Quarterly Newsletter - September 2025



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Message from the Director

Dear External partners and CERC members,

CERC staff and members have been working on a number of exciting community projects, collaborating with industry to inform programs and community initiatives. The feasibility study of the Walhalla Goldfields Railway, exploring the barriers, benefits and enablers to an extension of the railway through to Erica, is heading into the community engagement phase with a number of workshops scheduled during October.

CERC has been working with Melbourne City Football Club, evaluating the impact of

the City Futures program, which is delivered in three high schools in the city of Casey. Teachers and students who have participated in the program were interviewed; findings will inform future program delivery and funding.

Over the next two months, CERC will be leading a series of workshops at each campus of Federation University to co-design an evaluation framework to measure the impact of our Co-op model. Federation University is Australia's first co-op university, incorporating work placement opportunities for students. We welcome your involvement in the co-design process and look forward to working with you in the future.

For a media release about supporting innovative research and evaluation, click the link: <u>Supporting innovative research and evaluation - Federation University Australia</u>

Professor Joanne Porter leads a multidisciplinary team of researchers and evaluators, working on projects with industry partners, government departments, agencies and community groups to shift thinking in evaluation research by empowering communities to grow through evidence-based innovation.



Professor Joanne Porter

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CERC Announcements

<u>CERC Professional Development Workshop</u>

The Collaborative Evaluation and Research Centre (CERC) warmly invites all CERC members, including staff and HDR students, to a one-day, on-campus professional development workshop focused on key aspects of research practice and growth.

Location: Berwick Campus, Room BER_901_203

Date: Friday, 10 October 2025

Time: 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

This workshop is designed to offer valuable insights and practical guidance for researchers at all stages of their academic journey. We hope you'll find the sessions both engaging and enriching.

Click here to enrol - CERC Professional Development Workshop - Tickets

We look forward to your participation!

CERC Writing Retreat

In July, CERC staff, members and HDR students attended a writing retreat at the RACV resort in Inverloch, Victoria.

The purpose of the retreat was to provide CERC staff and PhD students an opportunity to review work and writing goals and attend to these without distraction throughout the week. Furthermore, a range of social activities, mentoring, and professional development opportunities were provided.

A variety of professional and social activities were available to staff and PhD students throughout the retreat, including:

- Uninterrupted writing time
- Research capacity building sessions Research funding
- Opportunities to undertake qualitative thematic analysis
- PhD student workshop
- Mindfulness and wellbeing sessions Qigong, gym/walk/swim, self-defence
- Social and relationship building Group dinners, card games

There were a great number of goals achieved, including research manuscripts drafted, project reports and thematic analysis written, PhD chapters commenced/completed, and building of multidisciplinary relationships within the team and HDR students attending.

We encourage CERC members to register their interest in attending future writing retreats.



CERC writing retreat attendees



HDR students working on data analysis and thesis drafting



CERC team thematic analysis

Leadership Training and Network Event

A Leadership Training and Network Event was held on 10 July this year at Albert Coates Complex, Federation University's Mount Helen Campus, as part of the project "Creating Inclusive Work Environments through Leadership and Management Innovations". The Collaborative Evaluation & Research Centre (CERC), in partnership with the Victorian Skills Authority (VIC) and Federation TAFE, aims to create inclusive work environments in the construction and manufacturing sectors by introducing leadership and management innovations.

The event brought together apprentices, managers, and emerging leaders from construction and manufacturing across the Ballarat region for a full day of hands-on training and professional networking.

The training focused on developing inclusive leadership skills and sharing real experiences and best practices from industry leaders. Participants benefited from practical workshops, expert-led coaching, and small-group discussions designed to build confidence and provide actionable strategies for creating more inclusive workplaces.

A key goal of the day was to gather insights and real stories to help shape a new online learning package for the sector. Interviews, panel discussions, and case studies were filmed to create authentic training content, and participants will have the chance to review and help refine the final modules.

