purposes in the mid-90's (Cornish, 1994). To summarise, creating crime scripts generates two key outcomes: 1) providing step-by-step accounts of the crime commission process related to the crime to further our understanding on how offenders operate; and, 2) providing a framework to apply, detection, investigation and/or prevention strategies to disrupt these crimes. In this project, publicly available data will be analysed to reconstruct the crime script related to online funding activities by RWE groups.

A preference might be given to students with an interest in information technology, social media platforms and/or financial crimes committed online.

## **Breaking the cycle of intergenerational maltreatment: A rapid evidence review**

*Supervisors: Dr Stacy Tzoumakis (s.tzoumakis@griffith.edu.au); Dr Emma McKenzie (emma.mckenzie@griffith.edu.au)*

Much of the research on intergenerational maltreatment focuses on maltreatment continuity also referred to as 'cycle maintainers' (both parent/s and child maltreated). However, understanding 'cycle breakers' (parent/s maltreated, child not maltreated) and 'cycle initiators' (parent/s not maltreated, child maltreated) is equally important to inform prevention and intervention initiatives. This project involves conducting a rapid evidence review on studies that examine the four different patterns of intergenerational maltreatment to determine: 1) their prevalence; and 2) associated risk and protective factors. This project involves literature searching multiple databases and conducting data extraction from quantitative studies.



## **Special Industry collaboration opportunity – work directly with an industry partner!**

### **Changing Lives Through Peer Accountability: An Evaluation of the ‘You Choose’ Preventive Education Program for 11th and 12th Graders**

*Supervisor: Associate Professor Justin Ready (j.ready@griffith.edu.au)*

You Choose Preventive Education takes a shared social-project approach to provide risk prevention education to 11th and 12th graders. It focuses on peer advocacy and accountability to change behaviours and attitudes, particularly in relation to drink driving and risky driving behaviour. You Choose stimulates participants into personal reflection about their choices and actions while driving. An initial presentation phase involving powerful first-hand experiences is supported in-class with interactive resources. The program has been administered to 200,000 Australian teenagers over a 7-year period and has recently won the Australian Road Safety Award. The Queensland Police Service and You Choose CEO Peter McGuinness have invited Associate Professor Justin Ready to conduct an impact evaluation of the program on participant attitudes and driving behaviour over a 12-month follow-up period. Dr. Ready will supervise one honours student who would assist in conducting the evaluation which would be the focus of her/his thesis. A reasonable to high level of quantitative competency would be required, and also some interest or knowledge of qualitative research.

### **Contested or Cosmopolitan? Exploring the social dynamics of ethnically diverse neighbourhoods in Australia**

*Supervisor: Professor Rebecca Wickes (r.wickes@griffith.edu.au)*

Neighbourhoods are critical for the cultivation of social and cultural life. Social relationships are nurtured in local neighbourhoods and these relationships provide conduits for inclusion, cohesion and belonging. In advanced western nations, large scale immigration from non-English speaking countries has changed the physical, social, and ethno-cultural landscapes of neighbourhoods, with some places providing a welcoming context for new migrants while others generate a sense of unwelcome, which can manifest in feelings of fear, presuppositions, anxiety and even hostility towards new members. In this project we are interested in examining a range of factors that shape neighbourhood residents' experiences of social inclusion or exclusion. This includes the kinds of places that promote cosmopolitan canopies where individuals from different ethno-racial backgrounds mix readily and harmoniously. We seek to contrast those places with those that create heightened inter-ethnic anxiety, which could lead to the development of unwelcoming attitudes, or even acts of hostility, towards new immigrants. For students working on this project, they can have access to survey and census data to conduct quantitative analyses. There is also the possibility to support qualitative research in carefully selected case studies. Potential research questions include:

1. What are the neighbourhood factors that influence residents' welcoming or unwelcoming attitudes?
2. Do increases in neighbourhood immigrant concentration and/or ethno-racial diversity influence inter-ethnic anxiety and does inter-ethnic anxiety exacerbate welcoming or unwelcoming attitudes?
3. What neighbourhood or individual level factors might protect against inter-ethnic anxiety and unwelcoming attitudes?

