

# WOMEN AND RESEARCH

JUNE 2010

**Mission statement:** To foster an active and inclusive research environment in order to enhance high quality research output.

## FROM THE PEN OF ANGELA

Dear Researchers,  
Welcome to our June newsletter.

This month's seminar session will feature our industry based guest presenter, Ms Shirley Robertson, Customer Operations Manager for the ConnectEast Group. Ms Robertson will speak about senior management, starting at 12.30pm, June 21. A light lunch will be provided.

Thank you to Professor Gill Palmer for guest presenting at our May seminar. Professor Palmer spoke about career development and progression for women in senior positions.

Thank you to Sarah, our feature

conversation this month. Sarah has begun some interesting research looking at the impact of the baby bonus.

Recently, I read some interesting information about a successful mentoring program in America. I have included some information on page 4. And RMIT news can be found on pages 2 and 3.

Tricia Hallahan sent me an email recently. She said she was "prompted to email because I have just read the Good Weekend and despair about the state of women's (in) equality in the workplace. For too long women have been blind to the inequality they suffer - many not realising it until too late - i.e. mid-career. The

facade of equality is very strong!"

Tricia has started a new business "with two other fabulous women", an alternative dispute resolution business targeted at family breakdown. Tricia tells me it "is an interdisciplinary practice and is the first business of its type in Australia. The business website is [www.melca.com.au](http://www.melca.com.au)". Tricia says the "website is new and will be further developed - any constructive criticism/feedback would be most welcome".

Do you have some exciting news? Please email me and let me share it in this newsletter.

Happy researching.

Angela

## INTERVIEW WITH SARAH SINCLAIR, CONTINUED PG 3

Having completed my BA and MA in Economics in succession at the National University of Ireland Galway, I had the opportunity to continue in the realm of academia but I chose to gain some industry experience first, commencing with the expanding financial sector in Dublin's IFSC and subsequently in London.

I spent two years in London at a small venture capital company analyzing business plans for potential online business ventures. It was an exciting time and I left just prior to the

dotcom bust in the late 1990's. In Australia I worked for a renewable energy company. This was good exposure to Australian corporate life in a sector that has been the focus of many policy developments but which also has a well developed derivatives trading market.

Commencing at RMIT in 2005, I have found academic life the most interesting and stimulating work environment to date. I particularly enjoy the balance between interaction with students and the opportunity to

pursue individual research passions.

I am excited by the project I am currently working on which relates to fertility choice in Australia. This is particularly salient for me as I have just recently returned from maternity leave. I don't believe that children necessarily preclude career advancement but for



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Ms Sarah Sinclair

### INTERVIEW

Research on the impact of the Baby Bonus by Sarah Sinclair



## WOMEN AND RESEARCH

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS

**Career planning for academic women:** This two day Career Planning for Academic Women program will encourage women to examine their own current capabilities and career preferences and understand the need to build effective career plans in addition to teaching/research skill development strategies. It will provide insights to help develop networks with the academic community and colleagues within RMIT and foster effective personal practices to better manage the demands of the role of career academic.

\*6 and 7 July, 9:30 am - 5:00 pm (Two day program)

Please register online:  
<http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse:ID=arv78ie097fxz>

**Writing an application for promotion:** This workshop is aimed at academics who are applying for promotion to levels C, D or E in the 2010 promotion round. The session will provide applicants with general tips on how to present the case for promotion and respond to the criteria; and a forum for the sharing of advice on application preparation.

\*7 July, 10:00 am - 12:30 pm (Bundoora)

\*14 July, 2:00pm - 4:30 pm (City)

Please register online:  
<http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse:ID=czp8s30sjd9pz>

**Writing your application for promotion to Associate Pro-**

**fessor or Professor:** This workshop is aimed at academics who are applying for promotion to Associate Professor or Professor level in the 2010 promotion round. The session will provide applicants with general tips on how to present the case for promotion to Associate Professor or Professor level and respond to the criteria; and a forum for the sharing of advice on application preparation.

