

CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

Curtin University of Technology

Newsletter 1, March 2007

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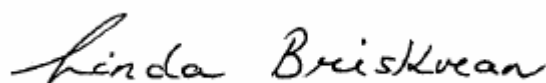
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Welcome from Director

I am pleased to report on my first six months at the CHRE at Curtin and to let you know of our plans for this year. A happy new year to all.

I took up the position here in July 2006, honoured to be following on in the footsteps of Professor Jim Ife. We are fortunate to have Jim still working with us as an Emeritus Professor. I have enjoyed working with the Centre staff, adjuncts, the Division and all the people in the University who have made me feel welcome and have issued invitations for collaborative work. As a newcomer to the West I am gradually making contacts outside with a range of organisations and individuals. Some of these have already turned into productive partnerships. There are still many people I have not yet met, so please make contact and come in for a cuppa.

This year promises to be a busy one. With our Masters programs looking strong and with a hefty research agenda in front of us we look forward to moving from strength to strength.



Linda Briskman
Dr Haruhisa Handa Chair in Human Rights Education.

Research Grants

A significant strength of the Centre is its capacity for grounded research and to link practice, research and teaching in human rights. We are delighted to see that efforts to maintain the Centre's research activity is being rewarded with 3 successful research grant applications to date and hopefully more coming.

Curtin Internal Linkage Grant: Linda Briskman and Lucy Fiske

Service responses to elder abuse in WA: Identifying rights based practice

This research is a partnership between Curtin University, the Office of the Public Advocate, the Office of Seniors Interests and Volunteering and the Alliance for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (one year project).

Curtin Internal Linkage Grant: A consortium led by Fran Crawford (Social Work), together with Linda Briskman, Pat Dudgeon (Centre for Aboriginal Studies) and academics from Psychology and Nursing.

Developing therapeutic communities for abused Aboriginal children and their families: A cooperative inquiry group for change through partnership.

This research is a partnership between Curtin University and the Ministerial Advisory Council on Child Protection (one year project).

ARC Discovery Grant: Deborah Zion (Monash University), Linda Briskman and Bibi Loffe (Monash University).

Caring for Asylum Seekers in Australia: Bioethics and Human Rights

This is a major research project, which will run for three years.

The Centre is part of a new research grouping – The Centre for Advanced Studies in Australia, Asia and the Pacific (CASAAP). This is a multi-disciplinary group of twenty-two researchers that aims to place Curtin and this group in a strong position for federal government and international research funding.

Student News

Masters Programs

Congratulations to graduating students. We are very proud to see 8 students complete their Masters degrees. All students completed 8 coursework units and a research or practice project to fulfil the requirements for the degree. Thank you to the students for their contributions to the course and the Centre, we wish you all the best for the future, and please, stay in touch.

Liam Barry (*Human Rights in Action: A Case Study of the Bakhita Centre, Timor-Leste*)

Inge Christiani (*Peace Journalism: Alternative news framings for the Indonesian media to support the peace process*)

Rosemary Hansen (*The Voice of the Child: A Case on the Rights of the Child in Family Mediation*)

