



edge

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edge

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# edge

/ɛdʒ/

noun:

1. [singular] a slight advantage over someone or something.

Welcome to the second edition of Edge, the Research and Innovation publication which showcases the outstanding activities and achievements of our researchers, Schools and Centres in the RMIT College of Business and Law during 2021.

The College's excellent research outcomes for 2021 are evidenced through the high proportion of articles published in top journals, impact(s) of our research, significant media presence, and success in grant income. Our researchers received eight awards for both team and individual efforts in the 2021 Vice-Chancellor's Research Awards, an accomplishment that highlights not only the dedication of our researchers, staff and students, but also the quality outcomes that is being generated across the College. We have exceeded most of our RMIT set KPIs and look forward to continuing with our research excellence and collaboration.

These successes are all the more noteworthy given the many lockdowns and challenges endured in both Victoria and Vietnam. We will be learning to work within an ever-changing higher education landscape in 2022, and welcome both our domestic and international HDR students back to campus.

We accomplished a great deal in research in 2021, and this publication highlights only a handful of the impressive array of achievements. Particularity noteworthy was the commencement of the redesign of the HDR programs, the continuation of the well-received early career academic program, wide-ranging media coverage of our researchers, HDR milestone awards and the end of year College Research Excellence Awards.

I would like to congratulate everyone who has gone above and beyond in 2021, making it another year of great research performance for the College.

I would especially like to acknowledge the many contributions of Professor Martie-Louise Verreyne and her stellar research leadership.

I look forward to seeing everyone in person as we return back on campus.

Tracy Taylor  
ADVC Research & Innovation, CoBL



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## College of Business and Law

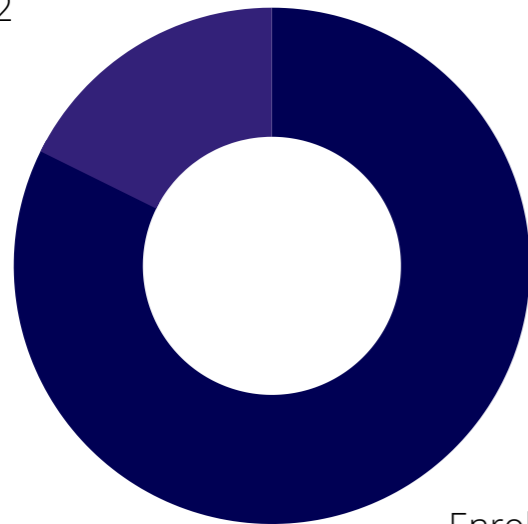
### By the numbers

2021 brought both opportunities and challenges associated with working from home throughout our various lockdowns.

Our research outcomes represent the amazing work of our academics, professional staff and students. CoBL exceeded nearly all of its 2021 KPIs.

### 2021 HDR numbers

Completions  
72



Enrolments  
335



## Publications

**454**

Scopus publications  
Exceeded KPI by 11%

**62%**

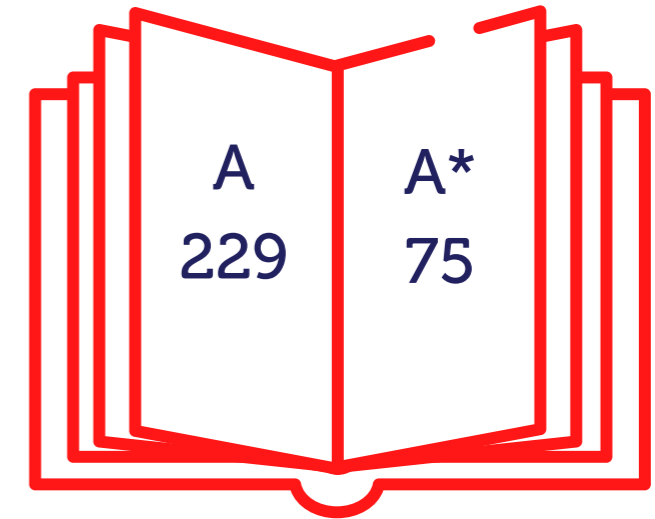
Proportion of publications  
in Top Quartile Journals

**75**

PhD Scopus authorships  
Exceeded KPI by 4%

**10,273**

Citations  
Exceeded KPI by 24%



Our researchers and academics had 109 publications in Q1 journals, and published 8 books in 2021.

## Research Income

CoBL has experienced yet another exemplary year in terms of attracting research funding, exceeding our funding target by 6%

**Total research income**

**\$5,289,351**

### Examples of 2021 External Research Grant Success

'Fostering new skills by means of excellent initial training of researchers'  
Professor Anne-Laure Mention

**\$2,094,429**

'Digital Infrastructure and the Digital CBD' (VHESIF Pool 1)  
BIH and CCSRI

**\$1,709,234**

'National Financial Capability Research Roadmap' Phase 2  
A/Prof Constantino Stavros

**\$348,618**

'Energy Poverty and Policy Responses in Australia'  
Dr Sefa Awaworyi Churchill

**\$334,534**

# 2021 Vice-Chancellor's and RMIT Awards

## Dr Marco De Sisto

### RMIT Awards for Research Excellence ECR (Technology)

Dr Marco De Sisto is an early career lecturer in the School of Management and a member of the Centre for People, Organisation and Work (CPOW). His research interests concern the implementation of HR principles within the decision-making processes of Top Management Teams in unstable or extreme environments.

Marco has developed new knowledge and contributed to the HR literature by studying and applying the strategic HR principles to firm innovation, CSR, and disaster management, in both developed (e.g. Australia) and developing countries (e.g. China and Pakistan). Particularly in Australia, he has used a variety of theories such as collective leadership, signaling theory, and social exchange theory to examine the relationship between HRM and emergency management (EM) especially at local government level. Through a more collaborative approach and network management, HRM can play a vital role in fostering and supporting the development of EM practitioners' knowledge, skills and abilities so that they can effectively mitigate and respond to disasters.



## Professor Alemayehu Molla

### RMIT Award for Innovative Research Supervision

Professor Alemayehu Molla is passionate in mentoring his research candidates in an engaged manner to ensure that their experience is both personally enjoyable and professionally rewarding. In his practice, he follows a phased approach initially starting with a structured program and gradually applying "guidance only" feedback, thus encouraging candidates to develop as independent researchers. Since 2005, he has supervised 19 HDR candidates (14 PhD) to completion and is currently supervising five candidates. His candidates produce an average of 1.2 ERA eligible outputs as sole authors during their candidature; won RMIT Doctoral Excellence Prize and the Australian Council of Professors and Heads of Information Systems Medal for Best Information Systems PhD thesis and many receive category one passes. His graduates have secured new employment as lecturers, researchers, managing consultant, IT consultant and service engineer.



## Dr Angel Zhong

### RMIT Awards for Research Excellence ECR (Enterprise)

Dr Angel Zhong is a Senior Lecturer in Finance and specialises in empirical asset pricing and investor behaviour in global financial markets.

Angel's research is at the forefront of the development of asset pricing models in the Australian share market. She is an aspiring academic with strong ties to the industry, and her research has strong investment applications for investors. Her research has frequently attracted significant mainstream media attention internationally. Angel's was recognised as a finalist in the Thought leader of the Year category in the Women in Finance Awards 2021 for her commitment to translating her research to improve the financial literacy and wellbeing of Australians.



## Dr Jonathan Kolieb

### RMIT Awards for Research Impact ECR Enterprise

Dr Jonathan Kolieb works in the field of international law. His research and engagement addresses the challenge of improving the corporate sector's respect for international humanitarian and human rights law, especially in areas affected by armed conflict. In partnership with the Australian Red Cross, Jonathan's work has forged new ground in the global business community's awareness and understanding of international humanitarian law. His work has been instrumental in the development of innovative, practical guidance tools and training packages designed to assist businesses in embedding a greater appreciation of international humanitarian law into their corporate policies and operations.

Jonathan's work contributed to the establishment of the Australian Red Cross' 'Business and International Humanitarian Law Hub' and informed United Nations' guidelines for businesses operating in conflict-affected areas.



**Dr Louise Byrne's team**

**RMIT Research Impact Team Award**

Dr Louise Byrne and her team in the School of Management; including Dr Lena Wang, Ms Helena Roennfeldt and Dr Melissa Chapman, have collaborated and engaged diverse industry stakeholders on the development of state and national level Lived Experience workforce guidelines.

Growing an effective Lived Experience workforce is acknowledged as a key strategy of national mental health reform, and the guidelines provide strategic level direction and recommendations to support sustainable and effective growth of this emerging workforce.



**Dr Olga Kokshagina**

**RMIT Awards for Research Impact ECR (Design)**

Dr Olga Kokshagina's research is connected to the digital transformation of legacy organisations and the Research Impact award was built around her important work in this key area.

In particular, she is focused on the Veracity project conducted in collaboration with Callaghan Innovation and Science for Technological Innovation in New Zealand. Research work around Veracity is crucial for individuals and organisations as businesses worldwide need to address emerging challenges with trust, potentially maintaining the integrity and competitiveness of entire sectors; ensuring the truthfulness and authenticity of information in the digital age. Olga's contribution was designing a collaborative research project which led to the establishment of a fully funded Veracity lab in 2021. For this a systematic design method – Concept Knowledge - was tested in NZ for the first time adding new capability to “New Zealand's innovation collaboration tool kit”.