## Controlling and abusive behaviours in young adult intimate relationships: developmental pathways

Supervisor: Dr Jacqueline Allen ([jacqueline.allen@griffith.edu.au](mailto:jacqueline.allen@griffith.edu.au))

In the past few years there has been a lot of discussion in both research and in the community about coercive control in relationships. This encompasses many abusive and controlling behaviours including ridicule, isolation, threats, insults, and surveillance. However, much of the developmental research on intimate partner violence has focused on physical violence. Therefore, there is still a lot to learn about the developmental precursors of non-physical controlling behaviours in intimate relationships. There are conceptual links to earlier behaviours such as bullying and teasing, as well as attitudes towards gender and sexuality. In a thesis, a student or students would explore these issues using longitudinal data. This data might include the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children, a nationally representative study of young people followed since they were children in 2004, or other Australian or international datasets. The supervision team will work with the student to develop a topic that is feasible and matches the student's interests. It will be important that the student be willing to do quantitative analysis, supported by the supervision team, and should have successfully completed 2009CCJ Statistics for Social Research or an equivalent statistics course.

## Couchsurfing, criminal offending, and victimisation

Supervisors: Dr Katie Hail-Jares ([k.hail-jares@griffith.edu.au](mailto:k.hail-jares@griffith.edu.au))

Homelessness and housing instability have long been associated with criminal offending. Rather than sleeping rough or using traditional types of homelessness support, more and more young people in Australia are increasingly "couchsurfing," or living temporarily with friends, neighbours, acquaintances, or strangers. Far from being stable environments, research suggests that couchsurfing hosts can harm the people living with them. In interviews with 65 young people who were couchsurfing in the Brisbane area, participants reported experiences with labour exploitation, drug trafficking, and physical and sexual violence. Despite the growing number of young people who are couchsurfing, there is minimal research about how this experience pushes or pulls young people into offending or victimisation. This project will have the opportunity to design a project that uses either quantitative, qualitative, or both (mixed methods) data to explore some aspect of this relationship between couchsurfing (or broader housing instability) and offending or victimisation.

## Cyberdeviance among Australian adolescents

Supervisors: Associate Professor Jesse Cale ([j.cale@griffith.edu.au](mailto:j.cale@griffith.edu.au))

The South Australian Digital Youth Survey (DYS) is a world-first longitudinal project exploring how adolescents use digital technology, and how this use changes over the course of adolescence. The project examines the links between how adolescents use technology and pathways into cyber risk-taking and cyber deviance (e.g., Brewer et al. 2018; Cale et al., 2019; Holt et al., 2020). In studying these links, this project seeks to identify the technical, social, and individual circumstances by which adolescents get drawn into cyber risk-taking. Understanding more about these circumstances will inform the development of prevention measures to mitigate such risk. Projects available involve identifying patterns in specific forms of cyber-deviance and links between cyberdeviance and offline antisocial behavior.

Brewer, R., Cale, J., Goldsmith, A., & Holt, T. (2018). Young people, the internet, and emerging pathways into criminality. *International Journal of Cyber Criminology*, 12, 115-132.

Cale, J., Whitten, T., Brewer, R., De Vel-Palumbo, M., Goldsmith, A. & Holt, T.J., (2019). South Australian Digital Youth Survey: Research Report: Year 1 Results. University of Adelaide.

Holt, T.J., Cale, J., Brewer, R., & Goldsmith, A. (2020). Assessing the Role of Opportunity and Low Self-Control in Juvenile Hacking. *Crime and Delinquency*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001128720978730>.