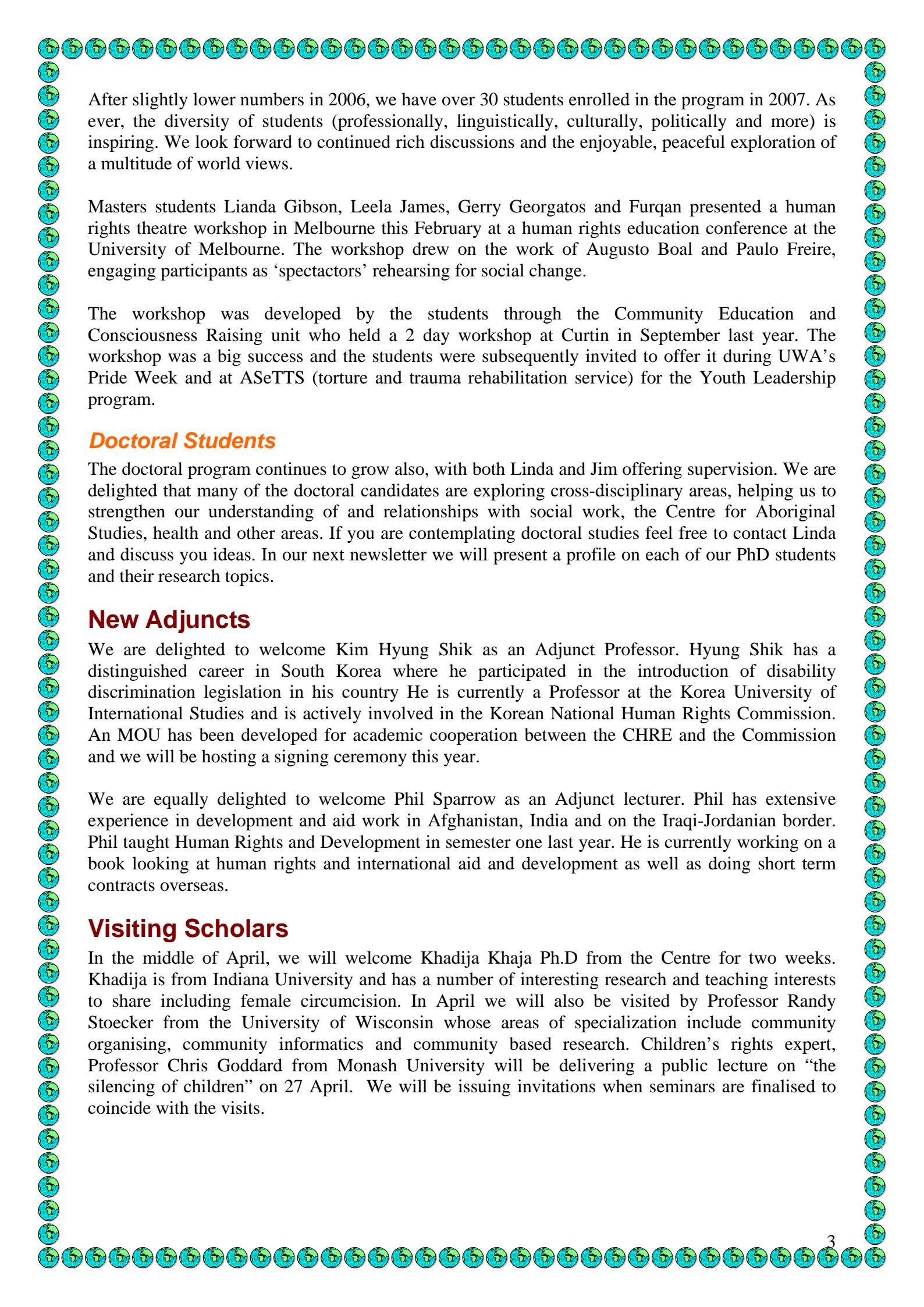
Anita Lee-Hong (*Women of Achievement: Stories of Indigenous women in the academy*)

Huey Ying Lim (*Aid and Geopolitics of the Postcolonial: Australian aid programs in Solomon Islands*)

Damien Norris (*Learning to speak the language of values and law to those who speak the language of power and privilege*)

Stacey Walker (*Neo-conservatism and Same-Sex Marriage in Australia: Exploring the effect of emerging ideologies on human rights in liberal democracies*)

Michelle Webb (*The Quest: Neo-colonialism, celebrity representations and changing human rights discourse*)



After slightly lower numbers in 2006, we have over 30 students enrolled in the program in 2007. As ever, the diversity of students (professionally, linguistically, culturally, politically and more) is inspiring. We look forward to continued rich discussions and the enjoyable, peaceful exploration of a multitude of world views.

Masters students Lianda Gibson, Leela James, Gerry Georgatos and Furqan presented a human rights theatre workshop in Melbourne this February at a human rights education conference at the University of Melbourne. The workshop drew on the work of Augusto Boal and Paulo Freire, engaging participants as ‘spectators’ rehearsing for social change.

The workshop was developed by the students through the Community Education and Consciousness Raising unit who held a 2 day workshop at Curtin in September last year. The workshop was a big success and the students were subsequently invited to offer it during UWA’s Pride Week and at ASeTTS (torture and trauma rehabilitation service) for the Youth Leadership program.

Doctoral Students

The doctoral program continues to grow also, with both Linda and Jim offering supervision. We are delighted that many of the doctoral candidates are exploring cross-disciplinary areas, helping us to strengthen our understanding of and relationships with social work, the Centre for Aboriginal Studies, health and other areas. If you are contemplating doctoral studies feel free to contact Linda and discuss you ideas. In our next newsletter we will present a profile on each of our PhD students and their research topics.

New Adjuncts

We are delighted to welcome Kim Hyung Shik as an Adjunct Professor. Hyung Shik has a distinguished career in South Korea where he participated in the introduction of disability discrimination legislation in his country He is currently a Professor at the Korea University of International Studies and is actively involved in the Korean National Human Rights Commission. An MOU has been developed for academic cooperation between the CHRE and the Commission and we will be hosting a signing ceremony this year.

