



CENTRE FOR WORK + WELLBEING

A STRATEGIC RESEARCH CENTRE
OF EDITH COWAN UNIVERSITY

ANNUAL REPORT 2021

Centre for Work
+ Wellbeing

STRATEGIC RESEARCH CENTRE



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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



It has been a great privilege to chair the Advisory Board of the ECU Centre for Work + Wellbeing over the past 12 months. Wellbeing at work has been a very topical interest area over the past decade, only to be further expressly highlighted by the global pandemic which left most employers scrambling

for answers, certainty and resources to manage such an evolving beast of a situation. I am immensely proud of the work done by the wonderful team at the Centre for Work + Wellbeing during this time to support employers across Australia and beyond, not only with a high level of academic rigour, but most importantly, practical real-world application to support workplaces in understanding issues such as leader burnout, resilience, talent management and acquisition as well as pandemic response.

As part of the ECU School of Business and Law, which was recently recognised as one of the top 250 business schools in the world, research done by the Centre for Work + Wellbeing focuses on issues that are important to businesses and professionals in workplaces.

From multinational conglomerates, to the public sector, to those who operate within the gig economy, the Centre strives to produce research and resources that have meaningful impact to workplaces to enhance wellbeing and business outcomes. I would like to specially acknowledge and thank Professor Tim Bentley – the Director of the Centre, for his leadership and guidance. I would also like to thank my fellow Advisory Board Members for their impactful contribution and input which they generously provided to help shape the work done by the Centre.

Whilst no one can be certain what 2022 will bring, the Centre will continue with work with organisations and industry stakeholders to ensure you benefit from the work we do.

Candy Choo GAICD,

Chair, Advisory Board, Centre for Work + Wellbeing
Chief Executive Officer, Local Government Professionals
Australia - WA

DIRECTOR'S REPORT



2021 has been our establishment year as a fledgling strategic research centre of Edith Cowan University, yet it seems we have made so much progress already towards our mission of having impact in the work and wellbeing field. Indeed, much of what we have achieved through our research as a team, alongside

our academic and industry collaborators, has been impactful on our stakeholders, including government and industry partners. Of course, we were fortunate to have hit the ground running at the beginning of 2021, with so much high-quality research already under our collective belts and many new government and industry-funded projects underway.

We draw inspiration and valuable industry knowledge from our wonderful Centre for Work + Wellbeing Advisory Board. Led ably by our Chair, Candy Choo, the Centre's Advisory Board has ensured we have stayed focused on what really matters to industry at this time. Importantly, given the current crisis, this includes evidence-based guidance for organisations to manage wellbeing effectively, and findings that inform best practice. As one would expect in the current times, much of this research has been concerned with organisational responses to the COVID-19 challenge, and in particular the related concerns of employee wellbeing and the need to shift work to flexible mode.

During 2021, the Centre's research has taken a particular interest in the role of the leader in creating healthy work and in the promotion of employee wellbeing during the pandemic. This research culminated in two guidance resources (available on our Centre website), and is currently being developed into a more general intervention program for enhancing relational leadership competencies; a much-needed development in support of Australian organisations.

Our other government-funded research, undertaken in partnership with the University of New South Wales and the Centre for Work Health and Safety, NSW Government, has focused on two main areas: managing psychosocial risks within organisations and managing an ageing workforce. Both topics are proving to be real challenges for our industry stakeholders and our intervention-focused research will help provide evidence-based solutions to assist organisations in adopting best practice.

The Centre is blessed with a fabulous team of scholars and you will be able to read a little about the great work they have been doing, much of which is both novel and impactful on end-users and organisations. This year we have had a focus on establishing the high-performance research culture necessary to grow the quality and influence of our research, and I have been really impressed with how the team has got behind our vision, with each member driving their own impactful research agenda, alongside supporting the wider Centre projects. My great thanks to our team and our amazing Advisory Board on behalf of the Centre leadership team, Professor Maryam Omari, Associate Professor Ben Farr-Wharton and myself.

We look forward to working with our wonderful industry partners in 2022, and to creating new and fruitful relationships with our WA and national stakeholders!

Professor Tim Bentley

Director, ECU Centre for Work + Wellbeing
School of Business and Law
Edith Cowan University, Perth

CENTRE PROJECTS

FUNDED PROJECTS COMPLETED IN 2021

Flexible work and psychological safety: best practice to advance psychologically safe work from alternate locations

This was a three-phase project involving research collaborators from the University of New South Wales and Southern Cross University, Queensland.

Phase 1 – Survey

In this phase, 1318 NSW-based workers were surveyed concerning the psychological risks a worker can be exposed to in the workplace, including job demands and job resources, wellbeing-related outcomes, and engagement with workplace health and safety.

Phase 2 – Interviews

The research team interviewed 33 flexible workers and 19 managers of flexible workers across multiple industries in NSW, for a deeper dive into key facilitators and barriers that can affect successful and safe flexible and remote work.

Phase 3 – Focus groups

Focus groups were conducted with a variety of stakeholders: regulators, WHS specialists, managers, workers, and human resources professionals, in order to co-design a toolkit to assist managers in the new working environment.