## Delinquency in adolescent girls: gendered pathways

*Supervisors: Dr Jacqueline Allen (jacqueline.allen@griffith.edu.au) and Dr Kirsten Besemer (k.besemer@griffith.edu.au)*

Quite a lot is known about risk factors for delinquency and offending in young people. However, the evidence is clearest for boys and men. There may be unique risk factors during adolescence for girls. For example, girls who engage in problem behaviours like substance use and offending may experience high levels of relational and physical victimisation. It is also possible that some risk behaviours, like running away from home, are more commonly engaged in by girls. These specific gendered pathways are not well understood, especially for Australian young people. In a dissertation, a student would use data from the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children, a nationally representative study of young people followed since they were children in 2004. With rich data on peers, family, school and behaviour, it would be possible to focus on a number of aspects of problem behaviour in girls. For example, a student might examine links between victimisation experience, running away, and later risky substance use. The supervision team will work with the student to develop a topic that is feasible and matches the student's interests. It will be important that the student be willing to do quantitative analysis, supported by the supervision team, and should have successfully completed 2009CCJ Statistics for Social Research or an equivalent statistics course.

## Delve into the world of financial crime

*Supervisor: Dr Margo van Felius (m.vanfeliuss@griffith.edu.au)*

Financial crime is a significant and growing problem. There are a variety of financial crime types: corruption, fraud, theft, extortion, tax evasion, money laundering, and illegal gambling. The financial and social costs of these types of crime are significant. Further research is needed to understand the prevalence, reasons for committing these crimes and the impact on individuals, families, communities and the economy. Students would be able to undertake a range of projects in this area dependent on their interests. For instance, they could undertake a systematic literature review to map the current state of knowledge regarding a specific financial crime type of interest and/or offenders. Financial crime offenders can range from individuals to organised crime syndicates, small businesses to large corporations.

Alternatively, if students would be interested in conducting a research project involving data collection and analysis, students could focus on specific financial crime type, for example identity theft. The student could conduct a quantitative survey to identify the types of measures individuals take to help prevent their identity being stolen.

Or, if students would be interested in applying a case study methodology they could examine one or more high profile financial crime cases, for example the collapse of HIH insurance, Bernie Madoff, etc. They could focus on identifying how these crimes could be perpetrated, the impact on society and individuals, how it was eventually detected, and the lack of governance or regulatory oversight and what has been done since to prevent these crimes being perpetrated.

As financial crime is such a large underreported and under researched crime, there are many opportunities for the student to apply a range of theories and develop research ideas. The supervision team will work with the student to develop a project that is feasible for the timeframe and matches the student's interest.

## Developing a framework to improve cross-examination of child witnesses

*Supervisors: Dr Natalie Martschuk (n.martschuk@griffith.edu.au) and Professor Martine Powell (martine.powell@griffith.edu.au)*

The project aims to advance change in the way children are cross-examined at trial by providing alternatives to the current cross-examination practice of children. Historically, defence lawyers' understanding of child developmental capacity has been limited by assumptions and stereotypical beliefs about the capacity of children to remember events and, worse still, their perceived tendency to fantasise and lie. Cross-examination of child complainants typically focusses on inconsistencies and oftentimes misconceptions about child sexual abuse. To present their case, defence lawyers ask questions that are leading, complex, vague or misleading; they include legalese that is difficult for adults to understand, let alone children. This study attempts to provide best-practice strategies on how to cross-examine children in a developmentally appropriate way, while considering legal requirements and maintaining the defendant's right to a fair trial. The first part of this project involves focus group discussions with legal practitioners (i.e., defence barristers and prosecutors) who are experienced in questioning or cross-examining child witnesses. The focus groups will work through multiple cases, discussing issues related to content and process. The second part is an experimental vignette study to assess the perceptions and acceptance of the previously developed framework among a larger sample of legal practitioners and developmental and memory researchers. The study is a mixed-method design involving a mix of qualitative and quantitative data analysis.

## Disrupting Online Markets for Stolen Goods

*Supervisors: Prof Michael Townsley (m.townsley@griffith.edu.au) and Dr Andrew Childs (a.childs@griffith.edu.au)*

The majority of stolen goods are resold rather than used for personal consumption. Online marketplaces (Ebay, FB Marketplace, gumtree, etc.) facilitate the disposal of stolen goods, enabling a fence to market to a wider audience than previously possible.