We are equally delighted to welcome Phil Sparrow as an Adjunct lecturer. Phil has extensive experience in development and aid work in Afghanistan, India and on the Iraqi-Jordanian border. Phil taught Human Rights and Development in semester one last year. He is currently working on a book looking at human rights and international aid and development as well as doing short term contracts overseas.

Visiting Scholars

In the middle of April, we will welcome Khadija Khaja Ph.D from the Centre for two weeks. Khadija is from Indiana University and has a number of interesting research and teaching interests to share including female circumcision. In April we will also be visited by Professor Randy Stoecker from the University of Wisconsin whose areas of specialization include community organising, community informatics and community based research. Children’s rights expert, Professor Chris Goddard from Monash University will be delivering a public lecture on “the silencing of children” on 27 April. We will be issuing invitations when seminars are finalised to coincide with the visits.

Invitations and Collaborations

Centre staff and adjuncts continue to be invited to participate in a range of activities and organisations. Jim Ife is much in demand as a keynote speaker; Linda has been appointed as Australian representative to the International Federation Social Workers Human Rights Commission and is a member of the newly formed Victoria Police Technical Advisory Group that has the responsibility to ensure compliance with the Victorian Charter of Rights and Responsibilities and to foster a human rights culture within the police force.

The Centre will co-host with the Minister for Disability Services the Hon Sheila McHale and the Disability Services Commission a public lecture by Rosemary Kayess. Rosemary was a member of the Australian Government delegation to the United Nations General Assembly ad hoc committee on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in New York. Rosemary lectures in international human rights law at the University of New South Wales, chairs the NSW Disability Discrimination Legal Centre management committee and is President of the Disability Studies and Research Institute. She will speak about the new Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Admission is free: Norman Dufty Lecture Theatre, Building 210, Curtin University, Bentley (Free parking in Carpark 3), Tuesday 13 March 2007, 6.30pm for refreshments, 7.00pm – 8.30pm for the lecture.

The Centre hosted a successful one day professional development training day addressing Disability Rights as Human Rights. The day was well attended by participants from a range of government departments, NGOs, students, community members and activists. Participation was both informed and passionate, with excellent feedback from participants.

Conferences and Forums

2006 was a busy year for conferences and community engagement.

In February Lucy presented a paper on sedition and activism at the Australian New Zealand Society of Criminology conference in Tasmania (Hobart).

Later that month the Centre co-hosted a seminar on the human rights of women in prison with the Centre for Aboriginal Studies. We were delighted to welcome Kim Pate from the Elizabeth Fry Society in Canada, Debbie Kilroy from Sisters Inside (Queensland), Bernie Lockyer from the Aboriginal Legal Service (WA) and Katie Culkin from Ruah. The seminar was very well attended. We particularly appreciated the women's ability to present radical ideas as utterly commonsense. Hopefully many participants now question the orthodoxy of imprisoning women.

Lucy was an invited speaker at the Western Australian Council of Social Services State Conference with Greens MLC Giz Watson and Attorney General Jim McGinty in May. All three spoke on a panel protection measures for human rights.

In June in Melbourne the Centre co-hosted with RMIT a conference on Asylum Seekers: Deterrence and Interdiction. The proceedings of this conference are being submitted for a book.

Lucy, Linda and Ailsa Watkinson co-authored a paper on the detention of asylum seekers in Australia. Ailsa, a former visiting scholar at the Centre, presented the paper on everyone's behalf at the International Federation of Social Work conference in Munich in July.

In August Linda attended a meeting of human rights education providers in Thailand hosted by Mahidol University. This meeting presented an opportunity to meet some regional fellow travellers and we hope to further develop relationships made there. Linda flew back into Perth just in time to

chair a panel discussion at the *Human Rights and Mental Health* conference that the Centre co-hosted with the Council of Official Visitors. Again this was a well attended and informative event. Audio from this event is available online at <http://info.humanrights.curtin.edu.au/conference.cfm>

In September Lucy was invited back by WACOSS to speak alongside Aboriginal Legal Service Western Australia Chair Dennis Eggington, and Western Australia for Racial Equality's Marc Newhouse at a community seminar on the proposed Human Rights Act for WA.

In October Linda spoke as a panel member at the launch of Anthony Leowenstein's book - *My Israel Question*, which was sponsored by Project Safecom in Fremantle.

Also in October the Centre partnered with Just Peace to present a seminar and open discussion about Islamophobia and the discrimination facing Muslims in Australia, and in November we held a discussion forum exploring the proposed changes to citizenship legislation. The Centre subsequently made submissions to the federal government on both the proposed changes to citizenship, and support offered to newly-arrived humanitarian entrants. These submissions are available on the Centre's web-site.