Outputs of this research were a report for each of the phases, culminating in the production of a best practice guide and toolkit for managers.

(See below – ‘Engagement activities: Policy impact’).

This Best Practice Guide is publicly available on the CWHS website <https://www.centreforwhs.nsw.gov.au/knowledge-hub/a-best-practice-guide-for-flexible-and-work-from-home-arrangements>

Funder

Centre for Work Health and Safety,
NSW Government.

Amount funded

\$135,157 | Understanding the Changing World of Work (Tender), 2020-2021.

Project team

Chief Investigators: Professor Tim Bentley and Associate Professor Ben Farr-Wharton.

Co-Investigators: Professor Maryam Omari, Associate Professor Carlo Caponnehchia (UNSW), Dr Alexis Vassiley, Dr Leigh-ann Onnis, Dr Azadeh Shafaei, Dr Mehran Nejati, Professor Julie-Ann Pooley, Associate Professor Amanda Divine, and Dr Abilio de Almeida Neto (CWHS, NSW Govt).



Enhancing workplace mental health during and post-COVID-19

This two-phase project was designed and conducted exclusively by members of the Centre.

In Phase one, surveys were conducted with respondents from Western Australia (all industries) and nationwide (public sector employees). There were two waves of data collection with over 1000 respondents.

Surveys concerned perceptions of organisational work conditions, work-family conflicts, quantitative, emotional and mental home demands, and work-life balance during the pandemic, as well as mental health and well-being outcomes in the second survey.

In Phase two, 40 interviews were conducted with remote workers and managers across a wide range of industries, both private and public sector. Interviewees were asked about work, wellbeing/mental health and organisational and supervisor support during various phases of the COVID-19 pandemic; extended lockdowns, snap lockdowns, and 'normal' work, which may be a hybrid model or entirely at the office.

This culminated in an 82-page report covering Phase one and Phase two findings https://www.ecu.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/960786/Final-Report-Enhancing-workplace-mental-health-during-and-post-COVID-19_0909211.pdf

The practical output was a short best practice guide for managers and employees on how best to work from home.

This Best Practice Guide is publicly available on the Centre for Work + Wellbeing website https://www.ecu.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/958987/42071-ECU-Centre-for-Work-and-Wellbeing_Report_12pp-A4_FNL.pdf

Funder

Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation, WA government.

Amount funded

\$100,000 | COVID-19 Research Fund, 2020-2022.

Project team

Chief Investigators: Professor Tim Bentley and Professor Stephen Teo.

Co-Investigators: Dr Uma Jogulu, Dr Esme Franken, Dr Diep Nguyen, Dr Leigh-ann Onnis, and Dr Alexis Vassiley.



Ready For Response Program Evaluation

This project evaluated the 'Ready for Response' (R4R) program, a 12-week nutrition and fitness initiative, provided by DPFEM and AT offering employees access to a program that supports healthy lifestyle choices. Considered frontline workers, frontline police, firefighters, paramedics, and emergency service workers have an increased exposure to trauma and risk. The aim of R4R was therefore to provide participants with an emotional and physical tool kit to draw on to remain resilient and engaged at work.

To evaluate the program's impact and effectiveness 184 surveys were collected from employees across DPFEM and AT who had participated in R4R, as well as employees who had not taken part. The survey contained psychometric questions to gain an insight into employee wellbeing, psychological distress and psychosocial safety climate. In addition, 16 semi-structured interviews were conducted with R4R participants to gain more in-depth data about personal experiences with the R4R program.

The findings of this research supported a continuation of the R4R program through the identification of significant positive individual and organisational outcomes. Outputs of this research were a report and presentation to the funders, including nine pragmatic steps to further improve the impact and effectiveness of R4R.

Funder

Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management (DPFEM) Tasmania and Ambulance Tasmania (AT).

Amount funded

\$38,976

Project team

Chief Investigators: Associate Professor Ben Farr-Wharton.

Co-Investigators: Dr Fleur Sharafizad.



Photo credit: 'Fitness Center Icarian Strength Machine at Colonnade Boston Hotel' by colonnade is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

CENTRE PROJECTS

NEW PROJECTS COMMENCED IN 2021

The Healthy Older Worker (HOW) Toolkit: A participatory organisational intervention

This four-phase, 18-month project is led by the Centre for Work + Wellbeing. In collaboration with researchers from University of New South Wales and Southern Cross University, the study investigates how organisations can create a healthy, safe and sustainable workplace for older workers.

In Australian businesses, the most frequent and costly work-related harms are attributed to musculoskeletal disorders and psychological injuries.

This research focuses on the design of work health and safety (WHS) systems to prevent injury in older workers. The Healthy Older Worker (HOW) Toolkit will be designed to facilitate the identification and assessment of the impact of an ageing workforce on WHS systems, and to guide the design of healthy, safe and sustainable work for older workers, applicable across a wide range of workplaces.

The approach has a strong participatory element to ensure the engagement of end-users in the design and evaluation of the HOW Toolkit.

Researchers will create a Healthy Older Worker (HOW) Toolkit, which will be developed and evaluated with multiple organisations across a range of industries to ensure wide applicability. This will be developed in four phases.

Phase 1 – Systematic literature review

To understand what is already available.

