



Organisations & Social Change



RMIT
UNIVERSITY

Centre for Organisations
and Social Change

Overview

About us

The Centre for Organisations and Social Change (COSC) is an interdisciplinary research centre within RMIT's College of Business and Law, dedicated to advancing transformative social change within and through organisations to promote inclusion, equity and well-being for all.

Operating at the intersection of business, society, and technology, COSC addresses emerging opportunities and risks in a rapidly evolving environment shaped by digital transformation and artificial intelligence.

Through a human-centred and socially responsible innovation approach, the Centre ensures that technological advances contribute to inclusive, ethical, and sustainable organisational practices and societal outcomes.

Our centre helps organisations, policymakers and communities understand and address complex social, business, and workforce challenges through rigorous, interdisciplinary and impact-oriented research, contributing to a more inclusive, equitable and thriving future for business and society.

Mission

To lead equitable and inclusive organisational and societal change through impactful, evidence-based and technology-enabled research.

Core capabilities

- applied research
- evidence reviews
- policy analysis
- program evaluation
- stakeholder engagement
- co-design workshops
- organisational diagnostics
- impact measurement
- research-informed strategy development

Research Themes

COSC's research is organised around four strategic priority areas:

Gender equity and organisations

Examines how gendered norms, power relations and institutional practices shape organisational life, and how policy, leadership and practice change can advance gender equity

Leads: Dr Pradeepa Dahanayake, A/Prof Catherine Earl, Dr Leila Afshari

Positive ageing and organisations

Considers how people as they age can be positively supported within and through organisations to be connected and contribute to society and the economy

Leads: Professor Bernardo Figueiredo, A/Prof Sarah Sinclair

Health, wellbeing and organisations

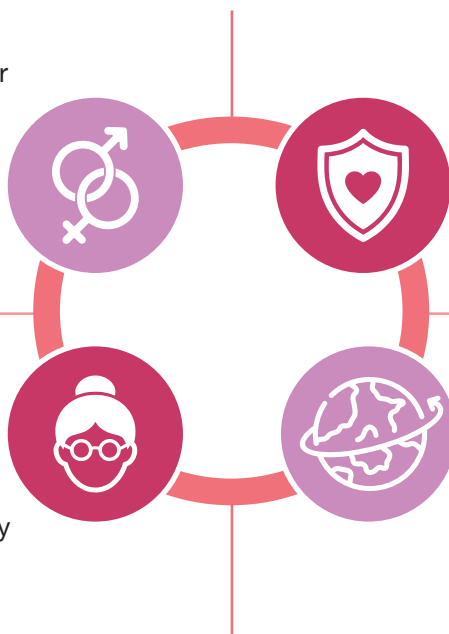
Explores how organisations can promote employee, customer, and community wellbeing, respond to health and social challenges, and design healthier, more inclusive systems

Leads: Dr Asanka Gunasekara, A/Prof Anna Zhu, Dr Phuong Hoang

Multicultural inclusion and organisations

Explores issues of inclusion and exclusion for culturally and linguistically diverse people, migrants, refugees and indigenous communities in workplaces and for organisations

Leads: A/Prof Marian Makkar, Associate Professor My Nguyen, Dr Thao Luong



Partnerships



Capability Statement

How We Work

1 Collaborative and Translational

Co-designing research with communities, organisations and industry. Translating evidence into meaningful and implementable policy and practice.

2 Interdisciplinary

Building interdisciplinary teams across business, social sciences, and STEM to develop innovative solutions

3 Equity-centred

Embedding equity, inclusion and wellbeing in research, partnerships, and practical solutions for organisations, governments and communities

4 Global and SDG Impact

Addressing global challenges and the UN Sustainable Development Goals through research that supports sustainable, inclusive, and socially responsible futures.

Impactful projects

COSC has a strong track record of external funding and has completed many high profile research projects in alignment with our research themes.

Gendered Norms and Gaming Influencers' project from the eSafety Commissioner

■ eSafety Commissioner

This multi-year project led by COSC Co-Director A/Prof Lauren Gurrieri was funded by the eSafety Commissioner (\$370,000) in 2025 to explore how the gender norms and ideals promoted by gaming influencer content on social media shapes the attitudes and behaviours of 'tween' boys aged 9 to 12.

The project identifies the kinds of gendered messaging in gaming influencer content popular with tween boys, and the concerns and approaches parents have when navigating this content with their children.

It aims to address the drivers of gendered tech-based abuse by developing resources to help build the capacity of parents and carers to address harmful gender norms impacting their children, and to teach tween boys about recognising and calling out harmful ideas and behaviours.



Empowering Senior Voices' project

- City of Melbourne
- U3A Network Victoria
- University of Melbourne and ANU

This project led by Professor Bernardo Figueiredo was funded in 2025 by City North Activation Challenge funding (\$40,000 approx.).

It aimed to inform more inclusive and accessible urban planning to strengthens social participation and neighbourhood belonging.

The project captured the experiences of people aged 65+ as they navigate walking through Melbourne, documenting this through photos and personal stories that turned lived experience into insights to shape positive community change.

The project continues to grow into 2026, including the event Flourishing: Co-Creating Healthy Ageing Futures in February, which attracted 90 attendees.



SAFE ('Social, Accessible, Fun, and Equitable') outdoor project

- Office for Women in Sport and Recreation
- Out Doors Inc

Led by COSC member Dr Ancy Gamage in 2025, this \$25,000 project examined the benefits of outdoor participation for women from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, as well as barriers and enablers to engagement.

The project found that shared outdoor activities fostered lasting benefits, including stronger social connections, enhanced confidence and wellbeing, and greater engagement with Australia's natural environment.

It also produced recommendations for more inclusive outdoor spaces for local councils, Parks Victoria, tourism and outdoor operators, industry bodies, and Out Doors Inc.

These insights were shared in a COSC-hosted webinar in October 2025.



Changing donation behaviour in young people

- Australian Red Cross Lifeblood

This project led by A/Prof Marian Makkar was funded in 2024 by Australian Red Cross Lifeblood (\$69,942) to identify barriers and motivators to attract and retain younger donors.

With 18 to 30-year-olds underrepresented in blood donation numbers, the project identified the unique challenges faced by young Australians, which empowered Lifeblood to tailor their outreach strategies.

Lifeblood can now build a culture of sustained blood donation, ensuring a reliable and sustainable blood supply for Australia while setting a global benchmark for engaging young donors.



Directors



Associate Professor
Lauren Gurrieri
Co-Director

Lauren's research examines gendered inequalities across consumer and digital cultures.

She has authored over 60 research outputs and has been awarded over \$1.2 million in external research funding, including from the Australian Research Council. Her research frequently informs public debate, industry reform, and policy initiatives.

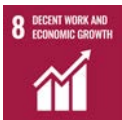


Professor Joe Jiang
Co-Director

Joe's research focuses on career development, employee thriving, workforce inclusion and work-related wellbeing.

He is ranked among the world's top 2% of scientists by Stanford University and received RMIT's 2024 Vice-Chancellor's Award for Research Excellence.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Contact Us

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COSC website



rmit.edu.au/cosc

Social media



LinkedIn



YouTube

Ready to partner with us?

Get in touch to partner with COSC to develop evidence-based solutions for inclusive, healthy and socially responsible organisations.



We welcome conversations with government, industry, community and not-for-profit partners seeking research-informed solutions to complex organisational and social challenges.

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