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# Hope Street: From Voice to Agency for Care-Leavers in Higher Education

Jacqueline Z. Wilson<sup>a</sup>, Philip Mendes<sup>b</sup> and Frank Golding<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Collaborative Research Centre in Australian History, Federation University Australia, Melbourne, Australia;

<sup>b</sup>Department of Social Work, Monash University, Melbourne, Australia

## ABSTRACT

In the early 1980s, one of the authors became an adolescent ward of the State of Victoria, Australia, and went into out-of-home care. While in care, repeated encounters with researchers, journalists and policy-makers left her disillusioned as to the efficacy and relevance of their activities, in that although she was sporadically provided with a 'voice', this did little to bridge the divide between their world of privilege and the non-privileged world of the subject of their attentions. The article argues that this divide is perpetuated long after people leave care as adults, and that a mere 'voice' is not enough – what is needed is agency, in the design and execution of research. This can be achieved through extended education, depending in turn on an inclusive culture shift within institutions of higher learning. The article utilises the author's personal experience as a brief case study.

## KEYWORDS

Care leavers; insider research; academic privilege; power; youth homelessness

## Visitations

In mid-1981, the Honourable Bob Hawke, newly elected member of parliament for the federal seat of Wills (in the northern suburbs of Melbourne) and the future prime minister of Australia, visited an emergency accommodation facility for homeless youth in his electorate.<sup>1</sup> The hostel, an aging converted house in an unremarkable side-street, provided refuge to around half a dozen residents at a time on a strictly temporary basis (a regulation six weeks), after which they were required to move on to whatever accommodation they or their social worker had managed to secure for them.<sup>2</sup> During his visit, Mr Hawke was shown around the house and grounds before making a brief speech of encouragement on the modest front lawn. He then departed, leaving the somewhat bemused residents to resume the various personal pursuits with which they did their best to fill the hours.

It happened that at the time of Bob Hawke's visit, the lead author of this article, Jacqueline Wilson, was one of those residents. Fifteen years old and a veteran of repeated periods in temporary care as a child, she had recently become a ward of the State and now found herself homeless. She recalls feeling a surge of naïve hope that Mr Hawke's visit would somehow result in her being provided with a place to live and rather more personal resources than she had at that time.

Jacqueline's experiences of the hostel to that point had been far from positive. Within hours of her arrival, a sixteen-year-old seasoned resident, high on inhaled cooking spray, had regaled her with stories of the juvenile female detention centre Winlaton, in Melbourne's outer-eastern suburbs, where homeless girls who could not secure accommodation were routinely incarcerated in overcrowded, maximum-security conditions if they were deemed to need 'care and protection' (Forster 1981; Gaffney 1998). These stories included harrowing accounts of the reception new inmates could expect, such as being raped with broom handles 'if you say the wrong thing'. Such routine atrocities were recently confirmed in testimony before the Royal Commission (2015: Case Study 30, Opening Address, paragraphs 30–53 and 95–120, 17 August). The 'old hand' spoke from personal experience of the institution. Later that evening she overdosed on epilepsy medication after self-harming with a razor blade, and was removed in an ambulance.

The possibility of finding oneself in Winlaton was both real and frightening for wards of the State, and was freely used as a threat to ensure compliance from wards while in temporary accommodation. But such strikingly uncompassionate behaviour toward someone already in an advanced state of distress was just one of a number of stressors the hostel, and the system of which it was an exemplar, presented to the neophyte.

Jacqueline was the only hostel resident currently attending school. The workers seemed unable, or unwilling, to adapt to the idea of a homeless teenager who needed support to stay at school, and hinted broadly that things would be simpler if she were to drop out and find a job. As the welfare benefit payments available to a fifteen-year-old were far less than those granted an adult, routine expenses such as clothing, bus fares to school and lunch while there were significant obstacles; she was told she would have to 'learn to budget'. On top of such simplistic suggestions, Jacqueline was informed that finding long-term accommodation would be her responsibility – with Winlaton explicitly cited as the consequence of failure. So the threat of incarceration was emanating from both peers *and* her case worker.

It was into this ambience of drab desperation that the incongruous presence of Bob Hawke, MP, was introduced with his message of distant hope, only to be whisked away, leaving hostel life to proceed very much as before. And it was into the same environment, less than a fortnight later, that a young woman arrived from a prestigious university, wishing to gather data for a research project on 'homeless students'.