Phase 2 – Quantitative study

Two sets of surveys to understand the nature of injuries in older workers, and their contributing factors.

Phase 3 – Intervention design

The design of an organisational resource (the HOW Toolkit) that identifies and assesses the impact of the ageing workforce on WHS systems and processes. This will be used for the design and redesign of work that promotes healthy outcomes for older workers and the prevention of WMSD and psychosocial risks.

Phase 4 – Intervention evaluation

Evaluate the efficacy of the HOW Toolkit to effectively analyse the impact of the ageing workforce on organisational WHS systems, processes, and the design or redesign of jobs for older workers.

Funder

NSW Government, Centre for Work Health and Safety.

Amount funded

\$186,808

Project team

Chief Investigator: Professor Tim Bentley.

Co-Investigators: Associate Professor Carlo Caponecchia, Associate Professor Ben Farr-Wharton, Dr Sharon O'Neill, Ms Catherine Andrew, Dr Leigh-ann Onnis, Dr Alexis Vassiley, Dr Abilio Neto.

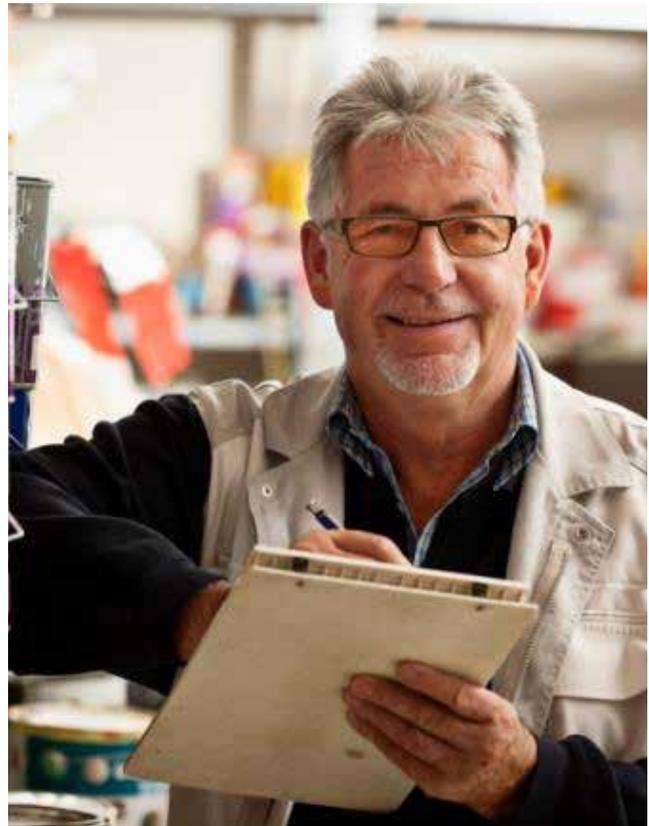


Photo credit: 'older worker' by hnnbz is licensed under CC BY 2.0

Centre Projects – New Projects Commenced in 2021 (continued)

Mentally Healthy Workplaces

This project, led out of the University of New South Wales, undertaken in collaboration with the Centre for Work + Wellbeing, was concerned with developing competencies for the management of psychosocial risks. The project has three stages. The first involved a systematic literature review focusing on interventions for psychosocial hazards. The second involved an interview survey to determine barriers and facilitators to psychosocial hazard and risk management. The third stage involves the development of a psychosocial risk management competencies, with a focus on work design.

Funder

NSW Government, Centre for Work Health and Safety.

Amount funded

\$65,000

Project team

Project leads: Associate Professor Carlo Caponnehchia (UNSW), Professor Tim Bentley.

Leading the Way: an evidence-based framework for a sustainable future

CWW's **Professor Maryam Omari** and **Associate Professor Ben Farr-Wharton** lead a project where ECU's School of Business and Law (SBL) is partnering with Local Government Professionals (LGP) to advance the capability of LGP members and the Local Government Agencies (LGAs) that they service.

This bespoke project will investigate and address the unique challenges, and significant external threats, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and a changing climate, LGAs face. These stressors compound more entrenched issues related to resource constraints, an aging population and workforce, and transformational technological change.

The primary aim of this project is to undertake a needs analysis with LGP, their members, and the LGAs that they support. The result will be an evidence-based framework, detailed in a final report, that outlines a sustainable future by building staff capability for LGP members and their associated LGAs. The framework will provide an environmental scan regarding the specific challenges that LGP members face, as well as the support mechanisms they presently have access to, or will need into the future, to address these challenges.

CENTRE PROJECTS

ONGOING

Wellbeing Evaluation Tender Proposal

2021 represented the second full year this project has been running. During the year, the research team engaged with the partner in several evaluation endeavours, including two large-scale survey campaigns.

Funder

Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management, Tasmanian Government.

Amount funded

\$200,867

Project team

Chief Investigator: Associate Professor Ben Farr-Wharton.

Marginalized workers in the Australian platform-economy

Funding scheme

University of Sydney Business School Industry Partnership Grant.

Amount funded

\$35,000

Project team

Co-Investigator: Dr Tom Barratt.

Influence of WIL on employability and employment outcomes (national project funded by Australian Collaborative Education Network)

Project team

Investigator: Professor Denise Jackson.