**Professor Simon Feeny's team**

**RMIT Research Excellence Team Award**

Professors' Feeny, Posso and Churchill are active research members of the CoBL Centre for International Development. They have made substantial contributions to research on child well-being in lower income countries. Specifically, they have excelled in their research examining child labour, child sponsorship and child health, incorporating many of the Sustainable Development Goals. This is evidenced by their numerous publications in A and A\* journals as well as through the award of over \$1 million in external research funding from United Nations agencies, government departments and International NGOs.

Their leadership is demonstrated by their work in multidisciplinary teams, mentoring early career researchers and attracting a large cohort of HDR students. Through the collection of new primary data and the use of innovative research techniques on secondary data, their research has led to evidence-based policy recommendations that have been adopted by international development organisations.



**Mr Ephraim Musharavati Munyanyi**

**Vice-Chancellor's Prize for Research Impact: HDR**

Ephraim's research provides policy recommendations that seek to improve the overall wellbeing of society.

His work to date has focused on enhancing outcomes including health, housing, life expectancy, gender equality, shared prosperity, and entrepreneurship. By taking a critical lens to development issues in both developed and developing countries, Ephraim's research is significantly aligned with several of the Sustainable Development Goals.



# 2021 CoBL Research Excellence Awards

## Professor Jonathan Batten

### CoBL Award for Research Excellence

This award recognises an individual researcher who has achieved the highest level of excellence in their research activity in the preceding year. This is evidenced by a very high quality track record in research publications and research income, innovative practice, and external engagement.

Professor Jonathan Batten, from the School of Economics, Finance and Marketing, exemplifies all of these award requirements and is extremely highly regarded in his field. Congratulations Jonathan, a very worthy winner of our Research Excellence Award.



## Dr Marian Makkar

### CoBL Award for Research Excellence - Early Career Researcher

Marian received the award because she demonstrated a strong emerging track record in the domain of consumer culture. She is forging a strong academic expertise in the research fields of market shaping and market dynamics, which she is translating to the marketing academy, external engagement, and disseminating that through knowledge sharing at university seminar series, media outlets and through broader engagement with industry.



## Associate Professor Bernardo Figueiredo

### CoBL Award for Research Excellence - Journal Publication by an Academic

This award recognises Bernardo, who had a refereed full paper publication in a high quality disciplinary journal. The paper is:

How Consumer Orchestration Work Creates Value in the Sharing Economy - <https://www.ama.org/2021/08/12/how-consumer-orchestration-work-creates-value-in-the-sharing-economy/>

And was written by: Daiane Scaraboto and **Bernardo Figueiredo**.



## Dr Tina Popa

### CoBL Award for Research Impact - Early Career Researcher

The award recognises Tina's work relating to a research partnership in 2019 with the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT), which led to significant internal process changes that benefit and positively impact society.

Tina worked with an interdisciplinary team (Professor Ingo Karpen, Olivia Dean and Mark Wright) at VCAT to evaluate, and provide recommendations on, the effectiveness of user-experience in case management processes affecting medical treatment matters, and how to better re-design those processes for external users. Her role on the team was significant in leading interviews with legal staff at VCAT, undertaking law research and translating the recommendations to a non-specialist audience.

## Dr Kate Grosser

### CoBL Award for Research Impact

Kate's pioneering research linking the fields of Corporate Social Responsibility and gender equality led to invitations to advise the United Nations on integrating gender perspectives into the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), and their implementation. Extensive engagement with policy makers, business, and civil society leaders nationally and internationally, through workshops, submissions, international consultations, and co-hosting a UN Australian Consultation on Gender, Business and Human Rights informed the first ever international guidance on this issue (UN, 2019).

Her research has facilitated the design of business human rights due diligence, and through co-hosting the 'UNGPs next decade' global multi-stakeholder gender consultation (2021) contributed to an international roadmap to advance business and human rights policy and practice over the forthcoming decade.





# The Early Career Academic Development Program

## INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE RESEARCH AND LEARNING AND TEACHING LEADERS

Building on a successful first iteration of the Early Career Academic (ECA) Development Program in 2020/21, we welcomed a new cohort in 2021/22. The program consists of a sequence of four modules of two-day workshops, exploring authentic academic identity in work and life; using that lens to explore learning and teaching, research, service, career development and work life balance.

The ECA Development Program provides the opportunity for participants to explore the issues fundamental to a rewarding academic career, expand professional networks with peers, and get to know senior CoBL leaders, both academic and professional. A big thank you to all the CoBL and wider university staff who have taken the opportunity to share their expertise and their own journeys of success, failure, passion, pivots, delight, despair, confusion, and clarity as they have navigated their careers. A special mention to our returning contributors including Marian Makkar and Marco De Sisto. This program relies on, and truly exemplifies, the collegial spirit in the College.

Over October and November 2021, participants finished their first two modules on authentic academic identity, and learning and teaching. They attended 25 development sessions interacting with 33 facilitators from CoBL and the wider university. In February and March 2022, the program will continue, drawing on the wisdom of many more college staff, reflecting on research then service, career development and work/life balance.

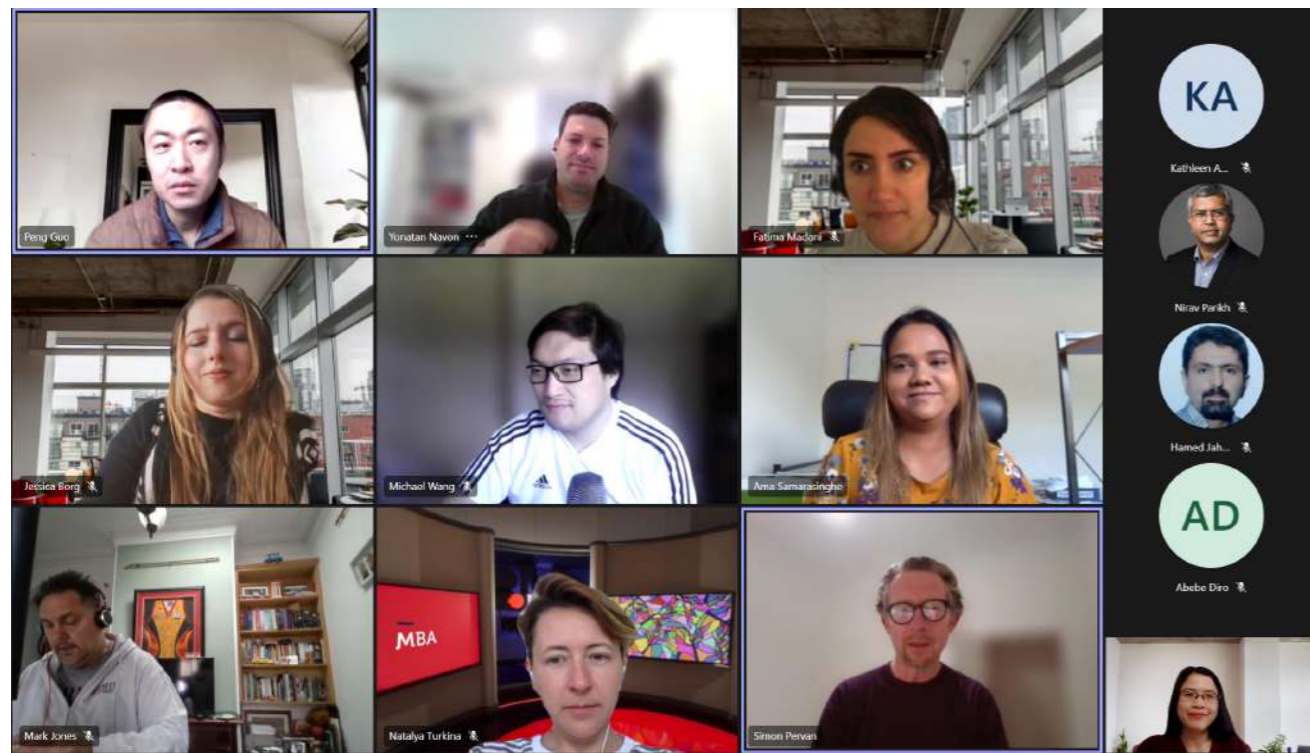
We asked participants about their experience thus far, and one standout feature of the program is the connection it provides with key staff from the college and university. Another is the deep dive it provides into individual aspirations around learning and teaching, and promotion.

*“The program has been a wonderful learning experience. It has been especially beneficial to go through the promotions categories and classifications, to delve into discussions around teaching philosophies and to meet people (albeit virtually) across the college.”*

*“I found both module 1 & 2 very helpful and engaging. I am happy I attended the program at the beginning of my career at RMIT. Individual module (2) for teaching was really useful. There were lots of good information about teaching philosophy which made me think about my teaching design and goal within a certain philosophy.”*

Feedback has also flagged areas we can add further improvement including the introduction of mentors during or shortly after the program that will enable the continuation of the development journey. Some of our Schools are developing these opportunities already and the College has recently appointed a senior mentor, which you will hear more about shortly!

We look forward to welcoming participants and speakers back in 2022 and encourage those of you who have contemplated the program to commit the time in 2022/23. We would love to have you on board and have no doubt that you will benefit from the collective wisdom of past participants and speakers, new and returning, as we look to support you in your journey in RMIT’s College of Business and Law.





# CoBL Media Stars

Media Stars celebrates and recognises the work of academics in promoting the University and showcasing their research and expertise through the media.

Congratulations to Dr Angel Zhong and Dr Meg Elkins for both being named RMIT's Rising Media Stars for 2021.

Angel has risen to be a strong media performer and trusted voice on fintech, investment trends and financial regulation. She has worked hard to establish and maintain media contacts in key publications through being a reliable expert on a range of trending financial topics throughout the year.