\*2 July, 10:00 am - 12:30 pm

Please register online:  
<http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse:ID=6ix7sqj8bsepz>

**Promoting your research through the media:** This session offers basic training for RMIT academics and teaching staff on working productively with the media. The training covers strategies for promoting your research or event through the media, what makes a good media release, what makes a good media event, advice on what journalists love (and what they hate), plus interactive training to improve your interview skills and boost your confidence when dealing with the media.

The session is aimed at media beginners. It will be useful for academics with little or no media experience who would like to gain confidence and skills in dealing with the media.

\*23 July, 9:30am - 2:30pm

Please register online:  
<http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse:ID=e6ciphvt5rig>

**Academic writing for publication:** This seminar is aimed at academics who would like to find out more information on how to publish their academic work, including choosing topics, setting publications goals and targeting the right readership.

\*15 June 2010, 12.00pm - 1.00pm

Please register online:  
<http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse:ID=eu48rv792ud2>

**How to Manage a Research Project:** This seminar is aimed at academic and research staff who would like more information about setting up budgets, monitoring and controlling expenditure, submitting progress and final reports, and preparing financial reports and acquittals.

\*18 June 2010, 11.00am - 12.00pm

Please register online:  
<http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse:ID=e1klpg6cgs81>

**Preparing a Budget for an ARC Application:** This seminar is aimed at academics who would like to find out more information on how to prepare a budget for an ARC grant.

\*29 June 2010, 11.00am - 12.00pm

Please register online:  
<http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse:ID=3rix8kemsc4cz>



"You must do the things you think you cannot do." - Eleanor Roosevelt



## WOMEN AND RESEARCH

### INTERVIEW WITH SARAH, CONTINUED FROM PG 1

many women finding the “right time” to have children is difficult due to career progression aspirations and income constraints (to name a few) .

The Australian Baby bonus was introduced in July 2004 and this research follows on from some work conducted by Gans and Leigh (2009) relating to short run discretionary birth timing.

The project team consisting of Jonathan Boymal, Ashton De Silva with the added support of Professor Lisa Farrell, and myself, have been assessing the impacts of this policy on fertility choice.

Former treasurer Peter Costello’s rhetoric accompanying the introduction of the policy urged couples to “have one for your husband and one for your wife and one for the country”.

Our research aims to conduct an in depth analysis of

the baby bonus, its efficacy in achieving the desired goal of higher fertility rates but also its possible distortionary effects on decision making with respect to child bearing and rearing.

There have been concerns that teenage Mums have been particularly responsive to the Policy’s monetary incentive which has broad implications for both the mother and child’s future.

Interestingly our preliminary data analysis has picked up potential spillover effects of this policy on abortion rates and children in foster care.

I will be presenting some initial results at the School of Economics, Finance and Marketing seminar on June 4, so please come along if you want to hear more.

The most exciting aspect of this research is that fertility choice permeates many sectors of the economy such as health, education and the

labour force.

The initial research will subsequently generate opportunities to explore these implications in greater depth in the future and thus generate a stream of research output beyond the scope of the original project.

I feel the project team framework is particularly effective and helps address skill gaps and provides a mentoring environment for less experienced researcher such as myself.

I look forward to seeing you on the 4<sup>th</sup> of June School Seminar

*For details of the School of Economics, Finance and Marketing Seminars please contact Associate Professor Mike Reid*

*([mike.reid@rmit.edu.au](mailto:mike.reid@rmit.edu.au)) or come along to the Level 12 Seminar Room, located in 108.12.84. A light lunch is provided.*

“Interestingly our preliminary data analysis has picked up potential spillover effects of this policy on abortion rates and children in foster care.”



### RMIT-PAY EQUITY FORUM

The Women and Work Research Cluster, Centre for Governance, Work and Technologies invites you to a forum on new directions in research and action on pay equity. The historic pay equity test case currently before Fair Work Australia and a re-engagement by industry to overcome gender inequity are focusing attention on different strategies for tackling and overcoming the intractability of pay inequity.

