



**Institute of Community  
Psychology Aotearoa/  
New Zealand**

*proudly hosts the*

**Trans-Tasman Community  
Psychology Biennial  
Conference 2012:**

**Poverty and Inequality**

**at**

**Tapu Te Ranga Marae, Island Bay,  
Wellington**

**Wednesday evening 18th April and  
Thursday 19th April 2012**



The New Zealand Psychological Society

*Te Rōpū Mātai Hinengaro o Aotearoa*

## Wednesday April 18, 2012

- 5.00pm Powhiri (official welcome) to the Tapu Te Ranga Marae  
6.30pm Dinner at the Marae  
7.30pm Guest Speakers:  
Metiria Turei, Green Party  
Hone Harawira, Mana Party  
Nanaia Mahuta, Labour Party  
(final panel of MPs to be confirmed)

## Thursday, April 19, 2012

- 8.00am Registration  
8.30am Welcome  
9.00am Keynote address: Katie Thomas, University of Western Australia  
*AUSTRALIAN ARISTOCRACY: The Vulture Rises from the Ashes*  
9.50am Paper presentations:  
9.50am Deborah Morris-Travers and Jenny Corry  
*Poverty and the most vulnerable: Who's looking after the Children*  
10.10am Kyli Hedrick  
*Preventing participation: The consequences of Australia's policy of mandatory detention*  
10.30am Jane Furness  
*"If we know we get good wellbeing outcomes from family-focused literacy provision, it is sufficient just to measure the literacy outcomes": How government kids itself*  
10.50am Discussion  
11.10am Morning tea  
11.40am Paper presentations:  
11.40am David Fryer (and Cathy McCormack)

*Poverty and Inequality: Socio-Structural Violence from a  
Critical Standpoint*

12.00pm Cate Curtis

*Self-harm, Suicide & Social Policy: An examination of links  
between government policy, poverty, self-harm and gender*

12.20pm David Fryer

*Richard Wilkinson on inequality: a non-epidemiological  
critique*

12.40pm Discussion

1.00pm

Lunch

1.45pm

Keynote address: Charles Waldegrave and Peter King, The  
Family Centre, Lower Hutt

*Community Participation in Measuring Poverty and  
Inequality*

2.35pm

Paper presentations:

2.35pm Rose Black and Anna Cox

*Poverty and Inequality in the Waikato*

2.55pm Christine Stephens

*Whose dog are you? The health promotion implications of  
maintaining privilege and status in an unequal society*

3.15pm Amanda Gregory

*Privilege and disparities*

3.35pm Discussion

3.55pm

Afternoon tea

4.15pm

Plenary session: Australasian CP in the 21st century

5.30pm

Closing

6.00pm

Social gathering and dinner at the Marae

# Abstracts: Keynote addresses

**Dr Katie Thomas**

University of Western Australia

Telethon Institute of Child Health Research

## *AUSTRALIAN ARISTOCRACY: The Vulture Rises from the Ashes*

In Australia, as global democracy faltered, profiteering was given precedence over human welfare. Changes to the physical environment, Industrial Relations Law, Family Law and Welfare access, alchemized a new social divide. The new House of Lords quickly recreated a servant class by dissolving categories of class, sex, race and oppression into the nebulous base of “wealth, progress and the economy.” Using Amartya Sen’s definition of development as “the process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy” and Mary Wollstonecraft’s distinctions between the rights of wellbeing and the rights of agency we can see that human freedom has been particularly curtailed for women and children from indigenous and diverse backgrounds. Different kinds of freedom are interdependent and strengthen each other but agency may be the freedom critical to social change and transformational process. What does the new obscurity of some sub-classes tell us about the global portrait? How might we create relational links across the widening molecular divides of class, race and care orientation? Rarely have conditions been fostered that would enable the caring intuitive self and the production self to be integrated. How effectively have we redressed this split in our own work? Do we have a formula powerful enough to reach and include those who are overworked, carers and from marginalized contexts? An allegorical and photographic journey of physical, political, economic, interpersonal and familial landscapes will be used to illustrate changes to the cultural panorama and to raise these questions for discussion.

**Charles Waldegrave and Dr Peter King**  
Family Centre Social Policy Research Unit

***Community Participation in Measuring Poverty and Inequality***

This paper will illustrate the way people who live on low incomes participated in the development of a robust measure of poverty that has in time become the basis for the measurement of income hardship in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The New Zealand Poverty Measurement Project (NZPMP), set out a framework for developing a poverty measure, based upon a consensual methodology where democracy and the judgement of those who live on low incomes contributed substantially to setting the threshold, rather than expert judgement alone. A poverty line was developed, in association with low income households, whose daily experience is to stretch minimal budgets through the deployment of a focus group methodology.

The measures developed by NZPMP have become the basis of poverty measurement in NZ and have been able to provide the evidence base for a number of income and housing policies that have reduced poverty in the country.