By involving local workers and leaders, this co-designed training resource will ensure that the final learning package is practical, relevant, and tailored to the needs of the construction and manufacturing industries.

Thank you to everyone who contributed their time, experiences, and ideas — together we are helping to build more inclusive, future-ready workplaces.



Participants and facilitators of the training



Panel session

Professional Development Sessions

CERC has offered many professional development online sessions during the past

several months. Many of these sessions have been recorded. If you have not been able to attend any of the sessions below and would like to view the recording, please contact the team via the CERC email address - cerc@federation.edu.au.

- Introduction to Covidence
- Grant Budget and Funding Forms
- Quantitative Report Writing
- Ethical participant recruitment, IP and sharing data
- Infographics CANVA info session
- Mentimeter workshop
- Virtual Reality and Pain
- Research Integrity Presentation
- Developing International Research Collaboration
- Publishing with Open Access
- Bibliometric analysis

Seed Grants

In June each year, CERC aims to provide members with an opportunity to apply for a Seed Grant to the value of \$5000. The purpose of the Seed Grant is to stimulate research projects that may enhance early-career researchers' portfolios, benefit communities we work with and meet the values of CERC. The Seed Grants are aimed at early-career researchers. Funds can be used for open-access publication, dissemination, research assistance, data collection and analysis, or the purchase of research-related equipment.

In 2025, the Seed Grants were awarded to

• Dr Divya Peter

Co-Researchers & affiliations: Dr. Robeena Emmanuel and Dr Bindu Joseph **Title:** Mental Health Awareness and Help-seeking Behaviours in Second Generation Migrants in Australia: A Mixed Method Intervention Study

Dr Elissa Dabkowski

Co-Researchers & affiliations: Chelsea Webb, A/Prof Loretta Garvey, Amber Van Drevan, Simon Williams

Title: Enhancing Nursing Students' Capability in Preventing and Responding to Falls, Pressure Injuries, and Medication Errors: A Mixed Methods Evaluation of a Co-Designed Workshop Series

• Dr Ria de Gracia

Co-Researchers & affiliations: Dr. Marlies Alvarenga and Prof. Rachel Grieve **Title:** Evaluating the Impact of the Kurnai Young Parents Program (KYPP): A Qualitative Study

Dr Natalia Albein Urios

Co-Researchers & affiliations: Prof Rachel Grieve & Kaiden Hein (FED) / Dr Melissa Kirkovski (DEAKIN)

Title: Autism, Impulsivity and Addiction

Staff Updates

Farewell

Dr Sambath My

It is with great sadness that we farewelled Sambath My at the end of July. He joined the CERC team in 2023 as a Research Fellow.

Sambath completed his PhD in Development Studies, winning the *SSPS Best PhD Award 2020* from the School of Social and Political Sciences (SSPS) at the University of Melbourne, Australia. His PhD fields of research covered gender relations, studies of men and masculinities, social policy, and socio-economic development. He also completed his master's degree in Development Studies (Gender & Development), gaining *First Class Honours* at the University of Melbourne.

In CERC, Sambath has been vital as a Research Fellow, supporting numerous projects and leading projects including the Our Equal Local Government: A Project for Preventing Gendered Violence and Sexual Harassment, Evaluation of the Peer Relationship Education Partners (PREP) Program – GCASA, Sexual Lives and Respectful Relationships (SL&RR), and Development of a Network to Support Gippsland's Migration Strategy Project.

Sambath will be greatly missed. We wish him happiness and good luck on the next stage of his life!

Celebrating CERC staff and members

HDR news/success

 Dr Megan Simic has been awarded the 2025 Dean's Award for Excellence in a PhD thesis. Each year, the Dean, Graduate Research at Federation University considers all theses which were completed in the previous 12-month period and decides upon the winner/s of the *Dean's Awards for Excellence*. Dr Simic was the joint winner for August 2024-July 2025, we wish to congratulate Megan and her supervisory team for this exciting achiement.