Meg has been proactive in providing timely insights on a range of behavioural issues from the marketing of vaccine incentives to vaccine hesitancy and anti-mask sentiments. Along with her commentary has been media promotion of her research, including a study into digital payments being the future payment system for street performers.

Congratulations to Dr Leonora Risse for being recognised as the College Media Star. Over the past year, Leonora has consistently engaged with high-profile media to deliver quality analysis of economic and financial responses to COVID disruptions, especially providing insights on the gendered impacts.

Finally, from being named RMIT Media Star 2020, Professor Matt Warren has been named the Media Commentator for 2021. Matt has continued his solid media efforts this year, providing the expert commentary and balanced analysis that make him a sought-after commentator. Matt was a reliable expert voice on security issues around the census and offered expert commentary on issues ranging from vaccine passports, cyber threats, hacking attacks, safety powers, 'hacktivism' and more, throughout the year.



Meg Elkins

[Reinvigorating the CBD after dark](#)



Angel Zhong

[ETF boom in Australia](#)



Leonora Risse

[Applying a gender lens on the budget is not about pitting women against men](#)



Matt Warren

[Ransomware: A Global Problem](#)

## 2021 TOP PERFORMERS

Congratulations also to these highly acclaimed CoBL media performers for 2021:

- Chris Berg
- Jason Potts
- Sara Charlesworth
- Amanda Spry
- Lauren Gurrieri
- Con Stavros
- Anthony Forsyth



# The Year in Review from RMIT R&I

2021 brought many successes in Research and Innovation at RMIT, with many considering it to be the best year ever for the University! Colleges also far exceeded their research KPIs even as we dealt with another year of lockdowns and disruptions. And the R&I Portfolio worked closely with the research community on many fronts to enable this success.

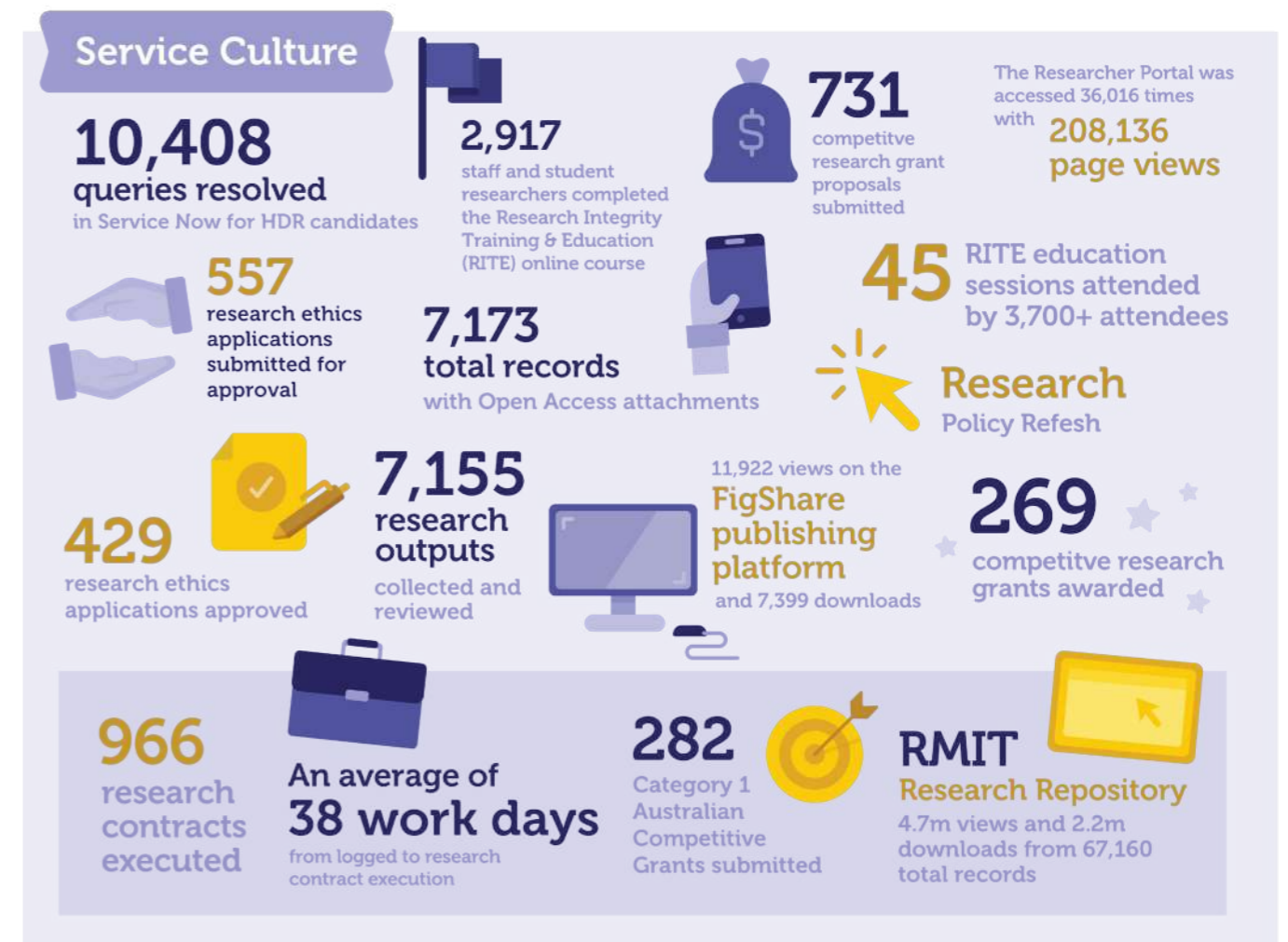
The Portfolio also implemented an ambitious strategic projects plan to refine its structure, enhance its service provision, and meet the changing Higher Education landscape - and it successfully met its project milestones. Some of the major projects included:

- Planning for ARC ERA 2023 and developing the tool FERA to support the Assessment.
- Undertaking a HDR Curriculum Redevelopment Project to be implemented in 2022, for course delivery in 2023.
- Conducting an externally led Research Integrity Governance review, which received strong endorsements for RMIT's existing practices.
- Developing an Indigenous Research Strategy to be further refined and implemented in 2022.
- Driving an ECP Restart Program to contribute to post Covid-19 recovery.
- Developing an Impact Pathfinders program and a community of practice to build capabilities in impact-driven research and develop an impact culture to share knowledge and practice.
- Developing an enterprise-wide Researcher Onboarding Program to be implemented in 2022.
- Launching a multi-initiative action plan to comply with the European Commission's (EC) HR Excellence in Research Award to be recognised as an EC accredited institution.

In 2022, Project Modern will take centre stage. The aim of this Project is to transform research management at RMIT by implementing smarter and simpler systems to support the research lifecycle from ideas to translation and impact. The experience of researchers and research management professionals are at the core of this transformation, and we look forward to uplifting RMIT research and research services to the next level. Stay tuned for this and several other service enhancements in 2022.

It is always enriching to work with the College of Business and Law, and I look forward to continuing my contribution to its research excellence journey, nationally and internationally.

Tania Tambiah GAICD, Fellow of ARMS  
R&I Business Partner



Support Provided by Central R&I Team



# Research Proposals Team update



The R&I Portfolio's CoBL & DSC Research Proposals Team supports applicants to optimise the quality and competitiveness of their grant applications through project development advice, application and career planning, grant development workshops, and strategic advice and tools for researchers developing applications and budgets.

The team provides feedback on application drafts, focussing on addressing the assessment criteria, general readability, logical construction and flow of the proposal, and presenting track record information to maximise the chances of success. Once an application has been developed, the team conducts a final review of compliance and eligibility against the relevant funding scheme rules, and organises School, College and institutional approvals required before submission.

This year to date, the team has supported the submission of over 185 competitive grant applications and delivered over 70 grant development workshops, ranging from ARC scheme-specific programs; preparing rejoinders; developing your ROPE; budget basics for early career researchers (ECRs); introductory grant writing; identifying funding through Research Professional; winning philanthropic funding, among many others.

We encourage researchers to contact the team to discuss opportunities well in advance of the external funding body deadline and consider RMIT's process for applying for both RMIT-led and externally-led applications and suite of tools available to support application development on the Researcher Portal.

As we approach the end of 2021, another challenging year featuring Covid-19 restrictions and flexible work arrangements, we thank all researchers and research leaders for their collegial and collaborative approach to pursuing research income and look forward to the College's continued success in 2022. We'd also like to thank Martie-Louise Verreyne for her ongoing support of the team's work and assistance with major grant rounds. We wish her well for her future endeavours and return to Queensland.

## **BUS and DSC Research Proposals Team**

Dr John Bonacci (Manager, Research Proposals)  
Ms Emma Hegarty (Senior Coordinator, Research Proposals)  
Dr Alexander Lugg (Senior Coordinator, Research Proposals)  
Ms Danielle Hickey (Coordinator, Research Proposals)  
Dr Carolyn Dancevic (Officer, Research Proposals)  
Ms Claire Adams (Officer, Research Proposals)  
Ms Amanda Crichton (Casual Officer, Research Proposals)

**75**  
grant  
development  
workshops

**185**  
competitive  
grant  
applications

**3**  
RMIT-led ARC  
applications  
submitted

**71**  
non-ARC  
applications  
submitted



# Thought Leadership and Knowledge Exchange Update



Thought Leadership and Knowledge Exchange is a key part of our Research and Innovation strategy, as it helps the College to continually build its external reputation. Under difficult circumstances the College has had a fantastic year in these areas, and we thank and congratulate all of our academics who have participated in various externally focussed engagement activities over the course of the year.