# Abstracts: Presentations

## **Deborah Morris-Travers**

Manager Every Child Counts, Save the Children NZ

## **Jenny Corry**

Specialist Adviser Child and Family Services Barnardos NZ

### ***Poverty and the most vulnerable***

#### ***Who's looking after the Children***

Social and economic policies are a determining factor on whether a child can grow and develop to their full potential. Central and local government play a vital role in shaping the social determinants of wellbeing. Despite the Government's commitment to eliminating child poverty in the 2002 Agenda for Children, little progress has been made. This paper highlights the impact of poverty on outcomes for children and considers government investment in children in the areas of social wellbeing, health and education. It discusses the need for child-centred policy changes and a comprehensive "Children's Action Plan." The paper emphasises the benefits in investing in our most vulnerable members of society, our children.

The voices of children are represented through their response to a survey through the 0800WhatsUp helpline. They talk about their own experiences of poverty and inequality.

## **Kyli Hedrick**

Sessional Academic, Masters in Community Psychology Candidate and Refugee Advocate, School of Social Sciences and Psychology, Victoria University, Melbourne, Australia

### ***Preventing participation: The consequences of Australia's policy of mandatory detention***

The Australian Government has had a policy of mandatory detention for asylum seekers arriving by boat since the 1990's. This policy contrasts with those used elsewhere in the world. A large body of research, refugee accounts and grounded knowledge indicates that immigration detention

has a range of deleterious psychosocial consequences for asylum seekers, their families and their communities, both in Australia and in their home countries. Furthermore, refugee accounts and practitioner wisdom highlight that the extent of these negative psychosocial consequences is correlated with length of time spent in detention. What exactly might this mean for refugees following their release into the Australian community? In this presentation, I will draw on grounded knowledge to argue that despite the incredible resilience of refugees who have resettled in Australia, the policy of mandatory detention essentially operates to prevent participation on multiple levels.

### **Jane Furness**

Associate of the Community Psychology programme  
University of Waikato

***“If we know we get good wellbeing outcomes from family-focused literacy provision, it is sufficient just to measure the literacy outcomes”:  
How government kids itself***

The qualitative study on which this presentation is based traced the experiences of nineteen mainly Māori, Pacific and Pākehā adults in four different family-focused, English-language, adult literacy education programmes over eighteen months. Wide-ranging positive effects linked to culturally-differentiated concepts of wellbeing were found for the participants, their families and communities. The study showed that whilst enhancement of skills in the ‘dominant’ literacy was often an important contributor to these positive outcomes, the key influences were the programme staff’s ‘social-relational’ view of literacy, the strengths, rights and trust-based view of people staff held, and their overarching concern for people’s holistic wellbeing. Revealing poverty and inequality at different levels in the social system, the study supported the view that government perspectives on what constitutes quality of life and how it can be achieved remain dominated by Western individualistic/economic ideals. Continued non-legitimation of different groups’ perspectives is evident in the literacy policy environment.

## **Cathy McCormack and David Fryer (David to present)**

David Fryer: Professor and Head of Research, Australian Institute of Psychology; Professor Extraordinarius, University of South Africa; Honorary Associate Professor, University of Queensland; Honorary Senior Research Fellow, University of Stirling, Scotland

### ***Poverty and Inequality: Socio-Structural Violence from a Critical Standpoint***

How should socio-structural violence be understood and how should that understanding be progressively deployed? For over a quarter of a century, Cathy and David have worked in mutually supportive and mutually stimulating ways, as community activist and community psychologist respectively, attempting to address this question. Each has focused critically, albeit in different ways, on interconnections between material poverty, societal inequality, socio-economic policy and psycho-social destruction in attempts to understand and contest socio-structural violence. Cathy and David argue that the contemporary world is characterised by an unremitting war without bullets against the poor and that things are swiftly going from bad to worse. The question is not whether socio-structural violence characterises contemporary Western societies but through which apparatuses socio-structural violence is achieved in particular domains and its roles in those domains in rendering people governable through processes of violent subjectification. Poverty and inequality are key weapons in the war without bullets.

## **Cate Curtis**

Senior Lecturer, University of Waikato

### ***Self-harm, Suicide & Social Policy: An examination of links between government policy, poverty, self-harm and gender***

Increasing rates of youth suicide have been an issue of great concern in many western countries over recent years, especially in New Zealand, due to our extremely high rates of youth suicide. Though a link between suicide and socio-economic deprivation is acknowledged by some researchers and policy-makers, this tends to be downplayed in favour



of individualistic explanations for suicide among young men, while women's self-harm continues to receive less attention than 'serious suicidal behaviour'. Yet there is a clear gender difference in self-harm, of at least 3 females : 1 male. Though research on self-harm is increasing, very little addresses links between socio-economic status and gender. In this paper I will argue that economic circumstances overwhelmingly impacted a cohort of people aged in their mid-late teens during the term of the Fourth Labour Government and the following economic/legislative changes have particularly impacted young women.

