



## Social and Cultural Inquiry Cluster

*UNSW Australia's Kensington campus, on which the School of Social Sciences is housed, is built on the land of the Aboriginal people. We pay our respects to the Bedegal people of the Eora nation who are the Custodians of this land.*

*We acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the First Australians, whose lands, winds and waters we all now share, and pay respect to their unique values, and their continuing and enduring cultures which deepen and enrich the life of our nation and communities.*

We are the *Social and Cultural Inquiry* Cluster. Our scholarship is multidisciplinary, critical and open-minded. We are driven by a desire to change and transform situations of disadvantage, marginalisation and inequity from a systemic perspective. Rather than focus primarily on individual issues, we use our scholarship, and our professional and clinical expertise to understand the circumstances of the relation between individuals and their collective in a world structured by social, political, cultural and economic pressures. We are committed to scholarship that is engaged with real-world issues and to principles of community-engaged scholarship as an approach that deliberately challenges inequalities in the production and sharing of knowledge.

Our methods are diverse but we share a commitment to disrupting received ideas and challenging orthodoxies whatever they may be. We consider enduring problems of suffering, freedom, inequality, oppression and happiness. We understand that there are a diversity of relations and practices of knowing and that part of our work is to decolonise prevailing ways of thinking. In short, we seek to avoid reductive explanations for complex social problems. This enables us to disturb conventional assumptions about what we know, what we don't know and how we think.

Our research operates in different problem spaces to shed light on issues, problems and perspectives that have been neglected. Our research is motivated by a commitment to social justice, and moves between the registers of everyday life experience and structural patterns in considering human rights and responsibilities, gendered violence, disability and other experiences of inequity and injustice. By creating and reflecting on different forms of knowledge and considering how knowledge is produced we seek to contribute to constructive, meaningful change that recognises and enables the well-being and resilience of individuals, families and communities.

### **Our purpose**

To tackle local and global challenges through an appreciation of the complex interplay of social and cultural forces that link individual experiences to broad systemic patterns.

To cultivate thoughtful, reflective students who pose questions about changing their place in the world and transforming the life experience of others.

To produce world-class scholarship that is theoretically informed and practice oriented.

To work with and listen to community organisations and help them respond to the needs of their members.

### **Our commitments**

#### Diversity

We respect the diversity of research expertise and teaching experience across the cluster, and are committed to acknowledging the experiences and practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups.

#### Research-Led Teaching

We are committed to teaching practice that is inspired by our research inquiries and contributions.

#### Applied Learning

We are dedicated to creating hands-on, student-centred learning experiences through endeavors such as work-integrated learning to engage students.

#### Social Engagement

We are committed to developing productive and meaningful engagements with our cultural collaborators, intellectual communities, project stakeholders, and our government and non-government partners

### **Our goals**

We aim to investigate social and cultural problems in order to reflect on their manifold causes and to understand the complexity of human suffering and different forms of inequality.

We seek to contribute to constructive, meaningful change that recognises and enables the well-being and resilience of individuals, families and communities.

We seek to create different forms of knowledge and reflect on how knowledge is produced.

### **Our Degree Programs**

BA (Bachelor of Arts)

BSW (Bachelor of Social Work)

BSRP (Bachelor of Social Research and Policy)

BCCJ (Bachelor of Criminology and Criminal Justice)

### **Our Dual Degree Programs**

BSW/BCCJ (Bachelor of Social Work/Bachelor of Criminology & Criminal Justice)

BSW/BA (Bachelor of Social Work/Bachelor of Arts)

BSW/BSRP (Bachelor of Social Work/Bachelor of Social Research & Policy)

BA/LLB (Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Law)

BCCJ/LLB (Bachelor of Criminology and Criminal Justice/Bachelor of Law)

BSRP/LLB (Bachelor of Social Research & Policy/Bachelor of Law)

BSW/LLB (Bachelor of Social Work (Hons)/Bachelor of Law)

## **Our Subject Areas:**

### **Sociology & Anthropology**

Sociology and Anthropology are dedicated to the exploration of real world problems in cultural and social life, and pose enduring questions as to the human condition and the way life is lived, both in localised and big picture settings. We ask questions about whose lives matter, what makes life meaningful, and why we live with conflict and care? In doing so these foundational disciplines, which remain vital to the entire scope of social sciences and qualitative insights on society and culture, provide key insights for contemporary debates, political shift and cultural survival. Our disciplinary strengths are celebrated through both rigorous theoretical and conceptual research and teaching, and ethnographically informed research and praxis based teaching.

### **Social Work**

Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline with a commitment to working within a value position and code of ethics, informed by the International Federation of Social Work (IFSW) and the Australian Association of Social work (AASW). As a professional practice, social work is concerned with the social, cultural and political context of day-to-day life for individuals, families, groups and communities. Our goal is to engage in research and practice that investigates and promotes social change, social development, social cohesion, equity, and empowerment. Our commitment to both is centrally underpinned by principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility, and respect for diversities. We are committed to research and practice that actively engages with ongoing and current challenges that are experienced by different individuals and population groups in a multitude of contexts.

### **Social Research and Policy**

Social Research and Policy is committed to the use of interdisciplinary methods of inquiry to make sense of, and respond to, numerous social policy and social justice issues facing people, communities, and the environment in Australia and around the world. Our goal is to make social research accessible, useful and beneficial via our own original research and by educating the next generation of policy influencers and researchers. We are committed to principles of community-engaged scholarship that values participants and community partners as co-constructors of knowledge.

### **Criminology**

Criminology aims to address issues in relation to crime, victimisation, crime prevention and criminal justice intervention from both theoretical and applied/policy driven perspectives. We are committed to improving both our understanding of these issues and existing practices. Our goal is to embrace various diversities in our scholarly work - diversity in: disciplinary traditions (law, criminology, social work, psychology, policy, and sociology); focus (criminalisation, victimisation, criminal justice intervention); analysis (local, regional, national and international issues), theoretical engagement (critical criminology, developmental and life-course criminology, socio-legal studies, feminist criminology, cultural criminology); and, methodological approaches (qualitative, quantitative and mixed research methods).

### **Disability**

The Intellectual Disability Behaviour Support (IDBS) Program aims to build the capacity of society to support, include, and improve the lives of people with cognitive disability and complex support needs, their families, and supporters through a

program of teaching and research. The work focuses on intersectional issues experienced by those with cognitive disability who are socially disconnected and experience poor access to social support, education, employment, housing, health care, and justice. IDBS works collaboratively and inclusively to generate knowledge, stimulate informed debate, and improve policy and practice. IDBS aspires to lead interdisciplinary scholarship and debate on cognitive disability and complex support needs in order to improve and transform lives. IDBS has strong partnerships with individuals, providers, and policy makers to apply knowledge and directly participate in the process of realising just outcomes for those living with disability.