Retailers suffer enormous costs due to theft and resale of their goods. To combat this, fraud teams monitor platforms to identify illegitimate resellers and work with platform providers to "takedown" illegitimate resellers. There are two substantive constraints on this approach; from the retailer side, the process is manual and search strategies are subjective, resulting in many people going undetected (false negatives). The constraint on the platform side is the risk of false positives -- users incorrectly identified as selling stolen goods. De-platforming legitimate users risk reputational damage and provides competitors with an advantage.

In this project, the student would study the ways that retailers identify illegitimate resellers and how platform owners coordinate with retailers. With this understanding, the student will determine the feasibility of automating the identification and takedown process. An initial goal is to understand the tacit profiling process retailers use to locate illegitimate resellers, with a view to formalising this into an explicit risk profile that could be applied to all users.

The supervisors have industry connections and have an existing program of research in this area. There is little scholarly literature in this area, so the topic can be tailored to the students' interest. This project will take a mixed methods approach, so students will need to be prepared to conduct both qualitative and quantitative analysis.

## Exploring how punishment avoidance works for young drivers

*Supervisor: Associate Professor Lyndel Bates (l.bates@griffith.edu.au)*

When punishment avoidance occurs, individuals are likely to continue offending. Punishment avoidance is particularly prevalent on the roads making this an ideal context to explore this construct. Qualitative research (Bates & Anderson, 2021) has identified that punishment avoidance can occur in three ways. However, this has not been tested in a way that is more representative of the driving population. Students would be able to design a thesis in this area that reflects their interest in this topic. For instance, students may choose to focus on a particular offending behaviour (e.g. driving while using a mobile phone) or a particular population (e.g. young drivers). The results of this project are likely to have broader implications regarding how we can effectively ensure other types of crimes (not just those on the roads) are punished.

## Improving the Measurement of Intimate Partner Abuse and Coercive Control by Comparing Quantitative Surveys and Qualitative Interviews

*Supervisor: Dr Jeffrey Ackerman (j.ackerman@griffith.edu.au)*

A proper understanding of a complex phenomenon can be no more accurate than the measures used to access the phenomenon. In other words, measurement details should not be merely technical, because they are fundamental to our ability to understand human behavior. This fact is particularly salient in the study of intimate partner violence (IPV) and related forms of maltreatment where the victimisation surveys administered in several countries superficially suggest that women assault men as often as men assault women. This finding drastically contrasts with information from other data sources such as police, hospital and shelter records. In contrast to victimisation surveys, these alternative sources suggest that partner violence is committed primarily by men. Many scholars feel that the discrepancy between these sources occurs as a result of the inadequate way that researchers have asked their survey questions and developed the scales used to detect and measure partner violence.

This research project is designed to help create better ways to measure and learn about partner violence by comparing quantitative survey data and qualitative interview data to help understand how surveys about IPV might be greatly improved. This type of research is becoming particularly important more recently given the changes to the laws of various Australian states that now criminalize conduct that has been called, "coercive control." Unlike older IPV research that relied more exclusively on physical violence, more contemporary research must deal with the ways that we might best measure and assess various types of non-physical abuse and coercive control such as online harassment, financial abuse, and other forms of abuse that involves the misuse of technology. While many aspects of this research rely upon mixed quantitative/qualitative methods, most of the project's current work is quantitative and also requires excellent computer skills. It would ideally suit dual-degree CCJ/ICT students or others interested in understanding more about the details of complex survey design.

## **Intimate partner violence perpetration and victimisation among post-secondary students**

*Supervisor: Associate Professor Jesse Cale (j.cale@griffith.edu.au)*

This project is based on data from the International Dating Violence Study (IDVS), 2001–2006 (Straus, 2011). The data were collected by a consortium of researchers across 68 universities within 32 countries and included completed questionnaires by university students. The focus of the questionnaires was on both perpetration and victimisation of different types of violence within relationships. The questionnaire is broken down into three parts: 1) Demographics of participants; 2) The Personal and Relationships Profile (PRP; Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy & Sugarman, 1999); and 3) The revised Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS2; Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy & Sugarman, 1996). Participants answered the questions referring to their most recent relationship that had lasted at least one month, be it one that they were currently in or their most recent previous partner. The sample was a convenience sample, as most surveys were administered to students in criminology, sociology and psychology classes, and of the 17,404 total participants, 14,252 were in a relationship at the time of the survey. Projects can focus on different forms of intimate partner violence perpetration and or victimisation (including intimate partner sexual violence), and associations between developmental and contextual risk factors for different types of intimate partner violence.