## THE COBL THOUGHT LEADERSHIP WEBINAR SERIES

In 2021 the Strategy and Innovation (S&I) team held four webinar series, each focusing on different research areas. The overarching topics included Health Innovation, Cyber Security, Digital Acceleration and Indigenous Business Perspectives.

In 2021, we've had significant media exposure, particularly on topics related to the business impacts of Covid-19. The College and Schools held 49 externally focussed webinars, conferences and workshops – that we know of! Our academics were speakers and keynotes at many externally held events, they featured prominently in The Conversation, and we consistently published high quality opinion pieces in Acumen (the College's Thought Leadership Blog) throughout the year.

With close to 2000 registrations overall, each Thought Leadership webinar featured between 1-3 industry speakers and encouraged cross-College collaborations. The S&I team approached our STEM and DSC colleagues to get involved in the series and provide panellists, and students and staff from Vietnam were also invited to get involved. Industry speakers included Government representatives, as well as CEOs and leading industry executives.

All of this activity was guided in the background by the CoBL Editorial Committee, which met monthly to strategise and report on research successes that had external engagement potential, a big thankyou to the committee members for their contributions during 2021.

Research Centres that were featured in the 2021 webinar series included CoBL's Centre for Cyber Security and Research Innovation (CCSRI), Blockchain Innovation Hub (BIH), Business and Human Rights Research Centre (BHRIGHT), the Consumer Wellbeing Group (CWG), and the Centre for People, Organisation and Work (CPOW), as well as the RMIT Health Transformation Lab and RMIT Digital Health CRC.

Ryan Wendt, Knowledge Exchange Manager  
Strategy and Innovation

Each webinar offered a distinct call to action (CTA) as an opportunity for the audience to engage with research Centres further. CTAs included signing up to Communities of Practices or newsletters and downloading research reports. A total of 13 genuine novel Industry leads were captured during 2021 via a feedback form, with external members of the audience wanting to collaborate with CoBL further.

The recordings of each CoBL Thought Leadership Webinar are saved and available on [the Research & Innovation website](#).



# Accounting, Information Systems and Supply Chain



Distinguished Professor Lee Parker

## The Office as Organisational Hub: Trends in Design, Control and Accountability

From among several of Distinguished Professor Lee Parker's research areas, is his program of research into the world of the office as today's version of the historic factory floor. In developed economies where service industry has become a major economic driver, the office has assumed a dominant profile yet has attracted minimal attention from management and accounting researchers.

From both his solo research and projects with collaborators Professor Ingrid Jeacle (University of Edinburgh) and Dr Jana Schmitz (CPA Australia), since 2013 Professor Parker's papers have been published or in-press across the journals *Business History*, *Journal of Accounting and Organizational Change*, *Contemporary Accounting Research*, *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, and *Accounting Organizations & Society*.

This research has identified linkages between both historic and contemporary office designs and processes. From early last century till today, scientific management of office operational and cost efficiency has been a primary agenda. The office has endured as the hub for strategy creation and transmission as well as planning, control, and budgeting. The research program has revealed today's innovative contemporary office designs such as Activity Based Working (ABW) as ongoing manifestations of early 20th century scientific management with its focus on cost reduction and productivity improvement.

The research finds ABW and open plan office designs from the 1900s to today having surveillance control of employees at the heart of their intent, with office employees themselves exercising records-based surveillance control over the organisation. The Covid-19 era's impacts on office design, location and functioning with respect to occupational health and safety have included transition to teleworking, office design and configuration reversals and office working protocol re-engineering. The research has identified prioritisation choices between occupational health and safety versus financial returns, as well as physical observability/accountability to staff and community overriding corporate window dressing. Further recent research into global Big 4 audit firm office design agendas has revealed client relations, office efficiency and cost control as the underlying driving intentions while carrying risks in relation to auditor independence and audit quality.

The ongoing office research program includes a study of filmed representations of offices and their management control functioning across four decades in the 20th century, management control issues in the emerging post-covid hybrid office, the correspondence between today's innovative office designs and the open kitchen restaurant configuration, university office configuration agendas in response to Covid, and linkages between historic and contemporary office mechanisation and automation.



# Economics, Finance and Marketing



## Commitment to creating meaningful impact in the communities

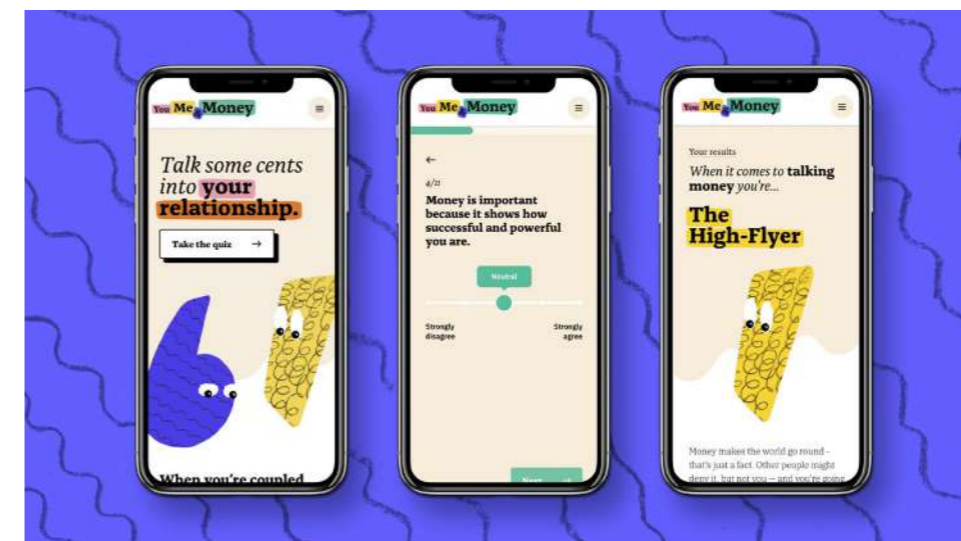
The Research Agenda in the School of Economics, Finance and Marketing focuses on societal wellbeing, innovations and sustainable development in the marketplace. Our researchers are dedicated to creating meaningful impact in the communities in which we operate.

This commitment is exemplified by the 'You, Me & Money' project, developed by the Consumer Wellbeing Research Group of the marketing discipline, in conjunction with external partners YLab, with funding by the Ecstra Foundation, to explore issues of economic abuse in relationships and demonstrate the power of technology as a facilitator for important conversations around money in relationships for younger Australians.

In 2021, the project was recognised with numerous national and international awards for both research and design including a Silver at the International w3 Awards, gold in the Web Design and Development, Digital - APPS and software, and Social Impact categories of the Australian Good Design Awards. Alongside enhancing the financial wellbeing of young people, our economists Professors Simon Feeny, Alberto Posso and Associate Professor Sefa Churchill have been highly active in research addressing child well-being in low-income countries. Since 2016, they have worked with World Vision International, Plan International and the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation addressing the impacts of child sponsorship and child labour. The research team authored a report for Plan International, which has gone on to influence

child sponsorship policy in over 50 countries. Policy briefs for World Vision International have also been circulated in the form of videos and conventional reports. They have been invited to present the findings from the child labour work at various international forums as part of the United Nations campaign for 2021 to be the year for the international elimination of child labour.

This year, conducting meaningful and high-quality research in sustainable finance, the finance discipline has been recognised globally and ranked as the Top 8 University in Australia for financial research. The strength of this group is further demonstrated by the successful bid for the Digital Finance CRC, which commits to the digitisation and global competition for reliable and trusted investment environments. This is a signal of EFM's competence in finance research that is world class, commercially focused, and internationally recognised. These projects illustrate the reach and social impact of some of the research conducted within the School of Economics, Finance and Marketing. However, this is just the tip of the iceberg, with our researchers contributing to local and global conversations on diverse issues. Together, the research agenda of EFM is truly multidisciplinary and demonstrates our strong commitment to enhancing societal wellbeing and fostering innovations and sustainability in the community.





# Graduate School of Business and Law

## Creating Meaningful Impact and a Better Future via Shared Value Industry Partnership

The Graduate School of Business & Law is recognized for its award-winning industry-engaged research projects that create real impact to industry and society. Our most recent example of this is a Shared Value Industry Partnership, which is co-led by Dr. Kevin Argus and an RMIT alumnus from Apricot Consulting and their SVP partners Ability Works Australia (disability and marginalised employment), Transurban and Aurecon within the Construction industry.

The partnership started from the RMIT Executive MBA Marketing Course that Kevin is leading, and has expanded from there, culminating in an impactful student project and a best practice research study with industry partners, resulting in winning an important industry award: 2020 Social Traders, Partnership of the Year Award (video link).

This unique Shared Value Partnership has created significant and novel research opportunities among the industry partners, including their need for measurement of social impact to comply with the Victorian Government Social Procurement Framework (government tender process) and developing best practices for creating shared value for businesses, local communities, and the broader society.

The School has capitalised these emerging research opportunities, Kevin, together with Associate Professor Joonas Keränen and Dr. Natalya Turkina, is leading a pilot study on Shared Value Partnerships with industry partners, and broader ARC Linkage Grant application with international consortium. Both of these projects have significant potential to generate novel and high-impact scholarly, practitioner, and societal outcomes and implications.