Equity implications of non-ATAR pathways: Participation, academic outcomes and work-readiness

Funder

National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education.

Amount funded

\$36,700

Project team

Investigator: Professor Denise Jackson.

Exploring the impact of COVID-19 on subjective well-being among UK students

Project team

Investigator: Professor Denise Jackson.

The career experiences and aspirations of personal carers in Australia

Funder

Australian Medical Association.

Amount funded

\$13,591

Project team

Chief Investigator: Dr Uma Jogulu.
Investigator: Dr Esme Franken.

Influence of parents on secondary school children's career decision-making

Project team

Investigator: Professor Denise Jackson.

Centre Projects – Ongoing (continued)

The gender gap: women and leadership in the sport industry

Funder

ECU Society and Culture Small Grants Scheme.

Amount funded

\$4,435

Project team

Chief Investigator: Dr Ashlee Morgan.
Investigator: Dr Esme Franken.

Building people up: Growth oriented leadership

Project team

Chief Investigator Dr Esme Franken

How do work environments shape women's identity perceptions and displays?

Project team

Chief Investigators: Dr Esme Franken and Dr Fleur Sharafizad.

The role of recovery experiences in facilitating a semblance of balance between work and non-work domains

Dr Jennifer Lajom is researching the role of recovery experiences in facilitating a semblance of balance between work and non-work domains and the process into translating this in work and non-work domain performance. This is funded by a seed grant from ECU School of Business and Law.

Contextual determinants of job passion

Dr Jennifer Lajom is researching contextual determinants of job passion, which can inform how workplaces can nurture passionate employees towards optimum performance at work.

Development of data visualisation to communicate forecasting of injury risk

Project team

Investigator: Dr Marcus Cattani.

Benchmarking fatality risk in the mining and resources sector

Project team

Investigator: Dr Marcus Cattani.

Comparison of real time and other workplace exposure monitoring techniques

Project team

Investigator: Dr Marcus Cattani.

Development of risk communication training for Western Australian industry

Project team

Investigator: Dr Marcus Cattani.

Investigating psychological wellness of telephone call centre operators

Project team

Co-Investigator: Dr Marcus Cattani (with Coall, D. and Boylan, J.)

CENTRE FOR WORK + WELLBEING EVENTS

The Centre for Work + Wellbeing held its launch event on 24 March at Fraser Suites in Perth's CBD. Chair of the Centre's Advisory Board, Cady Choo, presented an industry perspective on industry challenges associated with the pandemic. Centre Director Professor Tim Bentley spoke on key lessons for organisations from the COVID-19 pandemic. The event was attended by an industry and academic audience.

The Centre held regular member meetings to discuss current projects, plan new projects, and receive mini-presentations from Centre members about their research.

The Centre held two, 2-day writing retreats at Joondalup Resort. Members found them very productive, writing thousands of words for journal articles and grant applications. We also held shorter weekly writing groups (1.5 hours long) in the second half of the year.

Our Centre Advisory Board met three times, with the final Advisory Board meeting of the year open to the entire Centre membership, with a networking sundowner following the meeting.



Centre for Work and Wellbeing researchers at a writing retreat at Joondalup Resort, November. Photo credit: supplied.

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

POLICY IMPACT

Production of guidance for working during the crisis

Much of our policy impact this year has centred around helping provide organisations, managers and individuals, as well as government and regulators, with the tools they need to facilitate safe work in a COVID-environment.

The Centre produced two sets of guidance material. Firstly, 'A Best Practice Guide for flexible and work-from-home arrangements', commissioned by the NSW government's Centre for Work Health and Safety <https://www.centreforwhs.nsw.gov.au/knowledge-hub/a-best-practice-guide-for-flexible-and-work-from-home-arrangements>

This comprehensive guide takes the reader through the seven elements of a psychologically safe and productive (work) environment, from senior leadership through to tailored work design. It provides advice specific to line managers and flexible workers, as well as an Organisational Maturity Assessment, A psychosocial safety capability maturity action planner, real life case studies and links to further resources.

Secondly, we designed the 12-page guide 'Supporting mental health and wellbeing wherever people work: A best practice guide for organisations to manage psychosocial risk and promote wellbeing in the COVID-19 era'. It features:

1. An Organisational Blueprint.
2. Manager Guidance.
3. Employee Tips.

https://www.ecu.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/958987/42071-ECU-Centre-for-Work-and-Wellbeing_Report_12pp-A4_FNL.pdf

Centre members (led by Dr Judy Lundy and Professor Tim Bentley) authored 'FACTBase Bulletin 76 – The Role of Leadership in Maintaining Employee Wellbeing and Performance under COVID-19 Restrictions June 2021', published by the Committee for Perth.

<https://www.committeeforperth.com.au/documents/factbase-bulletin-76-the-role-of-leadership-in-maintaining-employee-wellbeing-and-performance-under-covid-19-restrictions-june-2021>

Finally, we are producing a short training module which will educate both employees and managers on some of the risks of remote work and best practice to mitigate them.

