

# Forensic Mental Health Professional Development Program

## 2025 CONFERENCE DAY

● 4 July 2025

● Swinburne University Hawthorn Campus

### Conference Program

9.15am	Registration	
9.30am	Opening remarks	<b>Dr Margaret Nixon</b> , PhD, Professional Development and Training Lead, CFBS, Swinburne University of Technology
9.45am	Keynote speaker 1	<b>Distinguished Professor James R. P. Ogloff AM FAPS</b> <i>'Rethinking youth justice in Australia: Getting serious about addressing needs and reducing offending'</i>
10.45am	<b>MORNING TEA</b>	
11.00am	Concurrent session 1	
	Lecture theatre (hybrid)	<b>Mr Tim Marsh</b> , LL.B, Barrister - <i>'A veneer of legislation on bricks and mortar services: a reflection on the complexities of the Victorian forensic mental health system'</i>
	Breakout room	<b>Susie Hancox &amp; Dr Kate McGregor</b> - <i>'The Boundary Seesaw Model'</i> (in-person attendance only)
12.30pm	<b>LUNCH</b>	<b>Meet with employers in the forensic sector (in-person attendance only)</b>
1.15pm	Keynote speaker 2	<b>Professor Michael Daffern</b> <i>'With so much uncertainty about what works for whom, why don't we encourage choice?'</i>
2.15pm	Concurrent session 2	
	Lecture theatre (hybrid)	<b>Dr Abraham Kuol</b> - <i>'Practical strategies to support early intervention in justice system contact for African migrant youth'</i>
	Breakout room	<b>Dr Margaret Nixon &amp; Dr Nichola Tyler</b> - <i>'Elevating qualitative research with people involved in the justice system'</i> (in-person attendance only)
3.15pm	<b>AFTERNOON TEA</b>	
3.30pm	The Great Debate	<i>'Justice System Interventions don't need evidence to work'</i> Negative: Ashley Batastini, Danny Sullivan. Affirmative: Caleb Lloyd, Ben Spivak. MC: Michael Trood. Judges: Margaret Nixon and Nichola Tyler.
4.30pm	Closing remarks	

## Keynotes

### Distinguished Professor James R. P. Ogloff AM FAPS

#### *'Rethinking youth justice in Australia: Getting serious about addressing needs and reducing offending'*

*Whilst jurisdictions have seen a reduction in the number of young people on youth justice orders, the types of offences are becoming more serious. The cohort is becoming more complex with increasing rates of social, psychological, and health damage. There has been an increase inquiries and recidivism rates remain high. This begs the question of how we should be approaching the management and care of those in youth justice, particularly youth detention. An alternative approach will be discussed. The argument will be made that by shifting the narrative and focus away from containment and control towards intervention and support, we can achieve better outcomes for our young people.*



**James Ogloff** is the University Distinguished Professor of Forensic Behavioural Science and Executive Dean at Swinburne University of Technology. A clinical forensic psychologist and lawyer, he has worked in forensic mental health and youth justice since 1982, including roles in prisons, youth detention centres, forensic psychiatric clinics, and hospitals. He led Forensicare's psychology service for over 20 years and since retiring from Forensicare, he is engaged as the strategic advisor to the Board and CEO. His expertise spans the assessment and treatment of violent and sexual offenders, personality

disorders, and cognitive impairment. A globally recognised expert, he has assessed some of the country's most high-profile offenders. He has published 18 books and over more than 400 scholarly articles and book chapters, supervised more than 80 doctoral students, and received numerous international awards for his contributions to forensic psychology and law. In 2015, he was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia.

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### Professor Michael Daffern, Clinical Forensic Psychology, Director of the Centre for Forensic Behavioural Science, Swinburne University of Technology

#### *'With so much uncertainty about what works for whom, why don't we encourage choice?'*

*Significant advances have been made over the last few decades in how to work effectively with people who have offended. Rehabilitation models have emerged, risk and needs assessment tools have been developed and psychological 'offence focussed' treatments have been developed. Although the responsivity principle is widely known, rarely are people who are deemed to require rehabilitation given the choice to pursue their own goals and methods for change. This presentation will explore this idea and consider where choices could be offered and the potential benefits and risks of providing choice.*



**Michael Daffern** is Professor of Clinical Forensic Psychology and Director of the Centre for Forensic Behavioural Science, Swinburne University of Technology. He is also Consultant Principal Psychologist with the Victorian Institute of Forensic Mental Health (Forensicare). He began his career as a psychologist in the New South Wales Department of Corrective Services in 1992 and he has worked in general and forensic mental health services since this time. He divides his time between research, teaching and clinical practice. His research interests focus on the assessment and treatment of people who have offended.