This Shared Value Partnership enabled Aurecon to successfully bid on a Department of Transport tender to design tram stops, employing Ability Works disability employee consultancy services, creating meaningful contribution of disability workers in a human-centred design process. Ability Works have since formally established their new disability employee consultancy service.

Novel shared value innovations occurred during lockdown in 2020-21. Aurecon engaged diverse teams of junior engineering staff across their organisation in a voluntary human-centred design project. Led by senior staff, employing design thinking tools, they engaged with Ability Works in 100-day sprints, culminating in unique opportunities identified for Ability Works to grow their business in ways previously unidentified.



Aurecon staff reported value in contributing meaningful social impact for disability employees and they learned what meaningful, sustainable social impact is, while extending their professional networks throughout the organisation.

The Shared Value Partnership was recently announced a finalist of the 2021 Shared Value Awards and represents RMIT in the AFR Learning and Teaching Awards Industry Engagement category, 2021.





# School of Management

## Promoting Long-Term Employment of Autistic Individuals

Autism Spectrum Disorder is a lifelong condition that affects up to 2.5% of the Australian population. Autistic adults experience high rates of under- and un-employment, and their transition into employment is typically facilitated by disability service providers or intensive workplace support. Our research takes a novel and transformative approach to optimising employment outcomes for autistic people. We argue that sustainable autism employment programs should actively support the well-being of autistic staff, and our research will provide evidence-based recommendations and practical tools to do so. Our partner organisations are DXC Technology and Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect), with whom we have an established track record of collaboration.

Our overall objectives are to a) identify factors that contribute to and improve sustainability of autism employment programs and b) improve successful integration of autistic employees in the workforce, which we will achieve by developing and testing a new model of autistic employee well-being and employability. The significance of this project is evident in the increasing number of autistic individuals transitioning into adulthood, their high rates of un- and under-employment, and the lack of research into autism employment and well-being. We set out to 1) develop a transformative and integrative model of workplace well-being for autistic employees; 2) improve the success and sustainability of autism employment programs.

Our research is based on three phases:

- Phase 1: quantitative testing of our model with training interventions;
- Phase 2: qualitative and quantitative validation of the interventions;
- Phase 3: integration and stakeholder engagement.

We hope that our research will play a role in supporting autistic employees' well-being, which will improve productivity and employment outcomes for our partner organisations. Findings will potentially impact the entire autism employment ecosystem through improved outcomes for people with autism, their family and carers, the community, and government and social institutions.



# School of Business and Management, Vietnam

## Modelling Vaccine-Related Information to Create Hybrid Information Hubs for People with Disabilities in Vietnam and Indonesia

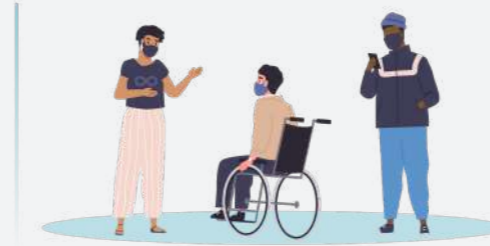
Disability rights limitedly appear in the Pandemic Preparedness, Response, and Recovery Plans (PPRRP) in many countries in Southeast Asia. In Vietnam and Indonesia, guidelines to protect People with Disabilities (PwD) were available at the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, but specific vaccination guidelines are presently scarce. Although many want to be vaccinated, PwD are unclear about which vaccine is safe for them. While ubiquitous on digital and social media platforms, vaccine-related information is often generic and rarely addresses specific health conditions of PwD.

An interdisciplinary research team, comprising of Dr Abdul Rohman (School of Communication & Design, RMIT Vietnam), Dr Duy Dang-Pham (School of Business & Management, RMIT Vietnam), and external collaborators across Vietnam and Indonesia, launched a research project to support vaccine uptake for PwD via the Vaccine Confidence Fund of Global Impact.

The project aims to apply data analytics to model vaccination-related information collected from multiple social media platforms and identify the online and offline information sources that are regularly consumed by PwD. Based on this, we will develop information hubs that combine social media and non-social media platforms to increase vaccine uptake among PwD. The hubs will connect PwD with reliable information sources, medical practitioners, and become

spaces where PwD can share their concerns and experiences before and after vaccinations, in addition to understanding the reasons of those who reject vaccinations. In broader terms, this research project will contribute to harnessing the usefulness of social media for mitigating vaccine hesitancy resulting from limited availability of vaccination guidelines. Thus, gradually mainstreaming disability rights in the PRRRP and strengthening protection to PwD in Southeast Asia.

This research project contributes to the sustainable development goals SDG3 (Good health and well-being), SDG10 (Reduced inequalities), and SDG17 (Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development) of the United Nations. PwD in Vietnam and Indonesia will receive the direct and tangible benefits from the outcomes of the project, and we anticipate the information hubs and social media platforms will also increase vaccine uptake in both countries, thereby addressing SDG3 and SDG10. The interdisciplinary researcher team, which comprises researchers in different countries, exemplifies the global partnership that jointly addresses the timely and practical issues of COVID-19 vaccination in developing countries.



Dr Duy Dang-Pham



Dr Abdul Rohman



# Blockchain Innovation Hub

## The New Era of a Digital CBD for Melbourne

In June, the Blockchain Innovation Hub together with the Centre for Cyber Security Research & Innovation secured \$2M from the Victorian Government for the 'Digital Infrastructure & the Digital CBD' project.

This project will conduct research into the acceleration of digital technology directly impacted by Covid-19 and consequently, the development of a digital CBD.

Through this research the project will:

- build a research base about how businesses, non-profit organisations, municipalities and policymakers can adapt to the post-COVID digital economy, and directly engage the public on digital opportunities; and
- identify the opportunities and challenges of adapting to the post Covid-19 digital economy.

The first of five milestone reports was recently published on the 1 December 2021 and provides an overview of the challenge, opportunities and the transition needed for Melbourne to become a digital CBD as well as a proposed 'piloted use case' which will feature in each subsequent report.

We are now moving into what the authors of the report term an 'era of the digital CBD': where people no longer enter the city every day for work, but instead, plug into its pulse remotely and live in 20-minute neighbourhoods.

This accelerated adoption of digital economic infrastructure, has left a lasting mark on the social, political and economic system which provides four key opportunities for economic recovery that will be explored in future reports:

- Adapting to new infrastructure demands to rebuild confidence in the safety of the CBD.
- How government can support resilient supply chains such as embedding fair and just practices into digital processes.
- Digital skills required for public services, education, agriculture and cultural services.
- The impact on surrounding economic infrastructure in both the global economy and in Victoria's regions and precincts.

It is envisaged that the five milestone reports together with a Global Digital City Ranking Index that make up this project will provide a comprehensive Digital Roadmap for Victoria.

For more information and to view the first milestone report, visit [The Digital CBD Project website page](#).





# Business and Human Rights Centre

## National and International Collaboration and Partnerships Inform High Level Business and Human Rights Centre (BHRIGHT) Research Impact in Gender, Business and Human Rights

Leading BHRIGHT's gender research theme, Dr Kate Grosser's pioneering research linking the fields of corporate social responsibility and gender equality led to invitations to advise the United Nations on integrating gender perspectives into the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), and their implementation. Establishing partnerships with the Australian Human Rights Commission and Australian Human Rights Institute she co-hosted the UN Australian Consultation on Gender, Business and Human Rights, with the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights (UNWG), bringing together stakeholders from government, business and civil society organizations from across the country.

Interdisciplinary collaboration at College level led to School of Management and ECP (Social Change, & Global Business Innovation) grants for research translation and submissions to UN consultations, including: a literature review; a series of interviews with gender and CSR scholars to help translate their research into policy-oriented recommendations; and convening a national workshop to facilitate understanding of sexual and gender-based violence as a business and human rights issue. This work informed the first ever international (UN) guidance on gender, business and human rights.



Kate's research leadership contributed to the design of business human rights due diligence in practice, helping multinational companies rethink their current approaches to managing the human rights risks associated with sexual harassment for example, through a partnership with the Global Business Initiative on Human Rights. In 2021 she co-hosted the 'UNGPs next decade' global multi-stakeholder gender consultation exploring business and human rights perspectives on women workers; sexual and gender-based violence; care work; LGBTI; energy transition and climate change, and; human rights defenders and remedy. This consultation provided input to an international roadmap to advance business and human rights policy and practice over the forthcoming decade.

The story of this research engagement and impact is theorized in the context of debates about academic activism in Grosser (2021), Gender, business and human rights: Academic activism as critical engagement in neoliberal times. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 28, 4:1624–1637 (<https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12608>). These successes informed new research grant applications, and the gender theme at BHRIGHT now attracts high quality PhD candidates and hosts a vibrant Paper Development Workshop series.



## Promoting Green Behavior through Ethical Leadership: a Model of Green Human Resource Management and Environmental Knowledge

The United National Emissions Gap Report 2021 reveals that the global temperature will increase to 2.7°C by the end of this century. According to the report, the world needs to reduce annual greenhouse gas emissions by 50% within the next decade to achieve the goals set in Paris Agreement. As business and industrial activities have been directly linked with environmental degradation, business leaders must lead by example. In business settings, leadership that inspires eco-friendly behaviour and develops an eco-ethical workforce is the need of time.