The young woman, who shall be known as 'Jane', was doing a postgraduate degree in social work. Jane paid several visits to the hostel over the next few days. Most of her time there was spent in the office speaking with the workers; but given Jacqueline's standing as the facility's only actual student, Jane took the opportunity to interview her in hopes of gaining first-hand insight into the experiences and situation of someone attempting to attend school regularly while homeless. This interview was preceded by introductory pleasantries, in the course of which Jacqueline was impressed by Jane's friendliness and by assurances that the research was intended to 'provide support' for people in her position.

The interview itself focused primarily on Jacqueline's account of the events and issues that had brought her to her present situation; having established a narrative, Jane followed up by asking her what she felt were her needs. Jacqueline recalls responding with straightforward candour, 'Somewhere to live. And enough money.' She also recalls feeling a sense of hope, no less naïve than that she had felt during Bob Hawke's visit and no less fleeting, that this immaculately turned out and manifestly privileged person could somehow make

an immediate difference to her circumstances. But, having completed this phase of her research, Jane said her courteous goodbyes and, not unlike Bob Hawke, drove away to pursue a career that never again intersected with Jacqueline. Meanwhile, Jacqueline remained in the hostel, more disillusioned than ever and hence bereft of hope.

Once her allotted six-week residency in the hostel had expired, Jacqueline was duly given her marching orders. At that point she encountered the beginnings of a pattern that would characterise her life for years to come: she found herself having to accept accommodation that was in one way or another inadequate, unsavoury, unhygienic and/or personally unsafe. Her only certainty throughout this chaotic period was that it was better than Winlaton (the prospect of which remained a threat regularly issued by her case worker).

As time went on, Jacqueline also discovered that another pattern had been established in those early days of her wardship. Relatively articulate and forthright in expressing her views, she continued to attract the attention of a variety of professionals with an interest in young homeless people. Thus, over subsequent months and years, she was again consulted by academic researchers, interviewed by radio, television and print journalists, and photographed for magazine articles. In every instance, her readiness to be involved in their various projects was based upon an implied or explicitly stated premise that her participation would benefit her and others in her situation. No such positive outcomes ever eventuated.

Such events occurred as occasional highlights against a backdrop of ongoing, anxiety-ridden involvement with the case workers in charge of her 'care and protection', to whom she had to answer regarding her conduct, her academic progress, her social life – every aspect, in fact, of her *modus vivendi*. The unreliable expectations so firmly laid down in the hostel proved to be normative: a grossly inadequate income, courtesy of the State, was deemed somehow adequate; the most precarious personal circumstances were regarded as inconsequential; an extensive history of domestic abuse was simply dismissed; and the emotional burden of living under official threats of imprisonment was actively utilised as a means of ensuring compliance.

### Privileged and unprivileged voices

Political philosopher Iris Young argues that 'for every oppressed group there is a group that is *privileged* in relation to that group' (1990, 42, emphasis in the original). The State ward who endures State-sanctioned oppression cannot help but be acutely aware of the disparity between her own life and (what she can see or surmise of) the life lived by the functionaries authorised to impose the oppression. This sensibility of contrasts, of privilege unthinkingly flaunted before the under-privileged, is experienced as nothing less than a psychological assault, an exploitation of chronic vulnerability. In such conditions the oppressed individual will inevitably accept any apparent opportunity for her story to be heard and her experience acknowledged. But as successive hopeful encounters with no less privileged professionals wielding microphones, cameras or notepads lead to successive disappointments, they come to seem no more than flashier, and hence more effectively disguised, manifestations of the same oppressive paradigm.

This disparity embodies more than merely a gap between 'haves' and 'have-nots'; in key ways, it amounts to a cultural 'clash of worlds' in which encounters between representative

individuals are characterised by barriers of language and mutual ignorance of central operative concepts. Thus, for instance (as Jacqueline realised years later), Jane's use of the phrase 'provide support' reflected her broad, structural perception of the problematic societal 'phenomenon' of homelessness, and referred to potential 'policy outcomes' to guide those whose role it was supposedly to redress the problem. Jacqueline, on the other hand, interpreted the word 'support' in the only way reasonably open to a young person beset by the imperatives of day-to-day survival – as a synonym for some kind of immediate and substantive *help*, on a personal level. That Jane lived in a world of something called 'policy' did not, and could not, occur to Jacqueline, or anyone else resident in the hostel for that matter. Such communication gaps, based as they are on lacunae in the hostel resident's understanding of the interaction, affirm comment by Tew et al. (2006) on the power relationship between 'privileged' oppressor groups and 'non-privileged' oppressed groups, noting that both groups may be unwitting, or only partially witting, of the oppression or their role in it, but that members of the oppressed group are the more likely to have some awareness of the oppression, albeit with only limited insight as to its exact nature.