Submissions on the gig economy

Dr Tom Barratt has contributed to Parliamentary Inquiries, including giving invited expert oral evidence to the *Select Committee on the impact of technological and other change on the future of work and workers in New South Wales*. He also has been involved in the *Senate Select Committee Into Job Security* providing both a written submission and invited expert oral evidence. His work informed the Committee's *First interim report: on-demand platform work in Australia*, which cited his evidence and published media contributions a total of 21 times. He was also asked, based on his expertise, to provide comment on the interim report's recommendations, which he did in the form of a separate submission, accepted by the committee.

He has also been a participant in Menulog Pty Ltd's Application for a Modern Award in the On Demand Delivery Services before the Fair Work Commission. Based on his peer reviewed and policy-facing research, Dr Barratt has assisted the Fair Work Commission through two submissions and a note requesting clarification.



A gig economy worker. Photo credit: 'milano, gig economy' by luiginter is licensed with CC BY-NC-SA 2.0.

Engagement Activities (continued)

Public consultation submission on the draft Code of Practice on Psychosocial hazards in the workplace

The centre made a submission, prepared by **Dr Alexis Vassiley** and **Professor Tim Bentley**, on the draft code of practice on psychosocial hazards, developed by the Commission for Occupational Safety and Health under Western Australia's *Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984*.

The submission centred around, firstly, ensuring the code was future-proofed by paying more attention to new psychosocial hazards generated by working-from-home/remote work, as well as related to the introduction of automation, robotics, algorithmic management and technology-facilitated surveillance, secondly, recommending more practical 'how to' content, and thirdly, greater integration of psychosocial hazards related to insecure work such as casual work, labour hire, and the gig economy.

Occupational health and safety

Dr Marcus Cattani has used his research and experience in occupational health and safety to educate leaders of organisations in injury and incident risk management, ahead of WA's new occupational health and safety legislation, due in 2022.

He has organised, facilitated and spoken on a number of panels and symposia on the legislation and is working with a state government agency on training regarding the laws.

He is also developing a series of short courses on risk management to assist industry implement the new legislation.

Underpayment of wages

Dr Tom Barratt sat on the steering committee for the payrights.com.au project, run by UnionsWA and funded by a State Government grant. The project was aimed at informing and suggesting avenues for recourse for workers in Western Australia who are experiencing systemic underpayment of wages, often called "Wage Theft".



Dr Marcus Cattani (2nd from left) on an industry panel. Photo credit: Provided.

CENTRE FOR WORK + WELLBEING IN THE MEDIA



Centre members have appeared in the *ABC*, *the Conversation*, *the Herald-Sun*, *Business News*, *MBA news* and much more discussing their research and its practical implications on topics such as working from home, the gig economy, mental health in the workplace, and gender and careers.

Authored media articles

- **Tom Barratt**, Alex Veen and Caleb Goods. A new deal for Uber drivers in UK, but Australia's 'gig workers' must wait. *The Conversation*, 21 March (readership over 13 000). <https://theconversation.com/a-better-deal-for-uber-drivers-in-uk-but-australias-gig-workers-must-wait-157597>
- **Tom Barratt**, Alex Veen and Caleb Goods. Did somebody say workers' rights? Three big questions about Menulog's employment plan. *The Conversation*, 15 April (readership over 9 000). <https://theconversation.com/did-somebody-say-workers-rights-three-big-questions-about-menulogs-employment-plan-158942>
- Alex Veen, Caleb Goods, Rick Sullivan and **Tom Barratt**. An employee, not a contractor: unfair dismissal ruling against Deliveroo is a big deal for Australia's gig workers. *The Conversation*, 19 May (readership over 8 000). <https://theconversation.com/an-employee-not-a-contractor-unfair-dismissal-ruling-against-deliveroo-is-a-big-deal-for-australias-gig-workers-161173>
- **Tim Bentley**. The 'new normal' - New ways of working require new ways of leading. *Business News*. 16 July. <https://www.businessnews.com.au/article/The-new-normal-New-ways-of-working-require-new-ways-of-leading>
- **Ben Farr-Wharton**, Matthew Xerri and Yvonne Brunetto. Paid on par with cleaners: the broader issue affecting the quality of aged care. *The Conversation* 25 February. <https://theconversation.com/paid-on-par-with-cleaners-the-broader-issue-affecting-the-quality-of-aged-care-155753>
- **Jennifer Lajom**. How do you react when your boss sends messages after office hours? *Channel News Asia* 20 October. <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/commentary/after-work-communication-email-texts-employees-bosses-2250966>
- **Fleur Sharafizad**, Kerry Brown, **Maryam Omari**, and **Uma Jogulu**. Women's academic careers are in a 'holding pattern' while men enjoy a 'tailwind'. *The Conversation*, 1 November. <https://theconversation.com/womens-academic-careers-are-in-a-holding-pattern-while-men-enjoy-a-tailwind-168840>
- **Erin Smith** Perth's 5-day 'circuit-breaker' lockdown isn't an overreaction to a single case — it's basic common sense. *The Conversation*. 31 January. <https://theconversation.com/perths-5-day-circuit-breaker-lockdown-isnt-an-overreaction-to-a-single-case-its-basic-common-sense-154348> (readership over 18,000)