Research by Saima Ahmad and colleagues advance a new ethical leadership paradigm for promoting green behaviour and 'eco-ethical work practices' in organisations. They propose that to achieve their environmental performance targets, enterprises need workforces that are committed to adopting environment-friendly behaviour. The study uncovers the effectiveness of ethical leadership style in inspiring the workforce's engagement in pro-environmental behaviour to tackle the challenges associated with climate change. It offers a framework that combines ethical leadership and 'green' HRM paradigms in a novel way to explain how and why the followers will adopt green and sustainable behaviours under the influence of the leader's eco-ethical role modelling. Such leaders hold themselves accountable for the environmental footprint of their business activities and empower HRM to train the workforce in implementing practices that ensure balanced and careful use of available resources.

This research shows that ethical leadership provides an important link between the business and its environmental responsibility by reinforcing eco-ethical work procedures and green HRM practices. The study has five notable implications for improving pro-environmental behaviour in business settings toward sustainable futures.

First, business leaders and workers should treat the conservation of the natural environment as their moral responsibility. Second, leaders should develop and implement policies and standards that are pro-environmental and regularly communicate the importance of environmental sustainability to the workforce. Third, leaders must lead by example through their pro-environmental actions to continuously inspire green behaviour in the workforce. Fourth, leaders must pay attention to integrating the agendas and activities of HRM and environmental management teams, as this integration not only helps in reducing the ecological footprint but also in generating greater synergies toward pro-environmental value-creation. Finally, HRM must concentrate on the recruitment and development of eco-ethical employees and leaders for sustainable development. Priority of green behaviour should be inbuilt right in the recruitment system. HR training and development sessions should focus on enhancing environmental knowledge. Performance appraisal and reward systems must recognise exemplary eco-ethical behavioural practices of the workforce.



# Centre for People, Organisation and Work



## Connecting Housing, Health and Social Supports for People Leaving Treatment: Social Care Practice Lessons from Victoria

With colleagues at the University of New South Wales and Curtin University, Associate Professor Cameron Duff is leading research at CPOW exploring pathways out of residential treatment for individuals experiencing mental health and/or substance use problems. It is well known that the transition out of residential treatment is a time of significant risk and uncertainty, particularly for individuals with complex health and social care needs. In exploring these risks, Duff and his team have focused on strategies to enhance the coordination of health and social care supports for vulnerable individuals, including policy and practice recommendations for enhanced inter-agency coordination and cooperation in the delivery of outreach and assertive case management programs.

Based on these activities, the research findings make a compelling case for more formal integration of specialist housing services into both inpatient psychiatric care and substance use treatment settings across Victoria and New South Wales, given the significant risks of housing insecurity that many individuals experience after leaving these settings, including experiences of homelessness. Duff's research also has important implications for the organisation of social care services and supports – for example, in terms of work design issues, leadership and governance approaches, role descriptions and task allocations – and the ways service systems may more effectively address service coordination barriers.



Funded by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute through their National Housing Research Program (19/PRO/53211), the research team conducted a series of research activities in Victoria and New South Wales between October 2019 and March 2021. With his colleagues, Duff conducted interviews and focus groups with professionals working in mental health, housing and/or substance use treatment services in either Sydney and Melbourne, followed by interviews with individuals with lived experience of these service settings. Each of these research phases explored models of best practice in discharge and transition planning, along with strategies for mitigating the risk of homelessness for individuals leaving treatment settings.

Duff is currently working with industry partners at Unison Housing, MIND Australia and Anglicare on the organisational, policy and practice implications of this research. There are two key aspects to this work, with the first focusing on questions of workforce development and the mix of skills, training and expertise required to design and deliver more effective care coordination, with the second exploring questions of program evaluation and the impact of outcomes based funding models across the community social care sectors.



# Centre for Cyber Security Research and Innovation



## UFIT Cyber Project

In 2021 the RMIT Centre for Cyber Security Research and Innovation (CCSRI) has continued to build and contribute to government and education sector cyber resilience. Year on year the Australian Cyber Security Centre has received an increase in cyber security reports, with malicious actors exploiting the pandemic environment and Australians' desire for digitally accessible information or services. For the higher education sector, we continue to be a target for sophisticated state-based actor attacks due to the sensitive research and personal data that we hold.

As a sector, our strength lies in the ability to develop a unified front to such cyber threats. Through investment from the Department of Education, Skill and Employment (DESE) on this Enhancing Cyber Security Project, which forms part of the 2020 Australian Cyber Security Strategy, and endorsement from the University Foreign Interference Taskforce (UFIT), CCSRI's involvement in this project has enabled a platform for universities to come together to strengthen the cyber security posture of the sector.

As part of the UFIT Cyber Project, led by Centre Director, Professor Matt Warren and project coordinator Gabby Cincotta, three trusted cyber security forums have been delivered virtually in 2021, bringing together key decision makers in government and across Australia's 39 universities. These forums have presented the opportunity to discuss, workshop and receive updates on critical cyber security issues including;

- Reforms to legislation around Critical Infrastructure and Systems of National Significance
- The Impact of Cyber Attacks on Universities
- A range of different initiatives and campaigns developed by key government agencies including the Australian Cyber Security Centre (ACSC) as well as the Australian Security Intelligence Office (ASIO)

The Centre has continued to build strong capability and expertise beyond the technical elements of cyber security in 2021, with a multi-discipline approach and focus on the human-centric and organisational facets of cyber. This capability is exemplified through this project, with our research focussed on identifying cyber maturity gaps, integrating threat modelling feeds cross sector, and developing a range of sector specific best practice guidelines, to ensure that both small and large universities are well equipped to deal with technical, human and organisational elements of cyber security.

Reflecting on 2021, we're proud of the work the Centre has completed as part of this project and the broader contribution it has brought to building a cyber resilient Australia. As we look to 2022, we strive to build on this work within the sector, and expand our cyber security research through new projects with governments, industry and our fellow RMIT colleagues. Some exciting work to come in 2022 includes:

- Raising Cyber Security Skills and Awareness in the SME sector through simulation/gamification – with Amazon Web Services (AWS) and RMIT Cyber Ready Cloud Innovation Centre
- Australian Women in Security Survey with Australian Women in Security Network (AWSN) and the Australian Signals Directorate (ASD)
- Exploring the cyber impacts of Digital Infrastructure & the Digital CBD with the Victorian Government and RMIT Blockchain Innovation Hub.



# Centre for International Development



## Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

In December 2020, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) commissioned Alberto Posso and Simon Feeny to undertake a global case study on the relationship between climate change and child labour in agriculture.

Over 70% of child labour occurs in the agricultural sector, the same sector that is most vulnerable to shocks resulting directly from climate change. Understanding the nexus between climatic shocks and child labour is crucial for providing evidence-based policy recommendations to governments and civil society. The case studies use data from:

- Peru
- Ethiopia
- Nepal
- Côte d'Ivoire

Using the latest econometric techniques, the researchers conclude that not all shocks associated with climate change affect child labour. However, where shocks are identified to affect child labour, they are more likely to increase incidences of child labour than decrease them. Drawing on its findings, the study proposes the following groups of policy recommendations to tackle child labour in the countries studied:

- Legislative policies devised to combat child labour but followed up with increased awareness of the policies and closer scrutiny of their implementation.
- Social protection policies that ensure households have adequate income and access to basic services to mitigate the need to use children in work.

- Education policies that include educating households on the detrimental effects of child labour and ensuring the availability of fee-free, adequately staffed schools that provide children with relevant high-quality education. Education and training should also be provided to farmers to improve productivity and reduce the need for child labour.
- Climate adaptation policies that include the introduction of new drought- and flood-resistant varieties of seeds, the development of infrastructure to collect water and prevent flooding and land use policies to reduce deforestation and degradation.
- Improving farm infrastructure, including mechanisation of agriculture to act as a substitute for child labour and increase agricultural productivity, and ensuring farmers have adequate storage facilities for their crops.
- Providing access to insurance, credit and other financial services to provide households with resilience to shocks and other difficult times.
- Collection of better data to capture the incidence and intensity of child labour and how they are changing over time, collection of better data on changing weather patterns and implementation of early alert systems for significant climate shocks.
- Finding innovative ways of changing cultural and social norms regarding child labour in the countries will also be important in making progress towards making 2021 the year for the elimination of child labour.

# Global Trade and Logistics Research Group



Dr Aida Ghalebeigi

## Gender Matters in Transport (GMiT)

The Gender Matters in Transport theme, established by Dr Aida Ghalebeigi, examines the age-old but enduring and challenging problem of gender inequality in the transport and logistics industry. As one of the traditional male dominated industries, its historically embedded ‘male’ cultures and structures have continued to limit women’s participation in the workforce, limit women’s competitive rise to senior management and leadership positions and maintain gender pay gaps.

Driven by the need to better understand and document the problem and contribute towards policy and industry efforts to achieve more workplace gender equality in the industry, Dr Ghalebeigi and team, including Prof Victor Gekara, Dr Lena Wang, Dr Maryam Safari, with the assistance of Dr Karen Douglass and Mr Slavatore Ferraro, developed active industry engagement and established collaborations with various key stakeholders leading to the award of a competitive grant by the Victoria Government Commissioner for Gender Equality. Some of the key industry collaborators include the National Association of Women in Operations (NAWO), the Department of Transport (DoT), Major Transport Infrastructure Authority, the Australian Industry Standards and a range of major industry operators.

The research, developed in collaboration with, and in the context of, the Department of Transport, examines progress towards gender equality in the DoT; the policy and strategy gaps and strengths; and assesses the overall capacity to effectively implement the Gender Equality Act 2021. In the process of developing the study the team organised and hosted two major industry research webinars in 2021 involving high-profile speakers and

attracting an audience of over 300 participants nationwide. The webinar participants were drawn from various leading organisations in the Transport and Logistics sector such as Linfox, Toll Group, Metro Trains, Yarra Trams, Kuehne Nagel, StarTrack, Port of Melbourne, and Work Safe Victoria, to name a few.

