

# Refugee Trauma Across the Lifespan.

Children and Adolescent Wellbeing  
and the Implications for Adult Health.



# Refugee trauma across the lifespan is recognised worldwide as a significant mental health issue in our times.

Refugee trauma can be across many cultures and there is much diversity with regard to idioms of distress causing a change in behaviour and mental well being. Refugee trauma is included in Australia's National Mental Health Plan, yet the extent to which it is recognised, researched or discussed in an interdisciplinary context is perhaps less than we would expect, even in places where there resides a diverse population of people from refugee background.

This one day symposium will consider the critical themes, debates and research possibilities related to refugee trauma for young people, with implications for later life, using a range of illustrative case study, clinical practice and research presentations.



**Thursday 29 October 2009**

National Wine Centre of Australia  
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<i>Healthy Development Adelaide</i>	
<i>Peace, Defence and Security Research and Innovation Cluster</i>	

# Program

9.15am	<b>Registration</b>	1.15	<b>Ms Bernadette McGrath (Co-Chair)</b> Director, Survivors of Torture and Trauma Assistance and Rehabilitation Service (STTARS)
9.50	<b>Kaurna Welcome</b>	1.20	<b>Keynote Address</b> <b>Dr Ida Kaplan</b> Direct Services Manager, Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture <i>The assessment of children and adolescents of refugee background – human rights, the family and the settlement context</i>
9.55	<b>Welcome &amp; Introduction</b> <b>A/Professor Nicholas Procter (Chair)</b> Co-Convenor, Peace, Defence & Security Research & Innovation Cluster, University of South Australia	1.40	<b>Robyn Smythe</b> Senior Counsellor, <b>Nicola Trenorden</b> Counsellor Child and Youth Program, Survivors of Torture and Trauma Assistance and Rehabilitation Service (STTARS) <i>From theory to practice: working with young survivors of torture and trauma</i>
10.00	<b>Keynote Address</b> <b>Mr Hieu Van Le</b> Lieutenant Governor of South Australia and Chairman of the South Australian Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission <i>From trauma to triumph</i>	2.00	<b>Professor Alexander McFarlane</b> Head, Centre for Military and Veterans' Health, University of Adelaide <i>The challenge of understanding: the mental health perspective of trauma in refugees</i>
10.20	<b>Professor Graeme Hugo</b> Director, National Centre for Social Applications of Geographical Information Systems, University of Adelaide <i>Refugee and humanitarian settlement in Australia – recent trends</i>	2.20	<b>Dr Julie Robinson</b> Developmental Psychologist, School of Psychology, Flinders University <i>What can we learn from comparing the wellbeing of newly arrived child and adolescent refugees and migrants?</i>
10.40	<b>A/Professor Wendy Lacey</b> Co-Convenor, Peace, Defence & Security Research & Innovation Cluster, University of South Australia School of Law, University of South Australia <i>Human rights, refugees and Australian law</i>	2.40	<b>Mr Tindaro Fallo</b> Clinical Consultant, Migrant Resource Centre <i>In treatment experiences of the impact of trauma and resettlement on identity formation and the future emotional well-being of young adult refugees</i>
11.00	<b>Dr Jon Jureidini</b> Head, Department of Psychological Medicine, Women's and Children's Hospital <i>Psychiatry, politics and trauma</i>	3.00	<b>Dr Fiona Arney</b> Deputy Director, National Centre for Child Protection, University of South Australia <i>Think child, think family, think community: multidisciplinary approaches to supporting families from refugee backgrounds in a new culture</i>
11.20	<b>Ms Jill Brodie-Tyrrell</b> Guidance Officer, New Arrivals Program Department of Education and Children's Services <i>Providing safe school environments for students with refugee background</i>	3.20	<b>Panel Discussion</b> <i>Invited Panel Member – Ms Nilofar Najimi</i>
11.40	<b>Panel Discussion</b> <i>Invited Panel Member – Mr Derek G Wright</i>	3.55	<b>A/Professor Nicholas Procter (Chair)</b> Closing remarks
12.20	<b>Lunch</b>	4.00	<b>Networking &amp; Drinks</b>
		5.00pm	<b>Close</b>

## Keynote Speakers



### Mr Hieu Van Le

Lieutenant Governor of South Australia  
Chairman, South Australian Multicultural  
and Ethnic Affairs Commission

Mr Le was sworn-in as Lieutenant Governor on 31st August 2007. Mr Le is the Chairman of the South Australian Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission (SAMEAC). He has been appointed as Chairman to 31 December 2009. Mr Le has been a member of the SAMEAC since 1995, including three years as Deputy Chairman and, since 1 January 2007, as Chairman.

