

Love, Loyalty and Lust Conference – Couple Relationships – Policy and Practice.

The Roy McKenzie Centre for the Study of Families and Relationship Services Whakawhanaungatanga held a two-day conference in September 2006. The Conference was attended by Counsellors and Researchers. Dr Rajen Prasad, Chief Commissioner, Families Commission opened the event. The Keynote presenters were: Dr Julie Fitness, Macquarie University, Sydney; Professor Mason Durie, Massey University/Families Commission; Professor Garth Fletcher, Canterbury University; Johnella Bird, Co-director of The Family Therapy Centre, Auckland; and Robyn Salisbury, Director, Sex Therapy New Zealand Ltd. Held at Victoria University Student Union Complex, a choice of 23 workshops, over the two days, was offered to conference attendees covering a wide range of research and practice topics. The conference was generously supported by The Families Commission, with satchels donated by Telecom.

For further information on the Centre's events please visit our website: www.vuw.ac.nz/mckenzie-centre



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Greetings from Deputy Director, Jeremy Robertson



Jan is currently on sabbatical and so I have the honour of providing an introduction to the first Centre newsletter for 2007. The last year was another exciting and busy year for the Roy McKenzie Centre. A number of research projects were completed, seminars were run, research proposals written and submitted, and significant advances made in data collection for the Youth Connectedness Project. The main item in this newsletter, by Paul Jose, presents an update of this project. The second round of data collection will begin in February 2007.

On the staffing front, we welcome Vaaiga Maiava, a Pacific researcher, who joined the Centre in July 2006. More recently Carla Crespo joined us from Porto in Portugal. Carla will be working on the analysis and dissemination of data from the Youth Connectedness project. We have also had staff leave the Centre to 'see the world'. Carey O'Hagan, Kairangahau/researcher left the centre in December to travel overseas and will hopefully return next year to continue her work with the Maori component of the Youth Connectedness project.

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We recently completed two research reports on parental decision making. The first examined the decisions parents make about the use of early childhood education services, and was done for the Ministry of Education. The other looked at decisions about the use of out-of-school care services, and was completed for the Ministry of Social Development. In addition we have two publications in the Families Commission Blue Skies research series – 'New Zealanders' Satisfaction with Family Relationships and Parenting' (Jeremy Robertson) and 'Beyond Demography: History and Ritual in New Zealand Families' (Jan Pryor). Links to all these reports are on our website www.vuw.ac.nz/mckenzie-centre. As always, we are on the look out for further research and have been busy drafting proposals, two currently with the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology, and one with the Porirua Pacific Islands Forum.

Finally, on a positive note, the Tindal Foundation has made a donation to help support the development of a longitudinal study of families going through transitions. This will assist us to conduct and promote research on the impacts of family change.

Jeremy Robertson

Connectedness in Youth Project

Collection of year 1 data from our young people was completed on 3 November 2006. Due to using a data collection procedure that captured data electronically and the fact that we had cleaned our data as we went, we were able to quickly move on to analysis of this data. We are still processing parent and principal questionnaires, which were collected via pen and paper methods, and look forward to integrating this information with the young people's data once data entry is completed.

By 21 December 2006 we had submitted a preliminary report to FRST. The main details of note in the report were that we surveyed a total of 2174 young people, achieved a 30% participation rate for Maori, exceeded our targets of 600 in each of the school years 6, 8 and 10, achieved a good distribution across school deciles and our measures showed good to excellent levels of internal reliability. In addition, selected measures from our four main connectedness domains (school, family, peers and community) demonstrated that they each predicted significant amounts of the variance in wellbeing outcomes (their interactive effects were controlled for). We are extremely pleased with these outcomes.

We come into 2007 facing the Year 1 data analysis proper. A core team of analysts have met twice to orientate to the database, and all now have a copy of the database in their possession. This team comprises Dr Paul Jose, Dr Jo KleeB, Carla Crespo and from the Kaupapa Maori Research Group (KMRG) – Timoti Brown.

Dr Jose overseas the group and provides statistical guidance. He will be heavily involved in higher order analysis as well as development of his key interests: peers and copying styles.

Dr KleeB has selected the areas of sleep sufficiency, bullying/peer orientation and technology for in-depth analysis this year. She is also in the process of analysing data related to loneliness, which is generating interesting outcomes. Her other main role for 2007 is to prepare the Year 2 version of the survey for both laptop and web

delivery and to manage the data as it comes back in. We have received ethics approval for the Year 2 survey, the laptop version is ready for deployment, and the web version is progressing.

Carla Crespo will be focusing primarily on the family data, in conjunction with Dr Jan Pryor. Her other main role for 2007 is to ensure that dissemination to project participants, stakeholders, principals and communities is kept on track and processed with the greatest efficiency and value to recipients. A draft dissemination plan is in development and will be put out for wider group consultation in the near future.

Timoti Brown will take the lead in data analysis for KMRG, testing conceptual frameworks and exploring other outcomes of interest as it pertains to Maori participants in the project.

There are a number of other areas for analysis that we are particularly keen to look at, for example those related to school transitions. However, we will require Year 2 data before we can look at some of these areas in earnest.

The project team is now preparing for round 2 of data collection, and with a number of new schools that need to be visited, it will be a very busy time until June.



Staff Update



Carla Crespo joined us from Portugal in January. Carla is a psychologist and has recently submitted her thesis entitled "Family rituals in married couples: Systematic layers" at the University of Lisbon. During one year of her PhD, she was a visitor at the University of Canterbury, where she also developed research

interests in the area of social psychology of intimate relationships.

Carla has previously worked for two years in an intermediate school, focusing on vocational training and also in a centre for children and adolescents as a psychotherapist. Among other activities, she has worked as a volunteer in Mozambique and was a member of a European "Leonardo da Vinci" project named "Venezia 2".

Vaaiga Maiava, joined the Centre in July 2006. Vaaiga is currently working on developing research proposals and undertaking research for the Porirua Pacific Islands forum.

Carey O'Hagan left at the end of 2006 to travel overseas, but we hope to see Carey return briefly during 2007 to assist with the Youth Connectedness Project.

Carey's position of Kaihangarau/Researcher has been advertised in February and it is hoped that a new member of the team will be employed shortly.

Dr Sarah Dwyer will also be back with the Centre in March if her major research proposal is successful.

The Roy McKenzie Annual Lecture

The lecture was held in October 2006, with approximately 100 people attending to listen to Guest Lecturer, Judge Peter Boshier, Principal Family Court Judge. The topic of the lecture: "The New Zealand Family Court 25 years on – has the vision been realised?"

A copy of the Lecture is on our website www.vuw.ac.nz/mckenzie-centre.



Judge Peter Boshier – Principal Family Court Judge

Maximising the Benefits of Parenting Interventions

The workshop was held in August 2006, hosted by Dr Sarah Dwyer and Professor Catherine Lee, University of Ottawa, Canada. Topics such as overcoming obstacles in engaging parents in psychological services for their children, preventing and managing process issues in parent consultants were discussed, with a panel of guests including Associate Professor Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop, Director, Va'aomanu Pasifika at Victoria University, and Lesley Max, CEO, Great Potentials Foundation.