Tew et al.'s (2006) observation reminds us that merely belonging to the 'privileged' group does not necessarily signify any conscious motivation to oppress; indeed, the *intentions* of individuals such as Jane may be presumed to be 'good'. Certainly, her research methodology was relatively enlightened for the times, in that she made an effort to glean first-hand testimony from the homeless youth she encountered – to hear their 'voice'. Such an approach, while not unheard-of in the early 1980s, was far from common. Today, in keeping with many other advances in ethical approaches to research in the field (Aldridge 2014; Lushey and Munro 2015), the practice is *de rigueur*, and the literature is replete with examples of vulnerable youth in a range of straitened or dire circumstances being given the opportunity not only to 'be heard', but to be heard with optimal consideration of their emotional, psychological and practical situations. There is also evidence that participation in research interviews may have therapeutic or healing benefits for some care-leavers who are able to tell their stories for the first time; yet, for others it can be potentially distressing (Kendrick, Steckley, and Lerpiniere 2008; Liebmann and Madden 2010; Townsend 2011; Daley 2012; Driscoll 2012; Daley 2013; McDowall 2013; Verweijen-Slammescu and Bowley 2014; Wigfall and Cameron 2006).

It is apparent that Jacqueline, as a young person oscillating between out-of-home care and outright homelessness, did not lack opportunities to 'be heard', courtesy of the various researchers and media personnel noted above. Yet the persistence with which such moments of apparent recognition changed nothing – for her or anyone else in her milieu – and tended, over time, to cast significant and lasting doubt on the notion that there is intrinsic empowering potential in having a 'voice'. As Jacqueline puts it, people with clipboards and notepads, people in suits, people in big cars, come and go, and for the residents/inmates of the institution, nothing changes. One can never fully hide the inherent pragmatic contradiction in the encounter between the privileged and the non-privileged, between the innately empowered individual wielding the clipboard or recorder, and the disenfranchised and radically disempowered individual telling their story (yet again).

As an academic researcher in the field, to this day Jacqueline struggles with the idea of going out and interviewing people experiencing homelessness, as the outcomes seem to be

so minimal, and the moment of hope granted by participation seems so unfair. Of course, some good may ensue from the research, some change may occur (otherwise why do it?), but it is excruciatingly gradual and invariably invisible to the individuals to whom it matters most.

Such misgivings, derived as they seem to be from a subjective, anecdotal base, may appear out of place today, given the undoubted developments in ethical and inclusive practices (including the provision of far better information to participants), and given, too, the seemingly obvious virtue of such practices (Kelly, Dixon, and Incarnato 2016, 234). Notwithstanding this progress, however, those doubts remain, because of both the continued – and continually rising – rates of youth homelessness and out-of-home care (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2012a, 2012b), and, crucially, the still prevalent problem of highly negative experiences suffered by young people in out-of-home care or other forms of State wardship (Commission for Children and Young People 2015).

Needless to say, we do not advocate a reversion to past non-inclusive approaches that for so long rendered homeless young people effectively voiceless. But the fact that a paradigm shift has made it a relatively straightforward process for researchers and policy-makers to grant homeless young people a voice (to the point of it becoming standard practice), without that shift resolving longstanding key problems, raises the possibility that having a voice is of little benefit if that is all one has. What is missing, we argue, is not opportunities to be heard, but opportunities to experience a sense of *agency*.

In the wake of a number of high-profile public inquiries,<sup>3</sup> there has been an upsurge in recent years of interest in care-leavers among academic researchers (which has also been something of a catalyst for the move toward ‘inclusiveness’ noted above). Thus, the situation is now arising that a very large group of adults whose life experiences have been largely shaped by the sort of concerns with which we began this article – childhoods marked by often appalling oppression courtesy of the ‘privileged’ group – are coming, once again, under the scrutiny of yet another privileged group, researchers.

There is abundant evidence that the abusive experiences suffered while in care remain with many care-leavers well into adulthood, and often for life (Penglas 2005; CLAN 2011; Senate Community Affairs References Committee [SCARC] 2004), and that care-leavers overall remain among the most socially and economically marginalised groups in our society (Australian Institute of Family Studies [AIFS] 2016); the prospect, then, of this group being required, or persuaded, to once more accommodate a new generation of (privileged) researchers opens the way for, at best, a gratuitous reminder of their place in the privileged/non-privileged dichotomy, and at worst a wholesale renewal of trauma.

It is for this reason that we propose the need for care-leavers to experience agency through participation in research.