Vietnamese born, Mr Le is the first person of Asian ethnic background who holds the position of Chairman of the SAMEAC. Mr Le is a Member of the South Australian Community Engagement Board. Mr Le is also Patron or an Honorary Member of a number of organisations, including the Australian Chinese Medical Association (SA), Chinatown Adelaide, Ethnic Schools Association of SA Inc., OzAsia Festival, Churchill Fellows Association of SA Inc., and the Migrant Resource Centre of South Australia Inc.

Mr Le has a Degree in Economics and a Masters Degree in Business Administration (MBA) from the University of Adelaide in South Australia. Mr Le is a senior Manager with the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC). He is a member of the Australian Society of Certified Practising Accountants (CPA) and a Fellow Member of the Financial Services Institute of Australasia (Finsia). Mr Le is a recipient of the 1996 Australia Day Medal for outstanding service to the ASIC and has been awarded the Centenary of Federation Medal for service to the advancement of multiculturalism.



### Dr Ida Kaplan

Direct Services Manager,  
Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture

Dr Ida Kaplan is Direct Services Manager at the Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture (VFST). She oversees client services (including the Early Intervention Program funded by Department of Immigration and Citizenship), is involved in development of appropriate service models for refugees and has had extensive experience, locally and internationally training professionals in the provision of appropriate interventions for survivors of torture and trauma.

Her research background is in depression and in the last 5 years has been a principal investigator on a four year longitudinal study investigating psychosocial factors which promote mental health and well-being in adolescents. She and her colleagues have recently completed an in-depth investigation of the effects of prolonged detention and currently are developing suitable methods for assessing outcomes of programs which aim to promote recovery from torture and trauma.

She has produced extensive professional development material. She was author of *Rebuilding Shattered Lives*, a comprehensive resource guide for working with survivors of torture and trauma. In her role at VFST, she is also responsible for contributing to development of policy relating to the mental and social health and well-being of refugees. She has assessed, prepared and contributed to reports on Cambodian detainees, East Timorese detainees and the Safe Havens. She has jointly contributed submissions to senate enquiries on the mental health of asylum seekers, the HREOC enquiry on children in detention and was a member of the advisory group assessing mental health of detainees in Nauru.

She has had a long commitment to human rights with special interests in justice, meaning and dignity as mental health issues in recovery from trauma, and a strong interest in dilemmas and challenges for professionals working in the area.

## Speaker Profiles



### A/Professor Nicholas Procter (Chair)

A/Professor Procter is co-convenor of the Peace, Defence and Security Research and Innovation Cluster at the University of South Australia. His discipline background is mental health nursing and he is the group leader for mental health research at UNISA's School of Nursing and Midwifery.

His work has been published in *Migration Letters*, *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law*, *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, *Australian Journal of Psychology*, *Journal of Advanced Nursing*,

and the *International Journal of Mental Health Nursing*. In addition he is author of the books *Serbian Australians in the Shadow of the Balkan War* (Ashgate) and *Speaking of Sadness and the Heart of Acceptance* (MMHA).

A/Professor Procter has undertaken extensive research and consulting work for government and non-government organisations delivering outcomes in practice development, clinical mentorship, transcultural mental health and the re-design of clinical pathways for improved mental health service delivery. He is an advisor to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship through the Mental Health Subgroup of the Detention Health Advisory Group and member of the Federal Government Council for Immigration Services and Status Resolution.



### Professor Graeme Hugo

Professor Graeme Hugo is University Professorial Research Fellow, Professor of the Department of Geographical and Environmental Studies and Director of the National Centre for Social Applications of Geographic Information Systems at the University of Adelaide. His research interests are in population issues in Australia and South East Asia, especially migration. His books include *Australia's Changing Population* (Oxford University Press), *The Demographic Dimension*

*in Indonesian Development* (with T. H. Hull, V. J. Hull and G. W. Jones, Oxford University Press), *International Migration Statistics: Guidelines for Improving Data Collection Systems* (with A.S. Oberai, H. Zlotnik and R. Bilborrow, International Labour Office), *Worlds in Motion: Understanding International Migration at Century's End* (with D. S. Massey, J. Arango, A Kouaouci, A. Pellegrino and J. E. Taylor, Oxford University Press), several of the 1986, 1991 and 1996 census based *Atlas of the Australian People Series* (AGPS), *Australian Immigration: A Survey of the Issues* (with M. Wooden, R. Holton and J. Sloan, AGPS), *New Forms of Urbanisation: Beyond the Urban-Rural Dichotomy* (with A. Champion, Ashgate) and *Australian Census Analytic Program: Australia's Most Recent Immigrants* (Australian Bureau of Statistics). In 2002 he secured an ARC Federation Fellowship over five years for his research project, "The new paradigm of international migration to and from Australia: dimensions, causes and implications". His current research has focused on migration and development, environment and migration and migration policy.