HDR Successful Completions

Marianne Ota

Project title: The Experiences of Nurse Leaders in Promoting and Maintaining Civility in Australian Regional and Rural Health and Aged Care Settings: A Qualitative Study.

Pritimoy Das

Project title: Common mental health issues experienced by migrants in Australia: a mixed method study.

Parul Parul

Project title: Investigating substance use disorders and psychological intervention.

Bonnie Watt (Das Neves)

Project title: Improving inclusion on the Bus: The Better Transport Insensitivity for All Passengers (Better Trip) project.

Pinyadapat Vacharanukrauh

Project title: Breast Cancer and Cardiotoxicity: A Scoping Review, Nationwide Cohort Study, and Evidence-Based Pharmacological Interventions.

CERC congratulates the current and previous HDR students on their wonderful achievements!

2025 HDR Conference Award

We would like to congratulate all HDR students who participated in the 2025 HDR Conference at Federation University in July. Special congratulations to the CERC HDR member for the best oral presentation:

Kerry de Vent

Conference acceptance and presentations

Natalie Bransgrove

 Accepted for oral presentation at an online Webinar with the Australian College of Nursing.

Megan Hekkema

 Accepted for oral presentation at the 2025 SMAANZ (Sport Management Association of Australia and New Zealand) Conference, Auckland, New Zealand.

Dr Emma Siesmaa

• Presented at VIC/TAS 2025 Regional Conference, Melbourne, Australia.

Dr Anju Sreeram

- Presented at the 49th International Mental Health Nursing Conference (ACMHN 2025), Brisbane, Australia.
- Presented at the 36th International Nursing Research Congress, Seattle, USA.



Anju Sreeram at the International Nursing Research Congress

Christine Trotman

 Presented at the World Organisation of Family Doctors (WONCA) World Conference in Lisbon, Portugal.

Dr Ishanka Weerasekara

- Presented a poster at the Australian Podiatry Conference 2025, Broadbeach,
 QLD. Australia.
- Presented a poster at the 19th Annual Florey Postgraduate Research Conference, Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences. Adelaide, Australia.
- Presented at GIN 2025 Conference, Palexpo International Exhibition and Convention Centre, Geneva.

Amy Cowan

- Attended the launch of the Ultimate Leaders Toolkit and leadership workshop on behalf of the ACN Leadership Faculty at the Australian College of Nursing, National Nursing Forum.
- Delivered a workshop masterclass on enhancing mentorship in diabetes education at the Australasian Diabetes Congress.

Other Achievements

Natalie Bransgrove

Recently, Natalie Bransgrove, a PhD student at Federation University working with East Grampians Health Service, has shared insights from DELIVER relevant to Hospital-in-the-Home (HITH) with senior policy advisors in the Victorian Department of Health's Older People and Aged Care and Hospitals and Health Services divisions. The Department is set to review and update the HITH guidelines over the next 12 months, providing an opportunity for her work to inform this process. The discrete choice experiment DELIVER will lead this year, exploring consumer preferences for HITH, will be timely and valuable for implementing the revised guidelines, Natalie Bransgrove is an associate researcher on this study. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this work.

Dr Samuel Zhang

Dr Samuel Zhang, currently a Senior Lecturer of Economics at Federation University, has recently been appointed as an editor at the *Journal of Applied Economics* (JAE) - a leading journal in the field of Applied Economics. JAE covers applied issues in micro and macroeconomics, including Development Economics, Health Economics, Finance and International Development. The editors and advisers of JAE come from

top institutions around the world, such as the University of Göttingen and Columbia. In particular, Samuel will be responsible for the Section of Development Economics at JAE.

This appointment is a testament to Samuel's expertise and capabilities in the field of Applied Economics and Development Economics. Samuel's research interests lie in inequality, poverty, development outcomes, social and economic policy evaluation, and household welfare. His research has been featured by media such as the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and the World Economic Forum. In the last 4 to 5 years, Samuel has achieved 11 publications at top journals, of which 6 are published at Top 10% outlets, such as *Journal of Business Venturing Insights*, *Energy Economics* and *China Economic Review*. In 2022, Samuel was appointed as a Fellow at the Global Labour Organisation (GLO), recognising his research expertise in labour research.