**Thursday 3 June, 12-2 pm,**

**RMIT Research Lounge, Building 28, Level 5** A light lunch will be provided.

**Speakers: Dr Helen Szoke**, Chief Commissioner of the Victorian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, will talk about how her new powers under the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 will assist her to investigate systemic discrimination such as pay inequity.

**Linda White**, Assistant National Secretary, Australian Services Union, will talk

about building the research and evidence base for the social and community services industry pay equity case.

**Professor Glenda Strachan**, Griffith University, will be speaking about the ARC Linkage project which she is undertaking into pay and gender equity in the higher education sector. The project is in conjunction with the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU), UniSuper and Universities Australia Executive Women.



## MENTORING PROGRAM THAT REALLY WORKS

CeMENT is a mentoring program offered by the Committee for the Status of Women in the Economics profession (CSWEP). Information about CeMENT was recently published in the Royal Economic Society Newsletter and I thought it might be of interest to our Women and Research members.

This American based mentoring program aimed at female economists in the USA has achieved huge successes. After five years the treatment group averaged more grants, additional publications and were more likely to have a top-tier publication than the control group. What makes this mentoring program so effective?

It seems that multi-faceted, single-shot mentoring of women by women is effective. So effective that CSWEP plans to increase the number of women moving from PhD completion to tenure positions in the US.

The program is so successful that membership has resulted in an increased likelihood of remaining in academia and applying for, and receiving, tenure.

The following information has come from the CSWEP website, <http://www.cswep.org/mentoring/register.htm>. CSWEP has received funding from the American Economic Association to continue its successful series of mentoring workshops to help junior economists overcome the tenure hurdle, with a special focus on addressing the unique challenges that women face at the beginning of their careers.

The national workshops typically consists of a two-day program and like the regionals, participants will be arranged into small groups based on their research area and will interact with each other and with senior (tenured) faculty

mentors.

The workshop focuses around small group interaction, where group members and mentors discuss and offer feedback on the participants' research. In addition, in the past we have offered a number of topic-oriented, how-to sessions. Possible topics are below:

- How to write a grant application
- How to write a tenure statement
- How to develop a tenure case
- How to attend a conference and network
- How to revise a paper (referees and editors)
- How to balance work and family

Here's what three participants had to say about their experiences:

*Junior faculty benefit from the CeMENT workshop in many ways. First, the content of the sessions and reference materials provided are very helpful, particularly in the area of research. Second, the workshop provides many opportunities to meet successful people, particularly women. Junior women can learn a lot from senior women in a variety of areas – everything from how to handle a negative referee's report, to the suggestion of hiring a cleaning service to free up some time in our lives! Third, the workshop provides junior faculty with an instant support group of people with similar research and teaching interests.*

*Members of my research group send e-mails on a monthly basis, and we are planning sessions for two future meetings.*

Lisa Jepson at University of Northern Iowa.

*What aspect of the workshop was most beneficial to you?*

*1. Tips! I have lists of things that I should be saving for my tenure file, ways to get my name out there, strategies that will help me get published, get tenure, and stay sane in the process. 2. The biggest realization for me is that although there is uncertainty surrounding tenure requirements, I need to ask questions. Within days of the conference, I was already discussing what I need to do with other members of my department. Everyone should be so lucky as to participate in this conference. It's an eye-opening and extremely positive experience. Gwendolyn Alexander at Fordham.*

*The most beneficial aspect [of the workshop] was the nature of the answers I received from the senior faculty members. There was no circumventing the questions.*

*For instance, if I asked, how many hours I should spend on doing such and such. The answer was x hours, not "well, that differs from person to person, do what you are most comfortable with."*

*In other words, there were real solutions to all the problems. This workshop was probably the most important thing that has happened in my career so far (okay, I'm not tenured yet). I consult the notes that I took during the workshop over and over again.*

Tinni Sen at VMI.

It is the intention of the EFM Women and Research group that all members benefit for their involvement.

Women and Research seeks to develop an active and inclusive research environment in order to enhance high quality research output.

Contact Angela if you would like to be a part of this group.



**"Mentoring is a brain to pick, an ear to listen, and a push in the right direction."**

**John Crosby**