### A/Professor Wendy Lacey

A/Professor Wendy Lacey is co-convenor of the Peace, Defence and Security Research and Innovation Cluster at the University of South Australia and one of the foundation staff members of the University of South Australia Law School. Having previously worked at the Universities of Tasmania and Adelaide she holds honours degrees in Arts and Law, and was conferred her PhD in Law in 2006, all from the University of Tasmania.

In 2008, she published her first monograph, *Implementing Human Rights Norms: Judicial Discretion and Use of Unincorporated Conventions*, Presidian Legal Publications, 2008. This book builds upon her previous research, published in a number of book chapters and refereed journal articles, on the nexus between international human rights law and Australian domestic law. Dr Lacey teaches in the areas of Constitutional Law, Administrative Law and Public International Law. Her research also focuses on these fields, but her specialisation is in the relevance and application of human rights norms and principles in Australian public law. Dr Lacey is the Research Champion and Research Degrees Coordinator within the new School of Law, and is also the current Book Review Editor for the Australian Year Book of International Law.



### Dr Jon Jureidini

MB, BS, FRANZCP, PhD, Child Psychiatrist

Dr Jon Jureidini is Head of the Department of Psychological Medicine, Women's and Children's Hospital, Adelaide where he works in Consultation-Liaison psychiatry. He has academic status as Senior Research Fellow, Department of Philosophy, Flinders University and as Associate Professor in the Disciplines of Psychiatry and Paediatrics, University of Adelaide. He was recently visiting scientist

for the Therapeutics Initiative at the University of British Columbia. He is the Chair, Healthy Skepticism Inc, an organisation devoted to countering misleading drug promotion. He is also a member of the Women's and Children's Hospital Patient Care Ethics Committee, and a chair of the board of Siblings Australia, an organisation which advocates for the needs of individuals with ill and disabled siblings. Publications in the last 2 years have addressed prescribing for children, immigration detention, suicide, and child abuse.

## Speaker Profiles cont...



**Ms Jill Brodie-Tyrrell**

Jill Brodie-Tyrrell is the Guidance Officer (psychologist) for the New Arrivals Program in the Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS) and has been in this position since 1993. As such she provides a psychological service to the newly arrived students in DECS. She brings to the role a breadth of experience as a teacher and a psychologist, including junior primary teacher, school counsellor at a high school, psychology

lecturer of trainee teachers, and psychologist in a medical clinic.

Many of the students Jill now works with are from refugee background, and their issues are often associated with their experiences of trauma and disrupted schooling. Jill works with teachers and school leadership to help them understand the effects of trauma on learning and participation at school and to empower them to take an active role in the healing process. As children and adolescents are at school for a significant part of their waking hours teachers are in a powerful position to assist that healing process and to prevent future mental health problems.

In her talk, Jill will describe what DECS offers through the New Arrivals Program. Using Judith Herman's model of healing from trauma, she will also discuss how school can be a therapeutic environment and ways by which schools can facilitate the healing process.



**Ms Bernadette McGrath (Co-Chair)**

Bernadette McGrath has been the Director of the Survivors of Torture and Trauma Assistance and Rehabilitation Service (STTARS) since 2002. She is a qualified social worker with over 12 years experience in the management of community based non-government organisations. Prior to STTARS she managed the Women's Legal Service and the Taryn House accommodation and support service for women. She has also had substantial experience in the provision of casework and counselling services.



**Ms Robyn Smythe**

Robyn Smythe is a Senior Counsellor/Advocate at the Survivors of Torture and Trauma Assistance and Rehabilitation Service (STTARS) where she has worked since 2003 in various positions, most recently with children and young people from refugee backgrounds. Prior to that she worked in the disability sector locally and in Cambodia where she was involved in developing culturally appropriate options for children with disabilities.

Robyn's formal qualifications include a B.A. in Social Work; a B.A. Disability Studies; a Masters in Disability Studies and a Grad. Cert. Loss, Grief and Trauma Counselling.