Samuel encourages suitable submissions to JAE from colleagues at Federation University.

JAE: https://www.tandfonline.com/journals/recs20/about-this-journal

• Dr Bindu Joseph and Robeena Emmanuel

In 2023, Dr Bindu Joseph and Robeena Emmanuel were awarded a CERC Seed Grant to run mental health awareness programs for carers and parents of young people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds in Australia. Their study has been published in a Q1 journal! Big congratulations on this achievement!

Joseph, B., Emmanuel, R., & Olasoji, M. (2025). Caught between Two Cultures: Understanding Mental Health and Help-Seeking among Australian Indian Families. *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health*, 1-10.

Current Projects

Evaluation of Federation University's Co-op Model

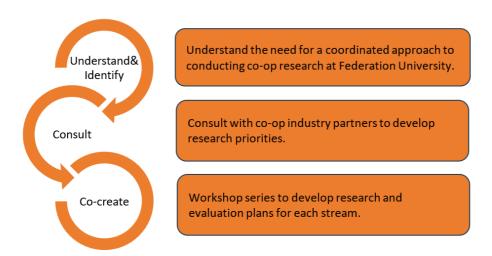
The Collaborative Evaluation & Research Centre (CERC) will oversee the establishment of a governance, monitoring and evaluation structure to assess the implemented co-op model at Federation University. Through a series of workshops and co-design activities, staff, students and industry partners will be invited to co-design the co-op evaluation plan. The co-op evaluation will enable the organisation to report on the impact and outcomes of the co-op model periodically with comparable and combinable data sets. The establishment of a collaborative

approach will focus the intent of related research and provide a mechanism for research support to academics / professional staff engaged in co-op research and evaluation.

The key objectives of the co-op evaluation include:



- 1. What is the socio-economic impact of the co-op model on the students' experience of industry engagement?
- 2. What is the economic impact of the co-op model for industry partners?
- 3. How do academics support and engage with the co-op model?
- 4. What is the economic benefit of the co-op model?
- 5. What is the socio-economic impact of the co-op model for a regional university in Australia?



Co-op co-design workshops

The Collaborative Evaluation & Research Centre (CERC) is seeking staff input in the development of the Co-op evaluation plan. This evaluation plan will help inform the vision of the evaluation, including the deliverables and measures of success.

We invite staff to join us in the Co-op co-design workshop series that will be delivered across Ballarat, Berwick and Gippsland campuses. Workshop times and registration links will be shared soon via the FedNews and CERC website. Stay tuned!

Gippsland
20th October
21st October

Berwick
22nd October

Ballarat
SMB Campus - 29th October
Mt Helen - 31st October

Online
13th October
28th October

Your voice matters—help us inform the vision for the Co-op evaluation!

Physical Literacy Enriched Environmental Design (PLEED) in the Latrobe Valley

The Collaborative Evaluation & Research Centre (CERC), in partnership with the Latrobe Health Assembly (LHA) and the Physical Literacy Enriched Environmental Design (PLEED) group, aimed to investigate how physical literacy enriched design can improve physical literacy outcomes in the Latrobe Valley. The collaborative action research project plan and evaluation engage with key stakeholders and partners to support the influence of the design of local parks and play spaces in line with physical literacy enriched environment design criteria.

The CERC team worked in partnership with LHA and PLEED group, Latrobe City Council (LCC), Mathison Park Advisory Committee, and LCC Recreation Planning Team to collect data. Unfortunately, due to the cessation of state funding for the Latrobe Health Assembly, the PLEED project no longer receives dedicated funding. Consequently, the scope of the project has been revised. However, the work continues, supported by two Honours students who remain actively involved.