Media Engagement

- **Professor Tim Bentley** was interviewed by *ABC radio Sydney* on the health of older workers and changing the idea of retirement, December.
- **Professor Tim Bentley** was quoted extensively in *Australian Mining* on gradual retirement to ease skills shortages, December.
- **Professor Tim Bentley** made expert comment on mental health days, and why they aren't a silver bullet, for the *ABC (online)*, September <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-09-21/mental-health-days-are-on-the-rise-here-why-theyre-important/100414384>
- **Dr Tom Barratt** appeared on *Radio National's 'The Money'* discussing Menulog's trial engagement of food-delivery couriers as employees, rather than independent contractors. He also appeared on *Radio National's 'Weekend Extra'* discussing the Application before the Fair Work Commission for the creation of an On Demand Delivery Services Award. <https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/sundayextra/regulating-the-gig-economy/13669384>
- **Associate Professor Ben Farr-Wharton's** work on wellbeing in the aged care workforce featured in the *Herald Sun*, as well as numerous local newspapers. Ben also made numerous radio appearances on the topic, March.
- **Dr Esme Franken** was interviewed by *ABC radio* on presenteeism and sick leave at work in the COVID-19 context, February.
- **Professor Maryam Omari** was quoted in the *West Australian*, outlining how ECU's ATO-funded tax clinic would mean supervised students could provide tax advice to individuals, small businesses, charities and not for profits unable pay for services, November.
- **Professor Maryam Omari** spoke to *Business News* on how ECU's business and economics discipline into Times Higher Education's top 250 list of providers for the first time this year, October. <https://www.businessnews.com.au/article/Top-marks-for-ECUs-business-courses>
- **Professor Maryam Omari** was interviewed by *Unibank*, on 'What will universities look like in a post-pandemic world?' <https://www.unibank.com.au/about/member-news/2021/interview-with-professor-maryam-omari>
- **Professor Denise Jackson's** research was mentioned in the articles 'Step towards a career' in the *Canberra Times* and 'A foot in the door' in *Campus Review*.
- **Associate Professor Erin Smith** made media comment online, in print and on radio, both within Australia and internationally, on the wellbeing of first responders, Australia's bushfires, and mental health.
- **Dr Alexis Vassiley's** research on the higher education sector was summarised in *Campus Morning Mail*, November.

AWARDS



2021 ECU High Achieving Researcher – Society and Culture theme.

Awarded to **Professor Denise Jackson**



2021 School of Business and Law Management Discipline award.

Awarded to **Dr Esme Franken**

KEYNOTE AND INVITED ADDRESSES

- **Denise Jackson.** Developing and evidencing student employability through work-integrated learning. National Association of Cooperative Education (NZACE) National Conference, New Zealand (international) 2021.
- **Denise Jackson.** Work-Integrated Learning: What? Why? How?’, Keynote presentation to Nottingham Trent University executive and faculty. 2021
- **Tim Bentley.** Wellbeing at work: The future challenge, ILO A+A Conference. October.
- **Tim Bentley.** Flexible work and psychological safety: best practice to advance psychologically safe work from alternate locations, Research Foundation. November 2021.
- **Ben Farr-Wharton.** Wellbeing & Performance in the Future of Work. AHRI State Conference. June.
- **Ben Farr-Wharton.** Rethinking the drivers of employee performance in the future of work. Local Government State Conference. November.
- **Uma Jogulu.** Improving the early career progression of culturally and linguistically diverse female academics.
- **Ben Farr-Wharton.** The cost of doing more with less. ECU’s Human Resource Service Centre Team. February.
- **Ben Farr-Wharton.** Results from DWERSity Census Report. Department of Water and Environmental Regulation – Equity & Diversity Panel. March.
- **Ben Farr-Wharton.** The cost of doing more with less. Australian Human Resource Institute (AHRI) North Network Event. April.
- **Ben Farr-Wharton.** Constructive workplace conversations good practice. ECU’s Strategic and Governance Services Centre. July.
- **Ben Farr-Wharton.** Wellbeing & Performance in the Future of Work. Geraldton City Council Leadership Team. September.
- **Ben Farr-Wharton.** Panel Q&A: Rethinking the drivers of employee performance in the future of work. QUT Not-for-Profit and Social Enterprise Network. October.
- **Denise Jackson.** Sustainable graduate Accounting and Finance career pathways’, for CPA Australia members.
- **Denise Jackson.** What is Employability and Why is it Important’, guest panellist, University of Queensland.
- **Denise Jackson.** Industry-university partnerships for SDG-focused internships in Australia and India’, guest panellist, Deakin University.
- **Denise Jackson.** The impact of WIL and employability-related activities on graduate outcomes’ for the Australian Collaborative Education Network.
- **Denise Jackson.** New technology’s impact on early career accountants’ skillset’, for CPA Australia members.



Professor Maryam Omari, Centre Deputy Director and Executive Dean of the School of Business and Law. Photo credit: Provided

MEET THE MEMBERS – LEADERSHIP TEAM



PROFESSOR TIM BENTLEY

Professor Tim Bentley is Director of the ECU Centre for Work + Wellbeing.

Tim is an experienced research leader, mentor and supervisor. As former director of the New Zealand Work Research Institute, Tim is rated 'world standard' in his research field according to New Zealand's Performance Based Research Fund quality assessment exercise (A ranked).

