

## Centre for Research on Ageing, Health & Wellbeing

### Symposium Session:

## Mental Health and Wellbeing

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**Friday 1 November 2019**

9:00 – 10:30am, followed by light refreshments

Bob Douglas Lecture Theatre, Building 62A (entrance on Eggleston Road)

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Rev Prof Elizabeth MacKinlay



Ms Martine Cosgrove



Dr Richard Burns

*This symposium will examine the utility of broader wellbeing measures to describe quality of life across the adult lifespan. Dr Burns will first present a general introduction and theoretical overview of personal wellbeing models and how such indicators can be used to inform local and national policy, and to complement traditional measures of psychological distress. The following presenters will then demonstrate the application of different wellbeing dimensions in two very different contexts. Ms. Cosgrove will present on her content analysis of Australian Defence Force health policy to examine how wellbeing and positive mental health is contextualised in an organisational context. Rev. Prof Mackinlay will present on her research and practical work by discussing on her work regarding the spiritual dimensions of wellbeing with a particular focus on the importance of meaning and personal narrative in older adults, and with a special focus on those living with dementia.*

### Symposium Agenda

09:00 am	Chair: Dr Richard Burns – Welcome and Introduction
09:05 am	Rev Prof Liz MacKinlay - Narrative: forming us as human beings, in our cultural, and spiritual selves.
09:35 am	Ms Martine Cosgrove - Flourishing in the Army? Mental Health Policy in the ADF
10:00 am	Dr Richard Burns – The role of wellbeing as a complementary indicator of individual and population health
10:30 am	Conclusion and morning tea



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## **Centre for Research on Ageing, Health & Wellbeing**

### **Symposium Session:**

## **Mental Health and Wellbeing**

## **Symposium Contributors**

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### **Rev. Professor Elizabeth MacKinley**

Rev Prof Elizabeth MacKinley AM, FACN, PhD Elizabeth is both a registered nurse and a priest in the Anglican Church of Australia. She was the inaugural Director of the Centre for Ageing and Pastoral Studies at St Mark's National Theological Centre, Canberra 2001 to 2012. Professor MacKinley is a member of the Centre for Public and Contextual Theology (PACT) at Charles Sturt University where she researches issues around spirituality, frailty and ageing. The book: Finding meaning in the experience of dementia. (MacKinley and Trevitt) was awarded the 2013 Australasian Journal of Ageing book prize. A second edition of Elizabeth's book: The Spiritual Dimension of Ageing was published in 2017.

#### **Abstract - Narrative: forming us as human beings, in our cultural, and spiritual selves**

The individual life story becomes more important as people grow older. It is the carrier of meaning and hope, or despair, into the final life career. It is more than a series of historical facts but connects deeply with what it is to be human; it is unique for each person, yet each person is part of a wider community and their story interacts with culture and community.

This paper outlines the model of spiritual tasks of ageing (MacKinley 2017) to address ways of connecting with story, focusing on meaning, through the process of spiritual reminiscence and in this case addressing the use of spiritual reminiscence for people who have dementia.

### **Ms Martine Cosgrove**

Martine Cosgrove is the Director People Intelligence and Research with the Australian Department of Defence. She has worked as a psychologist over 20 years in a range of settings including health, education, child protection, and the criminal justice system and non-government agencies. Prior to 2005 she worked with adults and children who were victims of crime and interpersonal violence. She was awarded a Master of Clinical Psychology in 2007 (ANU) and the same year commenced work for the Department of Defence, where she has held roles in mental health research, clinical governance, and service delivery, and as a security psychologist. In her current role, Martine leads a multidisciplinary team delivering research services across a portfolio of programs in organisational behaviour, culture and workforce intelligence. She is the Chair of the Defence People Research Low Risk Ethics Panel, and the National Lead for Australia on the Technical Panel for Human Resource

Management, which is an international research collaboration under the Technical Cooperation Program between the Five Eyes Nations.

Martine was awarded a Sir Roland Wilson Foundation PhD Scholarship in 2014. Her PhD research examines positive mental health in the military context, bringing together ecological, developmental, life-course and policy perspectives on mental health outcomes. The research findings provide an evidence base for a developmental-ecological framework for military mental health policy.

#### **Abstract - Flourishing in the Army? Mental Health Policy in the ADF**

The presentation will draw on Martine's PhD research which examined positive mental health in the military context, bringing together ecological, developmental, life-course and policy perspectives on positive mental health outcomes. The presentation will discuss military mental health policy and the implications of pursuing positive mental health impacts in the context of historical influences, the Australian Defence Force (ADF) mission, and whole of government policy for veterans. It will discuss the findings of a content analysis of ADF mental health policy (2002-2018), and some recent examples of positive mental health translation and implementation in the US and Australia.

#### **Dr Richard Burns**

Richard Burns BMus, BA, PGDE, MSc, PhD is a senior research fellow at ANU. A jazz musician by night, or by day if Floriade is on, Richard completed Masters and Doctoral studies into the convergence of employee characteristics and organisational climate on employee and organisational wellbeing and morale. Over the last 13 years, he has been based at the Centres of Mental Health (CMHR) and Research in Ageing, Health and Wellbeing (CRAHW). With primary substantive focus in areas related to mental health and wellbeing, Richard has a methodological expertise that has seen him lead and engage with other areas of interest including in healthy ageing, cognitive ageing, job strain and even in student motivation and engagement within the higher education context. Richard is currently completing a Masters of Biostatistics at the University of Sydney, where surprisingly he has performed far better in the pure maths classes than in some of the applied statistics classes. When not following orders from his wife, Richard is a keen follower of all rugby codes, union, league and head-high.

#### **Abstract - The role of wellbeing as a complementary indicator of individual and population health**

Wellbeing can have quite different meanings depending on one's professional and personal outlook. Traditionally, wellbeing has been defined in terms of economic growth and wealth. More recently this has been extended to incorporate social factors including health care provision, education access and equality, to name but a few. In a medical context, health and wellbeing reflects the degree of burden of disease and disability. For others, questions of wellbeing relate to issues of psychological functioning and feeling, defined in terms of cognitive function, affect, motivation and spirituality. Increasingly, governments, organisations and hipsters have argued for policy to be guided by principles of wellbeing and flourishing, but there remains debate about what 'wellbeing' looks like. Drawing on an international and Australian context, this presentation will present a brief summary of the way in which different wellbeing measures should complement and not replace current indicators of population and individual economic, social and health status. As a brief example, the mental health of Australian's since the beginning of the 21st century will be summarised and compared to other markers of personal wellbeing which provide a fuller description of the wellbeing of people in Australia, whilst recognising the complexity that underpins wellbeing definitions. Recommendation for how wellbeing can guide government policy will be presented.