### From voice to agency

In simple terms, agency is exercised when individuals act independently and make their own decisions in order to achieve the outcomes they want. Their capacity to exercise agency is influenced and often limited by social structures and systems and, in particular, by their capacity to exert power over their life choices, sometimes in the face of powerful opposition – implicit or explicit (Barker 2005; Bandura 2011). One important marker of the exercise of agency is to be found in the degree and quality of participation in research

that might influence policies that affect their life chances (Hart, Biggeri, and Babic 2014; Lushey and Munro 2015).

However, it is apparent that the degree to which young homeless people or those in out-of-home care can take on active roles in research is necessarily limited, and it must be acknowledged that so, too, is their capacity for full and immediate agency. They cannot suddenly become credentialed researchers by fiat. But it is not an enormous leap to imagine, as a first step, them being given *advisory* roles (not quite the same as simply being ‘listened to’) in research projects or policy-making bodies. Such inclusionary practices are themselves also limited, however, by the inherent structure of most research projects, in that the inclusion of members of the research-subject group in any capacity at all remains a function of the privileged/non-privileged dichotomy.

We propose that research teams include care-leavers who have successfully transitioned from care into higher education, that they conduct substantial components of the research and, crucially, that they participate in the *design* of research proposals. They would bring to the research lived experience of homelessness and/or out-of-home care. For example, advocacy groups such as the CREATE Foundation and the Care Leavers Australasia Network (CLAN) could establish a register of care-leavers who are willing to take on co-research or research partner roles similar to those pioneered in a number of international studies (Kelly, Dixon, and Incarnato 2016). Such persons, it is envisaged, would enter the research environment armed with a greatly enhanced capacity to empathise and establish constructive relationships with the subject-individuals, to formulate projects of maximum relevance, and to bridge the privileged/non-privileged divide. This in turn has the potential to engender in the subject-individual a justified belief that their concerns and problems are being meaningfully addressed, and ideally a sense of what might be termed ‘vicarious agency’.

### Small steps

We advocate a solution essentially the same as that proposed above, regarding research into currently homeless youth (and for very similar reasons): the fully equitable inclusion of care-leavers in research teams, not merely as ‘consultants’ or ‘research assistants’, but as designers of research projects and full partners in conducting the research so that they can develop the skills and research networks to lead their own projects in the future.

This ‘solution’ highlights a further significant problem, which brings us to our core concern. Although care-leavers in Australia number literally in the hundreds of thousands, only a very small number complete formal education leading to a credential. Overall, care-leavers spend fewer years at school, are less likely to achieve qualifications, and face major barriers to participating in further and higher education (Cashmore and Paxman 2007; Harvey, McNamara and Andrewartha 2016, Ch. 5). Jacqueline’s experience in this regard is typical: as a direct result of the institutional hostility to her scholastic aspirations recounted above, her education was fragmented and spread over a large number of schools, and, as she discovered when she accessed the records of her State wardship decades later, it was actively obstructed by the welfare system and its operatives that were supposedly in place to support her (Wilson 2013). As a consequence, it took far more perseverance and commitment on her part to complete her education than would normally be required. She did eventually finish Year 12, but not until she was 25 years



old, and a further six years would pass – after the birth of both her children – before she was able to take up a university place.

Small wonder, then, that as a group, children and young people who have been in the care of the State have some of the poorest educational outcomes in Australia, a situation consistent with other Western countries (London 2004; Stein 2005; Chase, Simon, and Jackson 2006; Cashmore and Paxman 2007; Wise et al. 2010; Zetlin, Weinberg, and Shea 2010; Hook and Courtney 2011; Australian Social Inclusion Board 2011; Wilson and Golding 2016). Available evidence (Penglase 2005; Jurczynszyn and Tilbury 2012; Mendis 2012, 2013; Michell 2012) indicates that very few care-leavers proceed to higher education; internationally it is considered ‘an exceptional achievement for a young person in care to go to university’ (Jackson and Ajayi 2007) and remarkable if they eventually obtain a degree (Jackson, Ajayi, and Quigley 2005; Jackson and Ajayi 2007; O’Sullivan and Westerman 2007; Jones 2010). It is heartening to learn that undergraduate numbers are rising in a small number of universities where a special project has been funded – and the learnings from this initiative may be taken up more broadly (La Trobe University 2017; Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare 2017) – but such developments represent only small and isolated beginnings at this stage.

Of those care-leavers who do get to university, a very small percentage – effectively a handful – go on to achieve higher degrees, and an even smaller number gain senior positions in the academy. (Determining exact figures of care-leavers with higher degrees in areas relevant to the present topic is problematic; see: Mendes, Michell, and Wilson 2014; Harvey, McNamara, and Andrewartha 2016, 2017.)