Finally, in December Linda participated in a quirky speaking engagement in Melbourne that took place on a moving tram as part of the Tram Overheard series. Together with Dave Corlett, she spoke on asylum seekers and immigration detention in Australia.

Although it is early in the year, we already have conferences and community events planned for 2007. In February, Linda attended a human rights education conference at Melbourne University. In June both Linda and Lucy will be presenting at a Conference organised by de Mont University in Leicester on 'refugees and empire', and Linda has been invited to be a judge in Melbourne at a Fabian Society event which will see Prime Minister John Howard being tried for Australia's participation in the war in Iraq. Linda has been invited to visit North Queensland locations to coincide with Social Work Day in May to run human rights and advocacy workshops. We will keep you posted about other events throughout the year.

People's Inquiry Into Immigration Detention

The first report of this citizen-driven inquiry, auspiced by the Australian Council of Heads of Schools of Social Work, was launched in Fremantle in November. Convened by Linda Briskman, the inquiry has held ten hearings throughout Australia and in these has heard 200 testimonies from asylum seekers and refugees, professionals and refugee advocates. Another 200 written submissions have been received. The Perth hearings, organised by students Inge Christiani and Stacey Walker with the support of Lucy and Kerry, were held in September 2005. The inquiry report is available at www.peoplesinquiry.org.au

Iraq

Following its working alongside the local Iraqi community in Perth in 2005 to facilitate the Iraqi Electoral Commission opening a polling booth at Curtin, the Centre continues to work with Riyadh Al Hakimi in a number of ways. Riyadh and the Human Rights Organisation have conducted a range of projects including sending 100 wheel chairs to Iraq (courtesy of Wheel Chairs for Kid and the Australian military) and bringing one child with a congenital heart defect to Perth for successful surgery (courtesy of the Rotary Club's medical branch: ROMAC and the doctors and nurses at Princess Margaret Hospital).

In 2006 Mary Anne Kenny (Adjunct Senior Lecturer with the Centre and Senior Lecturer in Law from Murdoch University) and Lucy edited four manuals for human rights training for civilians and government officials from the Iraqi Ministry for Human Rights, though the deterioration of conditions in Iraq has meant that the training has not yet been held.

The National Centre for Human Rights Education

We congratulate RMIT University in gaining the tender to run a national centre and look forward to a cooperative relationship. Jim and Linda are both members of the National Committee for Human Rights Education, which is now chaired by Dr Sev Ozdowski.

Submissions

The Centre continues its role of engaging in public policy processes and has made submissions to several federal enquiries:

- Senate Anti Terror Submission 2005 (November 2005)
- Submission in relation to the DIMA Discussion Paper 'Australian Citizenship: much more than a ceremony. Consideration of the merits of introducing a formal citizenship test' (November 2006)
- Submission in relation to the DIMA Humanitarian Settlement Discussion Paper (November 2006)

These submissions can be accessed on the Centre's website www.info.humanrights.curtin.edu.au

Staff Publications 2006 and 2007

Books

Ball, O. (2006), *No Nonsense Guide to Human Rights*, New Internationalist, Oxford.

Briskman, L. (2007), *Social Work and Indigenous Contexts*, The Federation Press, Sydney (in press).

Hogan, C. (2007), *Facilitating multicultural groups: A practical guide*, Kogan Page, London.

Book Chapters

Briskman, L. (2007), 'Decolonizing Social Work in Australia' in *Indigenous Social Work Practice and Education and Practice Around the World* (ed. J. Coates and M.Gray), Ashgate Press (in press).

Briskman, L. (2007), 'Human rights and social work – A global perspective', invited chapter in German book on *International Perspectives in Social Work*, eds. R. Lutz and L. Wagner (in press).

Briskman, L. (2007), 'A tale of two racisms' in Gopalkrishnan, N. and Babacan, H. *Racisms in the New World Order*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Cambridge (in press)

Briskman, L. and Goddard, C. (2007), 'Not in my name: The people's inquiry into immigration detention', in Lusher, D. and Haslam, N. *Seeking asylum in Australia* (submitted).



Refereed Journal Articles

Briskman, L. and Fiske, L. (2007) 'The Swing of the Pendulum: The rights and responsibilities debate', invited article for *Just Policy*.

Ife, J. and Fiske, L. (2006), 'Human rights and community: The community of rights and the community of responsibilities', *International Social Work*, vol. 1, no. 3, pp. 297-308.

Fiske, L. (2006), 'Politics of exclusion, practice of inclusion. Australia's response to refugees and the case for community based human rights work', *International Journal of Human Rights*, vol. 10, no. 3, pp. 219-229.