The Collaborative Evaluation & Research Centre (CERC) will continue working on the project in partnership with <u>Latrobe City Council (LCC)</u>.



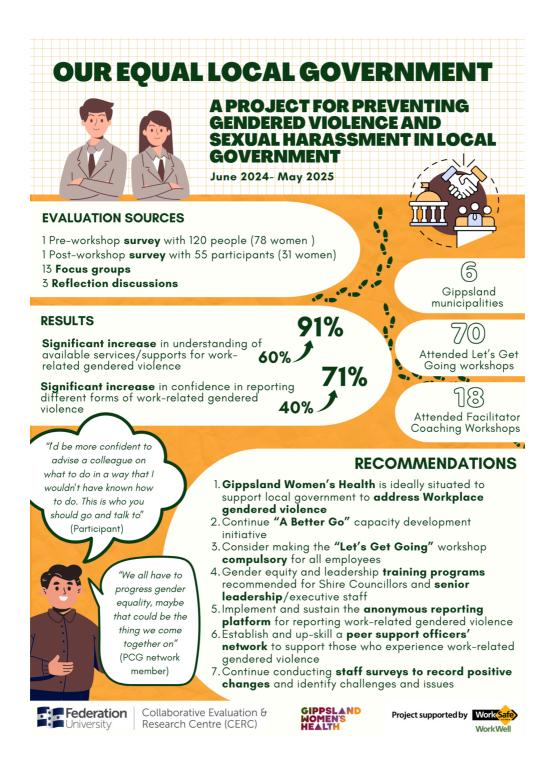
Completed Projects

Our Equal Local Government: A Project for Preventing Gendered Violence and Sexual Harassment (in Local Government)

The Collaborative Evaluation & Research Centre (CERC), in partnership with Gippsland Women's Health (GWH), aimed to strengthen and support Local Governments to reduce work-related gendered violence, including sexual harassment (WRGV-SH). Specifically, this project aimed to understand how workplace training on work-related gendered violence, including sexual harassment, can increase the knowledge and understanding of Local Government Area (LGA) staff members and promote system change in local governments in Gippsland.



A final report for this project will be available on the CERC website in the coming months.



Project infographic

Lived experiences of 1000 rural women in Australia

<u>CheekyMac</u>, a local production company, is developing a video documentary that explores the lived experiences of 1000 women residing in rural, regional, and remote areas across Australia. To inform the documentary, CheekyMac partnered with the CERC to conduct a national survey. The study investigated a broad range of topics, including gender inequality, rurality, employment, childcare, tall poppy syndrome, and gender bias.

The project aimed to gain a deeper understanding of how women in these communities experience both the challenges and benefits of rural life, identifying barriers and opportunities for improvement. While previous research has often focused on specific aspects of women's experiences, such as healthcare access or technology use, this study sought to provide a more holistic view of what it means to be a woman living in a rural environment. By covering a wide array of topics, the survey offered a comprehensive insight into the diverse realities faced by rural women across Australia.

A nationally validated survey was distributed using Australian Bureau of Statistics population density data to ensure a representative sample of 1000 women from across the country.

If you would like to learn more about this project, please refer to the recent Media coverage:

- Research aims to shed light on challenges faced by rural women.
- Federation University study reveals gender disparities in rural Australia.
- Herald Sun Rural Women
- A presentation and panel discussion about the project is available to be viewed <u>here</u>, upon the access request.

A final report will be available on the CERC website in the coming months.



Project infographic

CERC Staff and Member Publication Updates CERC Publications:

CERC has recently had a number of papers published in a range of academic journals:

Dabkowski, E., **Porter, J.E.,** Smith, W., Fernando, A., Seaward, L., **Jackson, M.** (2025). Systemic Factors in Workplace Accidents: An umbrella review of serious injuries and fatalities. *Social Sciences and Humanities Open*. Accepted 27 August 2025.