Straus, M. (2011). International Dating Violence Study, 2001–2006 Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor]. <https://doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR29583.v1>

Straus, M., Hamby, S., Boney-McCoy, S. & Sugarman, D. (1999). Manual for the The Personal and Relationships Profile (PRP). 1–37.

Straus, M., Hamby, S., Boney-McCoy, S., & Sugarman, D. (1996). The Revised Conflict Tactics Scale. *Journal of Family Issues*, 17, 283–316. <https://doi.org/10.1037/t02126-000>

## **Leaving prison behind: Men in prison and asking for help**

*Supervisors: Dr Katie Hail-Jares (k.hail-jares@griffith.edu.au)*

In the United States, more than 2 million people are incarcerated; the majority of those incarcerated are men. Unlike in Australia, men in US prisons serve long sentences; in Iowa, a state in the central US, a prisoner serves an average of 121 months in prison (10 years) compared to the national average of 85 months (7 years). Iowa's sentences are so long in part because, for many violent felonies, the end date is still determined by a parole board, acting in combination with mandatory minimums. Under this system, a mandatory minimum establishes the soonest a prisoner could be released, but the final release date is at the discretion of the state parole board. As incarcerated people prepare to see the parole board, they often seek out help in navigating this process. In this project, candidates will design a project that draws upon 110 interviews with 107 men serving prison sentences for violent and non-violent felonies in Iowa. The interviews focused on who men asked for help—both inside and outside the prison; whether they thought this support mattered to the parole board; and what programming had had the most significant impact on their inner change and rehabilitation. Students will have wide latitude to design projects using this data and support in building a qualitative or mixed-methods project.

## Media coverage and occupational homicide of taxi drivers and sex workers

*Supervisors: Dr Katie Hail-Jares (k.hail-jares@griffith.edu.au)*

Sex work is criminalised in many jurisdictions. This criminalisation is associated with greater client-initiated violence against sex workers; and sex workers working in such environments also report they are less likely to use safer sex practices for fear of condoms or other materials being used as evidence against them (Platt *et al*, 2018). In Australia, a patchwork of laws governs sex work, ranging from full criminalisation to full decriminalisation. Regardless of these laws, sex workers often face stigma when they reveal their profession. Such stigma has often resulted in harm against sex workers as being framed as their fault (e.g. victim-blaming) rather than addressed through the lens of occupational safety. This is in sharp contrast to occupational violence that has occurred against other at-risk workers, notably taxi or rideshare drivers. These drivers, like sex workers, also face a greater risk of client-initiated violence, ranging from robbery, physical assault, or even death. In this project, students will work with their advisor to carry out a content analysis of newspaper articles that cover the homicide of taxi drivers and sex workers throughout Australia, and consider how victimisation is framed in the media, coronial inquests, and other similar coverage. Other projects related to occupational homicide, criminalisation, and stigma are also welcomed.

## Parent drinking and adolescent drinking: the roles of parenting, gender, and peers

*Supervisors: Dr Jacqueline Allen (jacqueline.allen@griffith.edu.au)*

We know that parent drinking, especially heavy drinking, is associated with a higher risk of drinking in adolescent children. However, much remains to be learned about this relationship. For instance, research has shown that the risks of heavy parent drinking may be especially strong for adolescent girls. It is possible that this may be because of the sorts of peer groups (including boyfriends) that female children of heavy drinking parents choose. Another question is whether parenting behaviours are different in parents who at times drink heavily. Do they have different attitudes to adolescent drinking, and does this explain why their children are more likely to drink? These are important questions, because alcohol use is very common in Australian households, and many adults drink heavily at times. This research may help us understand the pathways that may lead to problematic alcohol use in young people. In this thesis, a student would use data from the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children, a nationally representative study of young people followed since they were children in 2004. With rich data on peers, family, school and behaviour, a student could focus on a number of different aspects of parent drinking, parent, peers, and adolescent behaviour. The supervision team will work with the student to develop a topic that is feasible and matches the student's interests. It will be important that the student be willing to do quantitative analysis, supported by the supervision team, and should have successfully completed 2009CCJ Statistics for Social Research or an equivalent statistics course.