### **David Fryer**

Professor and Head of Research, Australian Institute of Psychology;  
Professor Extraordinarius, University of South Africa; Honorary Associate  
Professor, University of Queensland; Honorary Senior Research Fellow,  
University of Stirling, Scotland

### ***Richard Wilkinson on inequality: a non-epidemiological critique***

The research of epidemiologist Richard Wilkinson (e.g. *The Spirit Level: Why more equal societies almost always do better*) is sophisticated and thorough within its own frame of reference. For people on the left, amongst whom I consider myself, critique of Wilkinson seems to be almost inevitably reactionary and anti-emancipatory and Wilkinson makes claims about the consequences of societal inequality which many of us are delighted to see given the status of knowledge. However if progressive debate is not to become petrified, critique also seems absolutely necessary especially for community psychologists who work from a critical standpoint and do not subscribe to many of the assumptions about apolitical science, knowledge and reality which epidemiologists like Wilkinson do. In my presentation I will engage in 'critique' of Wilkinson's work in the spirit of Foucault's dictum that "To do criticism is to make harder those acts which are now too easy".

## Rose Black and Anna Cox

Researchers, Poverty Action Waikato

### *Poverty and Inequality in the Waikato*

The impacts of poverty and inequality are experienced at global, national and regional levels of the societies and communities we live in. The growing unequal distribution of wealth is impacting greatly on the lives of people who manage on low incomes, along with a heightened sense of vulnerability for the 99% of people who control a decreasing proportion of the world's wealth. As with other regions in Aotearoa and the Pacific, many people in the Waikato are experiencing increased food and living costs, an ongoing lack of affordable housing, and limited work and employment opportunities. The degree of social connectedness in the Waikato is compromised by a significant and persistent level of economic inequality. Using statistics and stories Rose and Anna will give an overview of who lives in the Waikato and income inequality in the region. Work and employment opportunities, along with housing issues will be canvassed as we open the window on poverty in the Waikato.

## Christine Stephens

Associate Professor, School of Psychology, Massey University

### *Whose dog are you? The health promotion implications of maintaining privilege and status in an unequal society.*

Since acceptance of the important effect of socioeconomic inequalities on health there has been a great deal of health promotion policy and practice directed toward underprivileged groups with the aim of improving their health. This focus on disadvantaged people and poor communities, to help them empower themselves and improve their lot, often fails because it ignores the role of broader society. We neglect to note the crucial part that the advantaged play in perpetuating inequalities. Society may be understood as a world of power relations in which those with privilege are actively working to maintain their advantage. Research has shown the everyday ways in which middle class people maintain their advantage, and furthermore, often hi-jack the programmes designed to improve the health of the poor. I use some examples from these areas to suggest ways in which

a psychological perspective can contribute to an understanding of how inequalities are perpetuated in everyday life.

### **Amanda Gregory & the Privilege Research Team**

Researcher, Te Ropu Whariki, Massey University

#### ***Privilege and disparities***

Writers such as Powell et al (2005) propose that disparity can be conceptualised in two distinct ways – in a disadvantage or privilege framework. Exciting recent research on disparities goes some way to highlighting the inequitable distribution of societal resources at the individual, regional, national and international level. Momentum around the development of appropriate theories and study design has been steady and exciting. A fundamental problematic in disparities research is that the structuring of life's chances and opportunity does not occur without positive outcomes for some groups above others. While research has increased our understandings of the effects of structural forces such as racism and marginalisation on social and health disparities there are fewer studies that explore structural privilege and the experiences of groups who are frequently positioned in the positive end of statistics. This paper reflects on some preliminary findings from a research study looking at privilege, disparity and health.



The New Zealand Psychological Society

*Te Rōpū Mātai Hinengaro o Aotearoa*

The New Zealand Psychological Society (NZPsS) was established in 1947 and is the largest professional association for psychologists in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Over one thousand practitioner, academic and student psychologists are members of the NZPsS.

The New Zealand Psychological Society is an incorporated society governed by an elected National Executive and managed by an executive director and staff based in its National Office in Wellington. The Society has regional branches as well as institutes and divisions representing the major psychology specialties.

*Supporting and advancing psychology in Aotearoa/New Zealand -  
Awahi kokiringa ā whakamatai hinengaro i Aotearoa*



The Institute of Community Psychology Aotearoa was officially launched in 2004. IComPA has been established to provide a collective identity for community psychologists in Aotearoa. As a sub-group within NZPsS, the aim is to attract a broad membership among people in fields such as public health, iwi health services, community development and evaluation research. (You do not have to be a psychologist to belong but you must be a Subscriber to the NZPsS.)

### **Mission**

The Institute of Community Psychology promotes the application of psychology and related knowledge to enhancing social and cultural justice within Aotearoa.