He has led many major government-funded research projects in the fields of psychosocial risk, workplace ill-treatment, employee health, safety and wellbeing, and his research has been supported by over \$5.5M of external funding.

Tim's published research is extensive and has received considerable scholarly and public attention. Further, his research on psychosocial risk and workplace ill-treatment has had high impact on government and industry stakeholders, contributing to national policy in New Zealand and best practice guidelines/industry practice in both New Zealand and Australia. Most recently, Tim has acted as Chief Investigator and co-led multiple projects funded by the NSW and WA Governments, along with many industry-funded projects.

Tim's key research areas are: Psychosocial risks; Occupational health; Safety and wellbeing; and Human factors issues in work.



PROFESSOR MARYAM OMARI

Professor Maryam Omari is the Executive Dean of the School of Business and Law (SBL) and Deputy Director of the Centre. She is a member of the University's Executive team and has held a number of previous academic leadership positions between 2005-2015 including: Program Director MBA and Graduate Studies; Associate Dean International; Director of Undergraduate Studies; and Human Resource Management Course Coordinator.

Since becoming the Executive Dean in 2016, she led and managed a significant change agenda in SBL which has resulted in structural, cultural, academic and curriculum renewal.

As well as a university leader, Maryam is an accomplished academic. She is the author of three books, as well as countless book chapters and journal articles, and remains research-active. Her key research areas include: Dignity and respect at work; Workplace bullying; Quality of work-life issues; and Cross cultural management.

In her industry roles, Maryam has designed, developed, implemented and evaluated national projects and in-house capability building programs. Prior to academia, she worked in the public sector for over 17 years in various HR capacities including: learning and development; recruitment and selection; coordination of graduate programs; organisational development; strategic planning; leadership development and management. As an HR Manager she was a member of the State Executive of the Agency. Maryam has lived, studied and worked in the Middle East, UK and USA.

Meet the Members – Leadership Team (continued)



ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR BEN FARR-WHARTON

Ben is the Associate Dean of Management. His research specialises in employee wellbeing and compassion. For the last decade, he has worked with a broad array of organisations across the globe, to enhance workplace productivity through wellbeing, inclusion, and psychosocial safety initiatives. Ben has a nationally-recognised research profile in employee wellbeing within the policing, healthcare and public sector contexts. He has significant experience in instigating high impact university-industry engagement, having generated more than \$1million of external and national competitive funding since 2011. Ben's impressive publication record includes 31 highly ranked journal articles in a six-year period, six scholarly book chapters, and one co-edited book.



MEET THE MEMBERS – EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS



DR TOM BARRATT

Tom is a labour geographer and lecturer with significant research output and impact. His media engagement in 2021 has included an appearance on *Radio National*, and three articles for *the Conversation* on employment rights for workers in the gig economy, in Australia and internationally, with a combined readership of over 30,000 people.

Tom has contributed to Parliamentary Inquiries, giving invited expert oral evidence to a NSW and Federal Parliament Select committee, on the future of work and job security, and well as providing a written submission. This research was cited 21 times in the Job Security Committee's interim report. Tom has also assisted the Fair Work Commission with respect to an application for a new award in the gig economy.

His current research activity explores the co-production of work and place in the Pilbara, building on his already published geographically informed research in *Regional Studies* (ABDC A* journal) and *Geographical Research* (Scopus Q1) and considering the role of consumers in regulating gig work, and the experience of rideshare drivers who face labour market vulnerabilities.



DR AZADEH SHAFAEI

Dr. Azadeh Shafaei is a Lecturer at the School of Business and Law, Edith Cowan University and has previously worked as a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the School of Business and Law. Her key research areas include: Organisational Behaviour; Ethical and Inclusive Leadership; Educational Management and Leadership; Employee well-being; and Green Human Resource Management.

Prior to joining ECU, Dr Azadeh Shafaei was a Senior Researcher at the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), where she was involved in national and international research projects including a project for the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Dr Azadeh Shafaei has been actively involved in several research projects funded by internal and external bodies such as University of Science Malaysia (USM) where she obtained her PhD with full scholarship, Malaysian Ministry of Education, UNESCO Bangkok, and the OECD. She has also contributed to industry funded projects including Work and Wellbeing (BHP – Heritage), Valuing Remote Workers (Department of Water and Environmental Regulation – WA), and Flexible Work and Psychological Safety (Centre for Work, Health and Safety – NSW). Her research collaborations have resulted in conference papers, journal publications and book chapters.

Meet the Members – Early Career Researchers (continued)



DR ESME FRANKEN

Esme obtained her PhD from Victoria University of Wellington in 2019. Her main areas of interest in research relate to public sector HRM, employee resilience and positive employee behaviours. Esme uses both quantitative and qualitative methodologies in her research and has published in journals such as *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, *Review of Public Personnel Administration* and the *Journal of Management and Organisation*.



DR JENNIFER LAJOM

Jen received her PhD in Business at the Australian National University. Her research interests include workplace passion and motivation, supports and barriers in career development, and performance and well-being outcomes. She has published in various ABDC A*- and A-ranked journals such as *Human Relations* (FT50 Journals), *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *Journal of Construction Engineering and Management*, and *Journal of Career Assessment* (ABDC: A).