## Presentations

### Mr Tim Marsh, LL.B, Barrister

#### ***'A veneer of legislation on bricks and mortar services: a reflection on the complexities of the Victorian forensic mental health system'***

*Celebrating 25 years of practice in criminal law, Tim Marsh offers a unique perspective on the complexities of forensic mental health. Through extensive experience, this workshop discusses the premise that forensic mental health cannot be adequately understood through a solely legal or clinical framework; rather, it is the product of an intricate interplay between legislation, service system infrastructure, and professional practice. This seminar will critically examine a series of propositions, supported by detailed case studies, to illuminate the interdependencies that characterise the field. Participants will be guided to appreciate the necessity of a systemic and integrated perspective in developing a comprehensive understanding of forensic mental health.*



**Tim Marsh** completed a Law and a Science Degree at Melbourne University, majoring in Genetics. After working as a solicitor at the Office of Public Prosecutions, Tim went to the Bar in 2003, reading with Mark Rochford QC. In 2011 Tim was appointed as a Senior Public Defender at Victoria Legal Aid. In 2013 he was appointed as Chief Counsel, and for the next 7 years led VLA Chambers, before deciding to return to the Bar in November 2020.

While Tim practices in all areas of criminal law, he has a strong practice in mental impairment and disability law. His work has helped clarify and reshape how the Victorian Courts treat offenders with mental illnesses. He is a current member of the Victorian committee of ANZAPPL, a past member of the Victorian Bar's Wellbeing Committee and sits on the editorial committee of the Judicial College of Victoria's Sentencing Manual.

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### Susie Hancox and Dr Kate McGregor

#### ***'The Boundary Seesaw Model'***

*The Boundary Seesaw Model presentation will provide:*

- *an introduction to the Boundary Seesaw Model (Hamilton, 2010), which is a model for managing therapeutic boundaries in secure forensic mental health settings*
- *a brief presentation on the implementation of the Boundary Seesaw Model (2010) at Forensicare. Outlining the aims; supporting identification and maintenance of therapeutic boundaries, consistent boundary management, and open reflection on the potential benefit or harm caused by boundary changes*
- *and engaging participants in some experiential exercises taken from the Boundary Seesaw Core Concepts Workshop designed to promote reflection on knowledge and skills regarding professional boundary management in the workplace.*



**Susan Hancox** has been the coordinator of the Youth Justice Mental Health Initiative (YJMHI) at Forensicare since early 2019. This role has afforded opportunities to develop and deliver training, internally and across Youth Justice custodial precincts in addition to her leadership role with the YJMHI clinicians. During her tenure at Forensicare and separate to her role, Susan was appointed as alternate community member of the Youth Parole Board. Prior to her move to Forensicare, Susan worked at Orygen Youth Health for 15 years as a senior social worker. Across that time she worked in acute and forensic roles, including the chief social worker. Susan maintained a private practice for several years including a role as counsellor for Queens College. She has an undergraduate degree in social work from RMIT, graduate diploma and honours in psychology and a clinical master's in psychology from Victoria University and a Master of Counselling and Human Services from La Trobe University.



**Dr Kate McGregor** is an endorsed clinical and forensic psychologist and Board-approved Supervisor. She has over 15 years' experience working in forensic mental health, across hospital, custodial, and community settings in Australia and the U.S. Kate works at Forensicare as the Acting Principal Psychology Educator and has had key involvement in the implementation of the Boundary Seesaw Model (Hamilton, 2010) at Forensicare.