## The difficulties of sharing information

*Supervisor: Dr Margo van Felius (m.vanfelius@griffith.edu.au)*

Coronial and investigations into tragedies such as child deaths (for example Darcey and Chloe Conley, Mason Jet Lee) and domestic homicides (Not Now Not Ever report) often reveal that these tragedies could have been circumvented if agencies would have shared information. However, sharing information among criminal justice agencies is difficult for a variety of reasons.

If students are interested in this topic, they should be able to design a thesis in this area. For example, they could conduct an empirical study of policing partnerships and commissions of inquiry regarding tragedies and identify the facilitators and barriers to information sharing. Or they could identify a criminology, organisational or other theory to build a conceptual framework and analyse pre-existing qualitative data from 55 interviews of police officers and partner agencies.

## The effect of the imprisonment of a close family member on adolescents' transition into adulthood

*Supervisors: Dr Jacqueline Allen (jacqueline.allen@griffith.edu.au) and Dr Kirsten Besemer (k.besemer@griffith.edu.au)*

We now have over fifty years of research to show that for most children, the imprisonment of a father or mother is associated with a variety of lifelong harms, such as substance misuse, homelessness, ill health, poverty... and of becoming offenders themselves. There are far fewer studies that have looked at children who experience the imprisonment of a close relative other than a parent, such as a brother, sister, or a grandparent. We also know very little about which children are most vulnerable to harms after someone in their family goes to prison, or conversely, what factors might foster resilience in affected children. In your dissertation, you would be able to address some of these knowledge gaps, using a custom-made, nationally representative dataset of affected Australian teenagers. All young people in the dataset have experienced the imprisonment of a close relative between the ages of 12-17, and the data includes a wide range of outcomes measured at ages 18-21. Depending on your particular interest, you could choose to look at differences in young people's health outcomes, education, alcohol use – or any other outcome in the data. You could also look at differences between groups of children; for example those affected by the imprisonment of different types of family members. Together with your supervision team, you will be able to design a dissertation that matches your particular interests. Applicants need to be interested in doing quantitative analysis and should have successfully completed 2009CCJ Statistics for Social Research or an equivalent statistics course.

## Training witness intermediaries in interviewing best practices

*Supervisors: Prof Martine Powell (martine.powell@griffith.edu.au) and Dr Sonja Brubacher (s.brubacher@griffith.edu.au)*

This project will examine the effectiveness of an interviewing training program for witness intermediaries. Intermediaries are professionals whose intended role is to assess the communication capacities and special needs of children and other vulnerable witnesses, and in doing so, facilitate communication between these witnesses and professionals in the justice system without jeopardizing defendants' rights to fair trials. Intermediaries have good knowledge of linguistic, cognitive, and behavioural impairments that present barriers to a witness being able to give their best evidence. They do not, however, usually have training in interview best practices and question types. This means that, sometimes, their recommendations for questioning a witness are incongruent with interviewers' training. In this project, a group of intermediaries will receive training in interview best practices. Their recommendations for questioning child witnesses will be assessed before and after the training program. At both time periods, they will listen to three interviews of varying quality, and pause the interviews anytime they think a question is inappropriate for that witness (e.g., too complex). Responses before and after training will be compared to determine whether and how the training led them to integrate knowledge about questioning with their existing expertise in complex communication needs. Data will be analysed qualitatively and quantitatively.