**Ms Nicola Trenorden**

Nicola Trenorden has worked with young people for the past 20 years in residential settings, recreational and community development roles, drug and alcohol services, inner city street work and therapeutic wilderness settings. She has worked at the Survivors of Torture and Trauma Assistance and Rehabilitation Service (STTARS) as a Child and Youth Counsellor for the past three years and developed the Narrative/Drumming program

to work with students identified with torture trauma backgrounds.

Nicola's formal qualifications include a Masters in Counselling, a Post Graduate Certificate in Aboriginal Studies, a Bachelor of Social Science majoring in Community Development and an Associate Diploma in Community Work.

## Speaker Profiles cont...



### Professor Alexander McFarlane

MB. BS. (Hons), MD., Dip. Psychother., FRANZCP

Professor McFarlane is currently the Head of the University of Adelaide Node of the Centre of Military and Veterans' Health. He is an international expert in the field of the impact of disasters and post traumatic stress disorder. He is a Past President of both the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies and the Australasian Society for Traumatic Stress Studies. He is the recipient for the Robert Laufer Award

for outstanding scientific achievement in the study of the effects of traumatic stress, the Founders' Medal for a lifetime contribution to mental health research in Australia from the Australasian Society for Psychiatric Research and the 2008 RANZCP Senior Organon Research Award. He holds the rank of Group Captain in the RAAF Specialist Reserve.

He has held to role the Senior Adviser in Psychiatry to the Australian Defence Force, the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Australian Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health. His research has focused on the epidemiology and longitudinal course of posttraumatic stress disorder as well as the neuroimaging of the cognitive deficits in PTSD. He has a particular interest in the impact of childhood trauma and its impact on adult adjustment.

He has published over 300 articles and chapters in various refereed journals and has co-edited three books. He has also been involved in major litigation in a number of jurisdictions in Australia and internationally on matters relating to traumatic stress.



### Dr Julie Robinson

Dr Julie Robinson is a developmental psychologist in the School of Psychology, Flinders University. For the past 6 years her research has focused on the wellbeing of child and adolescent migrants and refugees. She has been involved in research concerning most stages of the refugee journey: she is involved in on-going research on children's well-being in a country of first asylum. She is a volunteer trainer with Refuge Egypt, a charity that promotes the

welfare of refugees in Cairo, and in collaboration with Refuge Egypt, she continues to conduct research on the well-being of young African and Middle-Eastern refugees and their families who are displaced in Cairo. She has been involved in research on young asylum seekers who were and were not successful in their application for refugee status. One study assessed the well-being of young Vietnamese asylum seekers after their application for refugee status had failed and they had been repatriated to Vietnam from camps in Hong Kong. Another study assessed the wellbeing of former child asylum-seekers from the Middle-East who were successful in their application for refugee status and were resettled in Australia after a period in an Australian immigration detention centre. She is also involved in a series of studies on resettlement of young people who are off-shore humanitarian entrants to Australia. This research is conducted in collaboration with the Department of Education and Children's Services and focuses on the adaptation of refugee students attending New Arrivals Programs in South Australian schools.



### Mr Tindaro Fallo

Tindaro Fallo is a clinical psychologist who has worked with refugees both in Australia and overseas since 1990. Tindaro has worked in a number of community and mental health services specializing in cultural and clinical psychology.

Tindaro Fallo is currently clinical consultant to the Migrant Resource Centre on the Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy's Torture and Trauma Counselling and Assessment Service. His role is to provide training and

supervision to mental health workers, from various agencies and backgrounds who provide clinical services to newly arrived refugees. The Short term Torture and Trauma Counselling service focuses on purposeful assessments aimed at restoring a healthy cultural identity, autonomy, and a sense of connection to the community. Treatment and counselling try to avoid forced acculturation and the filtering out of cultural expressions of distress. Counselling works towards a shared understanding of the experiences of the newly arrived refugee and an exploration of the pathways to a culturally meaningful recovery.



### Dr Fiona Arney

Dr Fiona Arney is the Deputy Director of the Australian Centre for Child Protection at the University of South Australia. Fiona has more than twelve years experience as a researcher in the areas of parenting support, child protection, and child and adolescent mental health and wellbeing. She has a special interest in the development of programs and policy which recognise the specific needs of children from Indigenous and refugee backgrounds. Fiona

is also part of a research concentration examining the factors affecting the use of research in policy and practice and the organisational and individual preconditions required for the adoption and adaptation of promising practices. She has also been a member of research teams at the Women's and Children's Hospital in Adelaide and the Parenting Research Centre (formerly the Victorian Parenting Centre) in Melbourne.