Porter, J. E., Simic, M. R., Raymond, A., Ghasemiardekani, M., Edgar, G., Vijayan, R., Luddeni, R., Stoneman, D.A., Armstrong, S. & Mesagno, C. (2025). The experiences of staff managing an organisational wellbeing centre in a large regional hospital: A qualitative study. *International Journal of Healthcare Management*, 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1080/20479700.2025.2528027

CERC Staff Publications:

My, S. (2025). Are men lacking caring qualities? Perceptions about male preschool teachers vs their experiences in preschool education. *The Journal of Men's Studies*. https://doi.org/10.1177/10608265251364381

CERC Member Publications:

Hayes C, Bourke S, Jacob S, **Joseph B**, Anish L, Plummer V and **Abdelkader A**. (2025). Psychological wellbeing and help-seeking behaviours of international undergraduate students of nursing programs: A Scoping Review. *Nursing Open*, 12, e70249. https://doi.org/10.1002/nop2.70249.

Abdelkader, A., **Joseph, B.**, Anish, L., Kaur, M., Bourke, S., Hayes, C., Thong, M., Plummer, V., & Jacob, S. (2024). International students' perspectives on factors impacting psychological well-being and early help-seeking behaviours in undergraduate nursing programs. *Nursing Open*, 11, e70030. https://doi.org/10.1002/nop2.70030.

Joseph, B., Emmanuel, R., & Olasoji, M. (2025). Caught between Two Cultures: Understanding Mental Health and Help-Seeking among Australian Indian Families. *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health*, 1-10.

Strachan, J. F., & Casey, M. M. (2025). "What are my options here? I don't want to stop training or miss competitions." Navigating the impact of early years menstruation in organised sports, girls 10–16 years. *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsams.2025.07.006.

Weerasekara, I., Styrmisdóttir, L., Ringsten, M., Orsini, N., Mukiira, C., Sharma, S., ... & Bruschettini, M. (2025). Birth weight and prematurity for predicting type 2 diabetes mellitus: a prognostic review. *The Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*, 2025(9), CD016154. https://doi.org/10.1002/14651858.CD016154

Nascimento, I. J. B., Abdulazeem, H. M., **Weerasekara, I.**, Sharifan, A., Bianco, V. G., Kularathne, I., Cunningham, C., Sathian, B., Deeken, G., Østengaard, L., Frederique-Djurdjevic, R., van Hoof, J., Lazeri, L., Redlich, C., Marston, H. R., Guimarães, N. S., de Barros, J., dos Santos, R. A., Azzopardi-Muscat, N., Yon, Y., & Novillo-Ortiz, D. (2025). An overview of reviews on telemedicine and telehealth in

dementia care: Evidence across clinical, psychological, behavioral, social, and economic domains. *JMIR Mental Health*. (accepted)

do Nascimento I, Abdulazeem H, **Weerasekara I,** Marquez J, Vasanthan L, Deeken G, Tan HL, Morgan R, Aguirre I, Østeengaard L, Kularathne I, Azzopardi-Muscat N, Permanand G, Grbic M, Van Kessel R, Martinez E, & Novillo-Ortiz D. (2025). Transforming women's health, empowerment, and gender equality with digital health: evidence-based policy and practice. *The Lancet Digital Health*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsams.2025.07.006

Hayes C, Bourke S, Jacob S, Joseph B, Anish L, Plummer V and **Abdelkader A.** (2025) Psychological wellbeing and help-seeking behaviours of international undergraduate students of nursing programs: A Scoping Review. Nursing Open, 11, e70249. https://doi.org/10.1002/nop2.70249

View our Publications



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About us

The Collaborative Evaluation & Research Centre (CERC) works in partnership to build evaluation capacity, research and expertise. CERC understands the value of listening to the community and has the ability to deliver timely, rigorous and sustainable evaluations tailored to the needs of a wide variety of organisations. CERC provides training, workshops and mentoring to build capacity to enable organisations to conduct meaningful evaluations.

Visit our website

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