### Event One:

Gender equality in the Transport & Logistics industry: How embedded ideologies impact the labour market, October 29, 2021

#### Panel members:

- Ms Louise Weine – CEO of National Association of Women in Operations (NAWO)
- Ms Julia Armstrong – Oceania CX Execution Manager, A.P. Moller - Maersk
- Dr Aida Ghalebeigi – RMIT University

### Event Two:

Gender equality in the Transport & Logistics industry: Policies and Strategies, May 13 2021.

#### Panel members:

- Dr Niki Vincent - The Commissioner for Gender Equality in Public Sector, Victorian State Government
- Ms Melinda Collinson - Deputy Secretary, Department of Transport, Victorian State Government
- Ms Anne Marie Baldwin - General Manager Talent, Remuneration, Culture and Capability, Australia Post

These events provided a platform for the much-needed reignition of the gender equality in transport debate, which is also important for other similarly male dominated traditional industries. The wide interest generated has achieved the study significant popularity, whose impact is already being felt and highly anticipated by the key stakeholders – the Victoria Gender Equality Commission and the DoT – as well as the sector more generally. The DoT has strongly profiled the study and their collaboration with the RMIT team as of great value and anticipated impact in its LinkedIn account. Likewise, the Gender Equality Commission publicly acknowledges the RMIT study and related research activities as highly valuable for the future of the implementation of the Gender Equality Act.

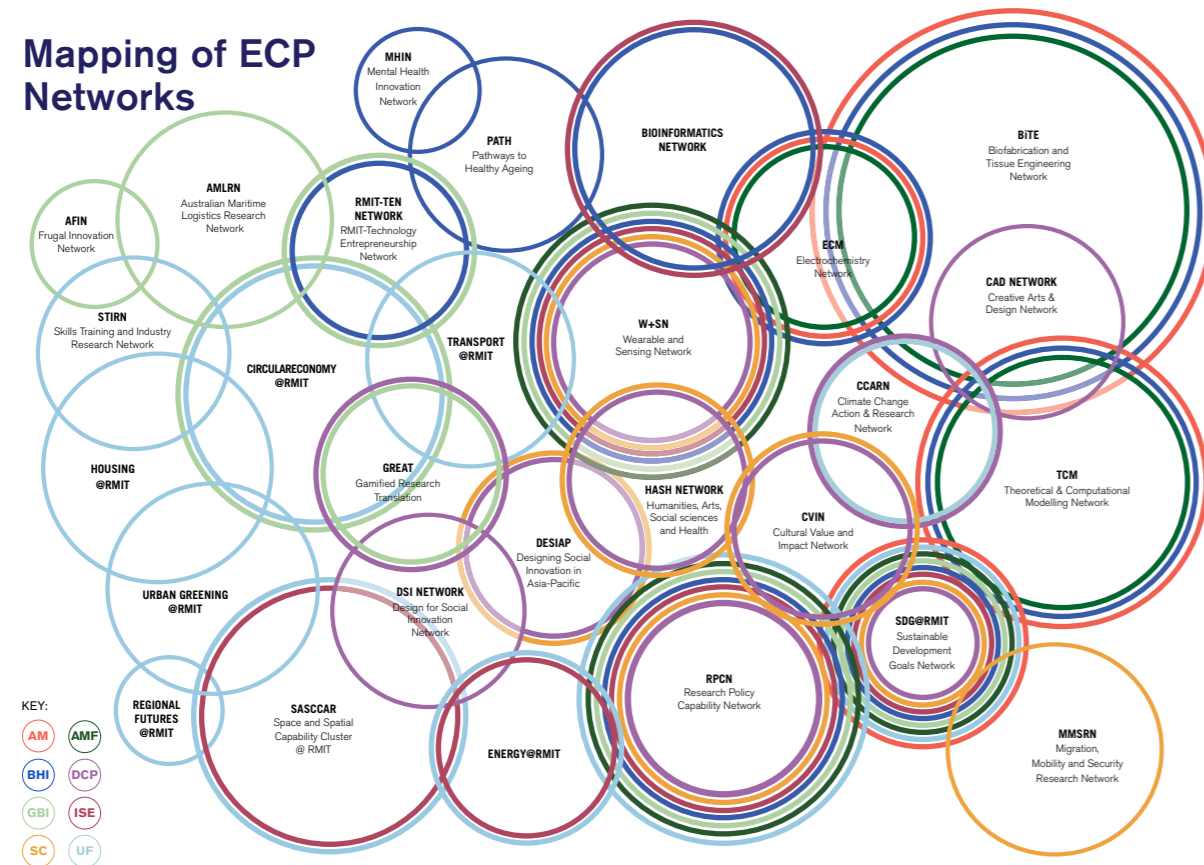
The Gender Matters in Transport theme, among other themes under GTL research, has therefore not only gathered rapid momentum but has also engaged in highly impactful and influential research activities. The gender equality study will certainly make a strong contribution to policy and practice as well as lead to greater grant successes in the future.





# ECP Collaborative Research Networks

## Mapping of ECP Networks



Note: The size of the rings represents the number of members  
 Diagram credit: Developed for the ECP Review 2021 by Professor Matt Duckham, Distinguished Professor Larissa Hjorth, et al.

ECP Collaborative Research Networks encapsulate the spirit of the ECPs and have been instrumental in facilitating cross-disciplinary engagement in two ways:

1. Enhancing previous connections between researchers across disciplines; and
2. Forging new connections between those who were unknowingly working within similar areas.

A total of 37 Collaborative Research Networks have been formed so far, including four that were established as a result of the ReStart Initiative.

Demonstrating how the ECPs facilitate sustainable cross-disciplinary collaboration through research networks, refer to the “pebbles in the pond” Mapping of ECP Networks overleaf. This diagram demonstrates the overlapping of ECP disciplines, providing a supported framework of connections, breaking down existing siloed research innovation eco-systems.

## GLOBAL BUSINESS INNOVATION ECP

The Global Business Innovation ECP has been involved (along with other ECPs) in supporting the following networks:

- Australasian Frugal Innovation Network;
- Australian Maritime Logistics Research Network;
- Behavioural Innovation Research & Design Network (BIRDS);
- Circular Economy @ RMIT;
- Cultural Value & Impact Network (CVIN);
- Gamified Research Translation Network (GREAT);
- Researcher Policy Capability Network (RPCN);
- RMIT-TEN Network;
- SDG@RMIT
- Skills Training & Industry Research Network (STIRN);
- VC Fellows Network;
- Wearables and Sensing Network.

On the 3rd December 2021, at RMIT Storey Hall, Green Brain Conference Room, a ‘Learning Across the ECP Networks’ event was hosted by the Advanced Materials (Director, Professor Rachel Caruso), Advanced Manufacturing and Fabrication (Director, Professor Ivan Cole), Biomedical and Health Innovation (Director, Professor Magdalena Plebanski) and Global Business Innovation (Director, Professor Anne-Laure Mention) Enabling Capability Platforms. We were delighted to have 14 Networks available to participant and present. Whilst at least one of the four hosting ECPs has been involved in each of the Networks represented at the event, it is important to acknowledge that the involvement in these Networks may not be limited to the AM, AMF, BHI and GBI ECPs.

The event was a fabulous way to bring people together to connect across networks and discipline areas. Professor Swee Mak, Associate Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research & Innovation Capability) and Professor of Innovation delivered a Welcome and Clare Russell, Director, Research Partnerships and Initiatives, R&I Portfolio, shared information on ‘Industry Engagement and Partnerships’.

Given the wonderful feedback that was received from this event, there will certainly be more similar networking opportunities throughout 2022.





# ECP Collaborative Research Networks

## SOCIAL CHANGE ECP

In 2021, The Social Change ECP continued to collaborate with and support our network of centres and research networks across DSC and CoBL, including the newest additions to our research ecosystem: the Centre of Business and Human Rights, the Center for International Development, the Centre for Cyber Security Research and Innovation and the Behavioural Business Lab (BBL). We also supported the launch of two new cross-ECP research networks: the Climate Change Research Network (CCR-NET) and the SDGs Research Network, with the aim to bring RMIT academics together, engaging with these critical topics in their research.

2021 was also a crucial year for open research and science. Australia's Chief Scientist Dr Cathy Foley referred to "improving open access research" as one of the four "critical foundational issues" of her strategic work plan during her tenure, noting that "Australia lags some other nations in regard to open access, with well over half of Australian academic papers requiring a payment to access". Contributing to a growing interest in open access, the Social Change and Information & Systems Engineering ECPs launched the Open Research Seminar Series to disseminate cross-disciplinary topics featuring "openness" in the production and distribution of data and knowledge.

We were delighted to host global leaders in the open science area such as Eva M. Mendez, Chair of the European Open Science Policy Platform, Edzer Pebesma, Co-Director IfGI Münster University, Ginny Barbour (QUT) and Adrian Dyer (DERC, School of Media and Communication). Platforms. We were delighted to have 14 Networks available to participant and present. Whilst at least one of the four hosting ECPs has been involved in each of the Networks represented at the event, it is important to acknowledge that the involvement in these Networks may not be limited to the AM, AMF, BHI and GBI ECPs.

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# HDR News

## CoBL's new HDR Program

In 2022 the College of Business and Law will launch an exciting new HDR Program. Candidates will for the first time undertake a comprehensive program of coursework to equip them with the skills needed to complete their thesis and develop a platform for dual career pathways; both practitioner and academic.