## Invited Panel Members



**Mr Derek G Wright**

Derek Wright trained as a Registered General Nurse and Registered Mental Health Nurse in Fife, Scotland, completed training in 1978. He moved to Newcastle in the North East of England in 1984 to take up the role of Nursing Officer for Acute and Forensic Services. He was appointed to the role of General Manager for West Newcastle in 1987.

In 1992 he was involved in an exchange and spent a year in Auckland, New Zealand as the Mental Health Manager for North & West Auckland. He was also appointed to lead the Mental Health Services for the Auckland region and to oversee the closure of two large Mental Health Institutions.

In 1993 he was appointed General Manager Mental Health Services for Waitemata Health, North & West Auckland. In 1995 seconded to work with the Mental Health Commission, for 3 months, to develop the New Zealand Mental Health Blueprint. In 1997 management of the Regional Drug & Alcohol Services was added to the portfolio.

In 2003 appointed Regional Director Mental Health Services Northern Region, involved in Funding & Planning of Mental Health Services for the four District Health Boards in the Northern Region. In June 2007 commenced as the Director Mental Health Operations, South Australia based at the Department of Health in Adelaide.



**Ms Nilofar Najimi**

Well as you know my name is Nilofar Najimi and I originally come from Afghanistan. I have been in Australia for 5 years and a couple of months. I live with my family. When I came to Australia, I came with no English and I learned it in Thebarton Senior College. Before coming to Australia I lived in Pakistan for nearly five years.

I finished my Certificate II in Community Service and SACE year 12 last year in Thebarton Senior College. I am a full time student doing Certificate IV in Specializing in Family Support Work at Gilles Plain TAFE, I do volunteer work with Youth Advisory Committee in Red Cross and I am also a Board member in Australian Red Cross (SA Board Member) and a Board member in STTARS as well. I have got a part time job in Hungry Jack's and also a casual job in Adelaide Lebanese Bakery. I also do volunteer work with MRC and some youth organisations too. Last but not least I am the President of the International Rotaract Club for Global Peace Australia and I have got family responsibilities too.

**A special thank you  
to our sponsors:**



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and Department for Families and Communities  
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## Healthy Development Adelaide

Healthy Development Adelaide (HDA) promotes, facilitates and undertakes research that advances multidisciplinary understanding of healthy development by combining research strengths addressing high priority research issues to ensure the physical, psychological and social health of Australian infants, children and adolescents.

HDA was initially established in 2004 as an initiative of the University of Adelaide and is led by Professors' Robert Norman (University of Adelaide), Caroline McMillen (UniSA) and Michael Sawyer (University of Adelaide / CYWHS).

HDA has over 130 members currently and fosters research in over 20 disciplines across the state with focus to developing a portfolio for South Australia in developmental health research. HDA crosses many sectors that include government, health service, university, allied health, associations, organisations/institutions and the general community.

Partners include UniSA, Women's and Children's Health Research Institute, Channel 7 Children's Research Foundation, and the Department of Education and Children's Services. Supporting Partners include Flinders University, Department for Families and Communities, Department of Further Education Employment Science and Technology, SA Health and Children Youth & Women's Health Service.

### **Winner in Excellence in Research Collaboration**

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## Peace, Defence and Security Research and Innovation Cluster

The Peace, Defence and Security Research and Innovation Cluster is an inter-disciplinary group of UniSA researchers actively engaged in the conduct of research across a wide spectrum of disciplinary fields, including political science, law, defence and security, information technology, health, post-colonial diaspora studies, engineering and physics.

The aim of the Cluster is to provide high-level analysis and innovative solutions to contemporary issues and problems which are a threat to peace and security, from the local level to the international context. Through collaborative engagement across disciplines, the Cluster provides a forum for the exchange of ideas and the cross-fertilisation of disciplines to provide insights on issues as diverse as cyber-crime, disaster response and counter-terrorism.

The combined synergies of the Cluster are elastic enough to provide the analytical energy required in a complex and changing environment. Cluster members are accomplished research and project managers who work across a range of disparate fields, including criminal and constitutional law, telecommunication networks, forensic computing, risk and multinational investment, security management, mental health, human rights, immigration detention and studies in the diaspora of terror.

Cluster members participate in lectures, seminars and workshops on a variety of research questions broadly falling in the areas of peace, defence and security. The Cluster also undertakes contract research, consultancy work, community engagement and research supported through competitive grant funding schemes.

**For further information please visit our website at**  
<http://www.unisa.edu.au/research/clusters>

## A joint event held by:



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