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### **Dr Abraham Kuol, Associate Research Fellow, Faculty of Arts and Education/Alfred Deakin Institute/Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation**

#### ***'Practical strategies to support early intervention in justice system contact for African migrant youth'***

*The African migrant diaspora in Australia is a diverse and growing community that has made significant contributions to Australian society. However, some African refugees face acculturation challenges that impact their mental health, leading to interactions with the justice system. Increased representation of African youth in Victorian youth justice centres, particularly in high-risk youth networks involved in serious offences, is a growing concern. This session will explore the psychological and socio-cultural challenges faced by African migrants, focusing on trauma, marginalisation, and unmet mental health needs. Practical strategies will be shared for mental health professionals, emphasising trauma-informed and culturally sensitive approaches to support early intervention in justice system contact.*



**Dr Abraham Kuol** is an Associate Research Fellow and PhD Candidate at the Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalization at Deakin University; his research explores the post settlement challenges of African Australians with a focus on justice system contact. His research interests include youth violence, risk, and protective factors for offending, and culturally and linguistically diverse young people. Abraham possesses an undergraduate and honours degree in Project Management from RMIT University. He has worked most recently as a Project Manager/Research Project Manager in the not-for-profit sector.

Abraham provides expert guidance and insights to Victorian state government departments, local councils, mainstream community organisations, and cultured based organisations in the youth justice space. He has worked and consulted for leading culture-based community organisations in the youth justice space. Abraham is involved in a number of community led justice focused interventions for South Sudanese communities. Abraham is part of the Justice, Young People, Community (JYC) Research Group.

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## Dr Margaret Nixon and Dr Nichola Tyler

### ***'Margins to centre- Promoting the voices of people with lived experience in forensic qualitative research'***

*Qualitative research methods offer valuable insights into people with lived experience in forensic settings. As researchers, we ask a lot from the people we work with, and in well-designed qualitative studies, we need to ensure we ask the right questions in the right way and truly listen to the responses. However, engaging with people with lived experience presents challenges. Several factors must be considered to safeguard the credibility of the research and the rights of the participants, rather than reducing them to mere 'tick box' exercises.*

*This workshop outlines how to determine whether a qualitative method might be a good fit for your research, considerations in the design and conduct of your research, and will discuss what we have learned from the perspectives of people with lived experience in qualitative studies to illustrate principles of good practice and challenges in the conduct of qualitative studies. By incorporating the individual's voice, qualitative research not only improves outcomes but also ensures lived experience perspectives are part of the knowledge base that shapes their care and quality of life.*



**Dr Margaret Nixon** has worked across many large research projects in both health and forensic research areas. She has extensive experience in conducting interviews with vulnerable populations (i.e. individuals with dementia, mental illness and histories of trauma). Marget is a senior lecturer in forensic behavioural science at the Centre for Forensic Behavioural Science, Swinburne University of Technology. Her research interests include cognitive impairment on offending populations, intellectual disability, dual disability, prison-based interventions and the intersection between offending and victimisation.



**Dr Nichola Tyler** is a Senior Lecturer in Forensic Psychology at the Centre for Forensic Behavioural Science, Swinburne University of Technology. Nichola's research primarily focuses on improving understanding, assessment, and prevention of problem behaviours, with a particular focus on firesetting, and justice professionals' wellbeing. She also has expertise in qualitative research methods and intervention evaluation.



## The Great Debate

### *"Interventions in Criminal justice don't need evidence to work"*

*How important is the use of evidence in responses to crime? This debate asks practitioners and academics to argue why evidence might or might not be necessary. An interactive and hopefully entertaining discussion of how and why we do the things we do in intervention, policy and practice.*

On the affirmative:



**Dr Caleb Lloyd**  
Associate Professor,  
School of Health  
Sciences, Swinburne  
University of Technology  
(Centre for Forensic  
Behavioural Science)

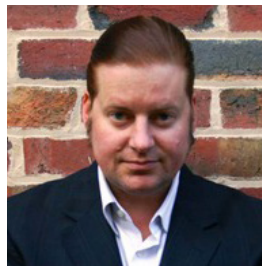


**Dr Benjamin Spivak**  
Senior Lecturer, Forensic  
Psychology, School of  
Health Sciences, Swinburne  
University of Technology  
(Centre for Forensic  
Behavioural Science)

And for the negative:



**Dr Ashley Batastini**  
Associate Professor of  
Forensic Psychology,  
School of Health Sciences,  
Swinburne University of  
Technology (Centre for  
Forensic Behavioural  
Science)



**Dr Danny Sullivan**  
Consultant forensic  
psychiatrist, previously  
Executive Director of Clinical  
Services at the Victorian  
Institute of Forensic Mental  
Health (Forensicare)

Master of Ceremonies: Dr Michael Trood

Judges: Dr Margaret Nixon & Dr Nichola Tyler