The new program consists of four new courses that address the foundations and philosophy of research leading to design, research methods and impact, applied research analytics, and a series of advanced seminars in global business and law. In addition, a revised Research Practice course will take the candidate to their Confirmation of Candidature.

*"It is the focus on application and impact that makes this a distinctly RMIT and CoBL HDR Program."*

The program will equip candidates with the knowledge to truly realise independent scholarship while at the same time provide an applied frame to their research. It is the focus on application and impact that makes this a distinctly RMIT and CoBL HDR Program. Many of our graduates seek a career in industry. Our program will help to realise that through sustained focus on applied research techniques, communication, and commercialisation opportunities. Throughout, a discipline context is provided with guests providing unique industry and academic insight.

We have our subject designers in place, and you can look forward to hearing more as the development occurs and we near our August launch!

Professor Simon Pervan,  
Director of Research Service and Partnerships



## HDR 2021 numbers



Enrolments: 225

Completions: 72



## Best Paper Award

Congratulations to the 2021 summer and winter round winners, listed below.

### Summer 2021

**Confirmation of Candidature:** Ying Kai (Simon) Yap, School of Economics Finance and Marketing; 'Essays on Peer Information Environment in Corporate Finance.'

**2nd Milestone Review:** Chintha Kaluarachchi, School of Accounting, Information Systems and Supply Chain; 'CyberBullying among adults in Australia.'

**3rd Milestone Review:** Anthony Cooper, School of Economics Finance and Marketing; 'The Strategic Management of Social Media Relationships: An Examination of Governance Issues in Fashion Brand Communities.'

### Winter 2021

**Confirmation of Candidature:** Nadja Dollisson, School of Economics Finance and Marketing; 'Selfie or Self-Acceptance: Does matching of brand communication content to consumer goals enhance brand evaluations.'

**2nd Milestone Review:** Retno Maruti, School of Economics Finance and Marketing; 'Essays in Education and Labour in Indonesia.'

**3rd Milestone Review:** Faith Aboyeji, Graduate School of Business and Law; 'International Copyright and Human Development: The Case for Access to Knowledge.'

AND Mark Ashcroft, School of Management; 'Innovation Implementation in Healthcare: A Resource Based View.'

## Vietnam School of Business and Management Joins the Milestone Conference

In 2021, CoBL's Vietnam HDR Cohort joined the Milestone Conference program. We started with a Mini Conference in October, and more candidates will be participating in the November conference. We hope that through participating in the Milestone Conferences, we can build connections between Vietnam and Melbourne, both between candidates and staff. Academic staff and all candidates in the College are welcome to attend Milestone presentations. Before each conference we publish a Program Guide containing the names and project abstracts for all presenting candidates. As we are currently delivering all our conferences online, the guide also includes a direct link to the Teams Meeting, as well as the date and time of the presentation.

We look forward to more Vietnam based candidates participating in our 2022 conferences.

You can learn more about CoBL's Milestone Conferences at our Milestone Hub. Launched earlier this year, the Hub is designed to be a one-stop shop for all things Milestone Conference related. You can also find information on our candidates' research projects in our HDR Candidate Project Database.





# Spotlight on a HDR Candidate

## Ahmad Alaassar

Ahmad successfully defended his PhD conducted in co-tutelle with the University of Agder (UiA) and has graduated from RMIT and UiA in August 2021. His dissertation included 3 ABDC A publications in Technovation, Technological Forecasting and Social Change, Small Business Economics.

Ahmad was the first candidate under a CRTA (collaborative research training agreement) with RMIT and UiA, which was established in the broader context of the OpenInnoTrain H2020 project which is about to ramp up with more candidates.

He recently joined Professor Anne-Laure Mention's team in Barcelona where he will continue his journey with RMIT.



## Tahereh Pourhabibi

Tahereh is a researcher in the field of Business Information System, with a Master of Science in Artificial Intelligence from Al-Zahra University, Iran.

Tahereh recently successfully defended her PhD in the School of AISSC, and thesis, entitled "Fraud Detection: A Graph Based Anomaly Detection Approach", was supervised by Professor Booi Kam, Dr Yee Ling Boo and Associate Professor Kok-Leong Ong (La Trobe University). She has now fully graduated from RMIT, and her dissertation included two A\* level papers in the Decision Support Systems Journal.



## Mark Micallef

Mark commenced his HDR candidature in 2020, after 15 years working in industry.

During his years working in senior management roles in sales organisations Mark observed first-hand changes which have been driven by digital technology use. Mark has set out to understand why some sales organisations struggle with digital technology use while others do not in order to help sales managers to develop and implement more effective digital transformation strategies.



## Apurva Kirti Sharma

Apurva is a PhD candidate at the GSBL and before coming to Australia to pursue a research degree she was a law practitioner in India.

Building on her small-town upbringing in the foothills of the Himalayas, she deeply embraces her connection with land, communities and Mother Nature, and through this connection she has found her greater purpose - to use her legal advocacy skills, research experience, and personal strengths to empower underprivileged communities and stakeholders in terms of rights and resources.



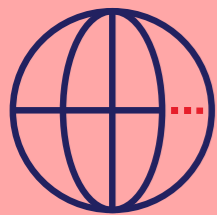


# 2022 Research Strategy

## Our CoBL research vision

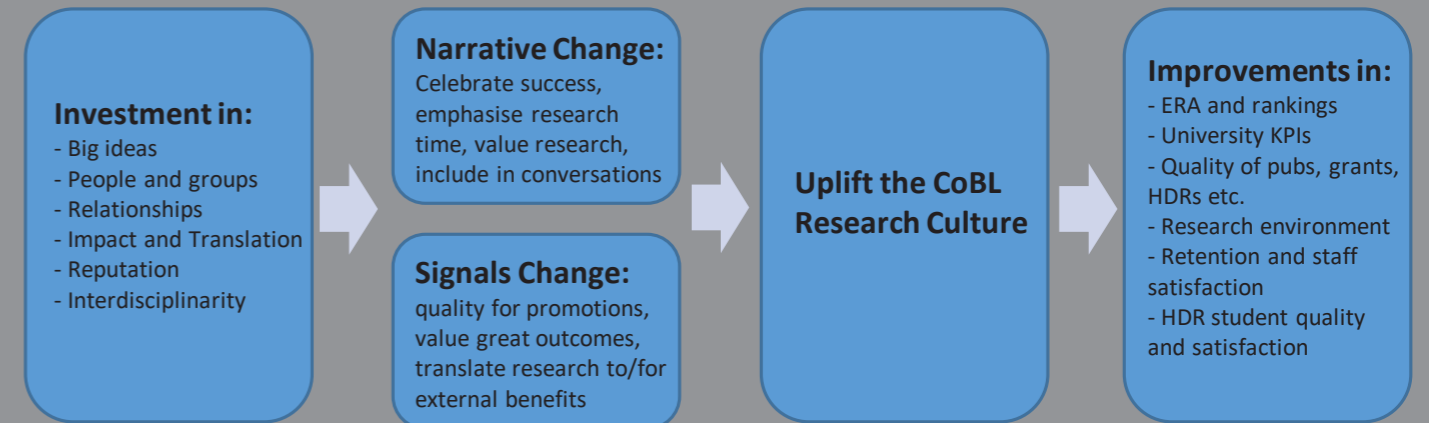
*“Leading academics and researchers producing applied, evidence-based research, and future-relevant thought leadership”.*

## Overview

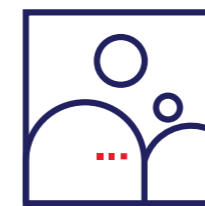


Research in the College of Business and Law covers a broad range of business discipline areas, reflecting the activities of our Schools. Our cohesive environment provides support to our nationally and internationally established researchers, and nurtures our emerging researchers and postgraduate candidates. The College of Business and Law undertakes rigorous and evidence-based research that informs policy and business practice. Our research is impactful and supports action on business, ethical and social dilemmas. Our research is industry relevant and translatable, and we welcome opportunities for collaboration and partnership.

## Strategic Approach



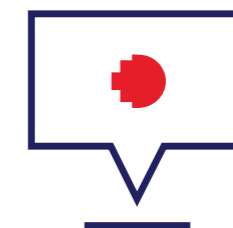
## Strategic Goals



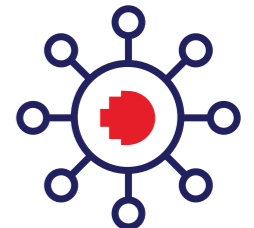
**Uplift research culture**



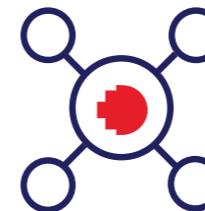
**Research informed, leading-edge education**



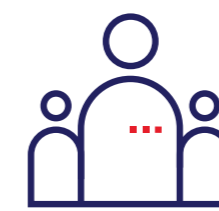
**Enhance research reputation**



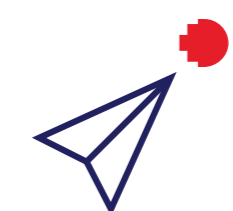
**Increase collaborative work with industry to create impact**



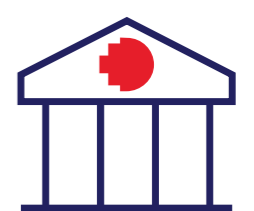
**Instil interdisciplinary mindsets and initiatives**



**Build research capability**



**Ensure greater impact**



**Provide a state-of-the-art HDR student experience**