Meet the Members – Early Career Researchers (continued)



DR FLEUR SHARAFIZAD

Fleur Sharafizad is an early-career researcher working on a growing number of research projects. The funded projects she has worked on to-date are *Business Continuity and resilience: capacity building and upskilling post COVID-19*, which was for the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation (\$100,000). Fleur also worked on the *Ready for Response Evaluation* for the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management (DPFEM) Tasmania and Ambulance Tasmania (AT) (\$38,976), as well as *Carers Connect to Education and Employment (Try, Test and Learn)* for the Australian Medical Association (\$13,591).

Fleur's PhD examined the career progression of female academics in Australia, specifically looking at an identified bottleneck in the academic pipeline for women, which had not been previously explored. While Fleur is particularly interested in gender research, she is passionate about pragmatic research that makes an impact and advances individual, organisational and societal welfare. Some of Fleur's PhD findings have been published in *The Australian Higher Education*, *Campus Review* and *the Conversation*.



DR ALEXIS VASSILEY

Alexis is the Centre's Research Associate. He has recently conducted research for two projects on the psychosocial safety of workers working from home and has explored issues around the mental health, wellbeing, and occupational health and safety of Fly-In-Fly-Out (FIFO) workers. Alexis has published in outlets such as *Journal of Industrial Relations*, *Labour and Industry*, and *the Conversation*. His research has featured in *Campus Morning Mail*, *Radio Fremantle* and *A People's History of Australia*. He serves on the editorial board of *Labour History* (ABDC ranking 'A'). Alexis brings an industrial relations frame to work and wellbeing research as well as policy experience from roles in the public service and NGOs.

CENTRE FOR WORK + WELLBEING TEAM & ADVISORY BOARD

TEAM

Leadership Team

- Professor Tim Bentley (Director)
- Professor Maryam Omari (Deputy Director)
- Associate Professor Ben Farr-Wharton

Core members

- Dr Tom Barratt
- Dr Azadeh Shafaei
- Dr Esme Franken
- Professor Denise Jackson
- Dr Uma Jogulu
- Dr Jennifer Lajom
- Dr Alexis Vassiley

Collaborating members

- Dr Marcus Cattani
- Professor Julie Ann Pooley
- Dr Fleur Sharafizad

Higher Degree by Research students

- Michael Gyensare
- Emmanuel Kokoroko
- Ashley Speers



Advisory Board Chair
Candy Choo.

ADVISORY BOARD

The Centre is fortunate to be supported by an advisory board comprising senior and influential industry people with a wealth of experience across public and private sector organisations in Western Australia and beyond.

This ensures a two-way dialogue between researchers and industry partners. It informs how and what we research, and, in turn, we hope our research will impact wellbeing at work. The advisory board is a crucial part of this.

The committee met three times in 2021, in February, July and November. We thank them for their service and are pleased to report that all have agreed to serve for another year, including Chair Candy Choo. We also welcome new committee member Brett Cullen, Manager Employee Relations at Fortescue Metals Group.

Advisory board members

- Andy Shaw – Head of Customer Connection Services at Western Power
- Ashani Seneviratne – Principal at Mercer
- Bevan Catley – Professor at Massey University, New Zealand
- Brett Cullen – Manager Employee Relations at Fortescue Metals Group
- Candy Choo – Chair of CW+W Advisory Board. Non-Exclusive, Board Chair, Chief Executive Officer, Speaker
- Charley Jones – Associate Director at KPMG
- Jonathon Woolfrey – Managing Partner at Talenting, Dep. Chair, Catholic Education WA; Non-Exec Director & State President, AHRI, GAICD, FCPHR
- Michelle Raymond – Manager, Talent & Culture at Department of Water and Environmental Regulation
- Paul Arthur – Edith Cowan University, Society and Culture Theme Leader
- Pearl Proud – Board Chair at Community Arts Network
- Tim Bentley – Director, Centre for Work + Wellbeing, School of Business and Law at Edith Cowan University
- Maryam Omari – (Deputy Director of CW+W Advisory Board). Executive Dean, School of Business and Law at Edith Cowan University
- Ben Farr-Wharton – Associate Dean of Management, School of Business and Law at Edith Cowan University
- Janet Simmons – Industry Relationship Manager, School of Business and Law at Edith Cowan University

PUBLICATION LIST 2021

Smith, B., Goods, C., **Barratt, T.**, Veen, A. (2021). Consumer 'app-etite' for workers' rights in the Australian 'gig' economy. *Journal of Choice Modelling*, 38 (March 2021), Article number 100254. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jocm.2020.100254>.

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LOOKING FORWARD – 2022 PLANS



We have just launched our CW+W LinkedIn page to showcase the centre's research, events, industry engagement and publications.



Connect with us!



In August we will host the inaugural CW+W Industry symposium, a half day event in the Perth CBD to showcase the research of the Centre and continue to build links with industry partners and other academics.



And, of course, we will continue on our multiple research projects, collaborate with industry and other researchers in Australia and international, and strive to make work-life better!



Contact

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Find us at



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