The Social Inclusion and Social Policy Research Unit (SISPRU) is located within the Department of Social Work in the Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, Monash University.

SISPRU undertakes world-class research from a social work/social welfare perspective. The Unit has a depth of experience and interest across a range of social policy concerns including income security, child welfare and child protection, illicit drugs, and indigenous rights.

SISPRU builds on its solid research record to participate in education and community debate. It promotes knowledge and understanding in ways that enrich and improve public policy and related practice. With a strong academic foundation, it undertakes both independent and collaborative social policy research. It can also provide effective and impartial program evaluations, facilitation, education and training as well as media comment, conference, keynote and panel contributions.

SISPRU operates under the direction of Associate Professor Philip Mendes in collaboration with an advisory board comprised of prominent Australians. We provide meaningful opportunities for post-graduate training in inter-disciplinary policy research and partnerships with government and non-government community service providers and other policy bodies and advocates.

SISPRU produces quality research that:
- develops more effective policies and programs for responding to social disadvantage
- investigates the relative influence of structural and individual factors on social exclusion
- examines the influence of lobby groups including the media and think tanks on policy development
- explores the impact of gender on welfare state and employment policies
- considers the global policy factors and organizations that influence policy outcomes.

Contact:
Associate Professor Philip Mendes
Department of Social Work

TEL: +61 3 9903 1132 or 0413 285167
EMAIL: philip.mendes@monash.edu
SISPRU Research Unit Staff

Associate Professor Philip Mendes
Philip teaches Social Policy and Community Development in the Department of Social Work, and is Director of the Social Inclusion and Social Policy Research Unit. He is an acknowledged expert on community welfare lobby groups, having completed his PhD on the peak community welfare lobby body, the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS). He has also published widely on a range of social policy and community development debates including globalisation and the welfare state, compulsory income management, illicit drug policies, Indigenous social policy, and social workers and policy practice.

Philip is a member of the Editorial Advisory Board for a number of academic journals including Alternativas (Spain), Community Development Journal (UK), International Journal of Social Welfare (Sweden), Developing Practice and Social Alternatives. He is also a reviewer for International Social Work (UK), Journal of Social Work (UK) and Australian Social Work, and a member of the Sidney Myer Fund Poverty and Disadvantage Grants Committee.

He has published widely in peer reviewed academic journals (over 100 publications in total), and is the author or co-author of 12 books including Harm Minimisation, Zero Tolerance and Beyond: The Politics of Illicit Drugs in Australia (Pearson, 2004), Inside the Welfare Lobby: A history of the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) (Sussex Academic Press, 2006), Australia’s Welfare Wars Revisited (UNSW Press, 2008; new 3rd edition to be published in late 2016), and Young People Leaving State out of home care: Australian Policy and Practice (Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2011).

For the last 17 years, he has been engaged in ongoing research on young people transitioning from out-of-home care. He is a member of the Transitions to Adulthood for Young People Leaving Public Care International Research Group, and has completed a number of major leaving care studies pertaining to youth justice, disability, Indigenous care leavers, and mentoring and employment programs. He is the co-editor of Young people transitioning from out-of-home care: International research, policy and practice to be published by Palgrave Macmillan in September 2016.

Samone McCurdy
Samone teaches Leading Sustainable Change and Introduction to the Welfare State in the Department of Social Work at Monash University. She has expertise in gender mainstreaming, employment and welfare state policy, and is currently completing a large-scale Doctorate study of the Paid Parental Leave Scheme. She is particularly interested in researching at the intersection of politics, industrial relations and social policies relating to caregiving, family violence and ageing. Other projects of interest include: long term unemployment, the Newstart Allowance, Income Management, and longitudinal research on gender and the outcomes of leaving out-of-home-care.

Rachel Averbukh
Rachel works in the Field Education program within the Department of Social Work. She is currently undertaking a study of Jewish communal responses globally to revelations of child sexual abuse. Her key research interests include: the current Royal Commission into Institutional Child Sexual Abuse, with a particular focus on religious organisations, and the policy ramifications for organisations, particularly schools; to develop a greater public awareness of the benefits of social work with regard to developing and analysing social policy in a number of sectors; and out-of-home care with a particular focus on children who become mothers at a young age.

Katherine Levi
Katherine works in the Field Education Program in the Department of Social Work. She has expertise in the prevention of child abuse in an organizational context, and is currently engaged in a PhD on the social policy context of dyslexia in Australia. Other areas of research interest include: the implementation of the recent Victorian Child Safe Standards and their impact on culture in child focused organizations; knowledge of and perceptions of the recent Victorian Child Safe Standards of boards and CEO’s of child focused organizations; measuring the impact of the recent criminal legislation in relation to the protection of children in organizations: awareness and change; the protection of children in state care: the role of the Victorian Children’s Commission; discrimination and rights: The experience of adults with dyslexia in the workforce in Victoria; teacher training and dyslexia, measuring teacher knowledge of the indicators of dyslexia of recently graduated teachers and experienced teachers (a comparison); and adults with dyslexia and their reflections on their experiences at school.

med.monash.edu/socialwork