## What causes distracted driving and how to minimise driver distraction

*Supervisor: Dr Margo van Felius (m.vanfeliuss@griffith.edu.au) and Associate Professor Lyndel Bates (l.bates@griffith.edu.au)*

Distracted driving is a leading contributor to road crashes and subsequent road fatalities. Distraction occurs when a driver engages in a secondary activity that removes attention away from the driving task. This secondary task contributes to increased reaction time, impairs driver's ability to maintain speed and lane position and impacts on the operational efficiency of traffic.

One way to minimise distracted driving from occurring, is through regulation and law enforcement. Regulation is an important component of creating behaviour change in road safety. However, regulation of the diverse range of distracted driving behaviours is limited. The most common secondary task examined in the literature is mobile phone use, and regulation has focused primarily on the use of handheld mobile phone while driving. However, the literature suggests that the use of handsfree mobile phone use is equally distracting as it still requires manual tasks to commence and finish the call and significant cognitive space.

If students are interested in this topic, they would be able to design a thesis in this area. For example, if students are interested in conducting a research project involving data collection and analysis, students could conduct a quantitative survey to identify what drivers find most distracting when driving and what types of regulatory or law enforcement measures could be taken to minimise these distractions. Or another example, if students would be interested, they could examine whether there are differences in distraction between handheld and handsfree mobile phone use by conducting a quantitative survey of perceptions of drivers.

## What risk factors motivate and exacerbate conspiracy-fuelled extremism?

*Supervisor: Professor Kristina Murphy (t.murphy@griffith.edu.au)*

Conspiracy-fuelled extremism has been heralded as a new security threat for Australia. In February 2022, ASIO's Director-General Mike Burgess stated that Australia is seeing a significant rise in a new form of extremism brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. He noted this emerging form of extremism "doesn't fit the left-right spectrum at all". Rather, it is motivated by various "social grievances" and "conspiracies". He noted this "upswing" in grievance and conspiracy-fuelled extremism is concerning because many of the radicalised actors involved "are newcomers", having never been involved in extremism before (Burgess, 2022). Complicating this, these extremists are a highly diverse group, with libertarians, anti-vaxxers, sovereign citizen groups, right-wing, and QAnon believers among the mix (Roose, 2022). This makes it difficult for intelligence agencies to identify which individuals present a risk of escalating to violence, and what types of interventions might mitigate those risks. This research project seeks to answer the following research question: Which extremist risk factors interact with COVID-19 conspiracy beliefs to exacerbate extremist attitudes? The types of extremist attitudes measured will include sovereign citizen, libertarian and anti-vaccination beliefs. The student working on this project will draw on existing survey data collected from 779 Australians during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is a period in time when Australians were experiencing lock down fatigue and when authorities were seeing a rise in protest and violent behaviour from COVID extremists. Data will be analysed using regression or similar statistical techniques with SPSS.

# Understanding immigrants' willingness to empower the police\*

*Supervisors: Dr Elise Sargeant (e.sargeant@griffith.edu.au) and Dr Natasha Madon (m.madon@griffith.edu.au)*

This project will examine immigrant's perceptions of police empowerment. Police empowerment, defined as "public deference toward authorities and the decisions made or actions undertaken by those authorities" (Fox et al., 2021, p. 7), is one mechanism by which the public can provide their support to the police. Unlike other mechanisms of support for police, such as cooperation with police and compliance with the law, police empowerment is relatively under-researched. In this study we will unpack the mechanisms that lead immigrant communities to empower the police or, in contrast, to withdraw their support for police. Immigrants may have unique experiences including language barriers, cultural differences, misunderstandings of legal requirements, anti-immigrant bias, and prior experience with police brutality/corruption in their origin country, which may inform their trust in police and their subsequent willingness to empower the police (e.g., Jung et al., 2019). To examine the correlates of police empowerment among immigrants, this study will draw on quantitative survey data collected in the Sydney Immigrant Survey (collected in 2018/2019). The survey recruited 903n participants from three immigrant groups: White British immigrants, and Middle Eastern Muslim and Vietnamese ethnic minority immigrants (two minority groups that commonly migrate to Australia). Data will be analysed using ordinary least squares regression or similar.

*\* This project is only available from 2025 onwards.*