We need to begin with a strategic approach to data collection and analysis. Currently, Australian students entering higher education are encouraged to identify themselves as belonging to one of six nominated targeted cohorts of disadvantaged students, including those from low socioeconomic status – of whom care-leavers might be thought of as a particular sub-set (but to date have not been so identified). Further, given the stigma and enduring shame reported by some care-leavers – as indicated by the quotation used as the title of a care-leaver survey (‘My Family Only Knows What I Want Them to Know’) – there would be some reluctance to disclose their childhood status (CLAN 2016). Little is known of the demographic make-up of care-leavers, beyond rather broad and obvious basics such as the proportion of rural/urban origins and the preponderance of persistently low socioeconomic circumstances. And (in Australia, at least) of those who have progressed to higher education, even less is known. Details of, for instance, the ages, gender mix, ethnic make-up, subject/course preferences and attrition/retention rates of care-leaver university students are at best under-researched or remain no more than questions.

Yet it is obvious that without a substantial cohort of care-leavers who have achieved success in higher education, the measures we propose cannot be implemented on anything other than a very limited basis. To achieve this will require a multi-layered paradigm shift, given that Australia lags considerably behind a number of countries in both research and reparative policy development regarding the progress of care-leavers to tertiary education, and support for them once there (Michell, Jackson, and Tonkin 2015). Without such particulars, little can be said regarding the similarities and differences between care-leaver student populations in Australia and other countries, with the result that it is not possible



to make informed judgements as to the potential efficacy of (for instance) programmes such as the United Kingdom's mentoring and bursary support services (see, e.g., Buttle n.d.) if applied to the Australian environment.<sup>4</sup>

It is imperative that those few self-identified care-leavers who are appropriately credentialed are afforded as much support as possible within research projects designed to reflect the concerns outlined above. The position of the 'insider-researcher' can provide unique insights and access to sources that could properly challenge the norm in academic research that focuses on care-leavers as objects of study. A study of 18 Australian women who grew up in care and went on to obtain university degrees yielded unique experientially based insights into success factors that might be applied more widely to increase participation rates. These included a conducive environment in which education is valued, the existence of positive social networks, and the provision of practical and financial support. In addition to a conducive environment, these care-leavers considered personal factors including resilience and strong motivation were also important (Mendis, Lehman, and Gardner 2017, 8–12).

This study used a qualitative, narrative approach underpinned by feminist principles, including reciprocity and equity between the researcher and the participant. (Mendis, Lehman, and Gardner 2017, 6). We argue, however, that it is preferable to channel 'insider-researcher' contributions through negotiated equal-partner collaboration with established researchers. Such collaborations, we suggest, are likely to lead to better outcomes than research undertaken exclusively by care-leavers, given their status as a variety of insider-researcher' (although a modest research grants programme funded by CLAN in 2017 involving care-leavers in mini-projects may point to some useful learnings).<sup>5</sup> Moreover, 'insider-research' can also hold inherent pitfalls such as, most obviously, real or perceived problems of objectivity (Lushey and Munro 2015). As both Hodgkinson (2005) and Kanuha (2000) demonstrate, the pitfalls are significantly reduced when an insider/outsider research team approach is used. This form of equal-partner collaboration goes well beyond giving care-leavers voice; it is very much concerned with achieving agency.

Just what research should be done? A brace of questions suggest themselves as needing urgent attention. Who among former care-leavers and currently transitioning care-leavers aspire to attend university? And what would it take for them to achieve this? The exact nature of the support – intellectual, financial, and/or emotional – needed by such aspirants will depend, once again, on detailed understanding of the groups involved, on as broad a scale as possible – that is, involving studies examining large samples derived nationally rather than the small-scale, local research that has tended to characterise the field in Australia.

A final problem needs to be addressed. Both the conduct of such research and the implementation of policies and programmes that arise from it have the potential to founder in the current higher education paradigm, which over the past two decades in Australia has come ever-increasingly to reflect the political-economic philosophy known variously as 'monetarism', neo-liberalism', or, in Australia, 'economic rationalism'. Within this system, virtually all research of any significance must compete for a limited pool of funding on a competitive 'free-market' basis that may or (all too often) may not recognise and respond to the moral, social or humane imperatives of a particular line of enquiry (Productivity Commission 2017).

Given the problems of perennial exclusion, oppression, lack of privilege and ongoing trauma under which enormous numbers of care-leavers must conduct their lives and careers, we argue that the imposition of a notional 'level playing field' – the central concept of a supposedly equitable free market – in regard to research funding and the gaining of places in higher education amounts to a perpetuation of the privilege/non-privilege dichotomy, and this places care-leavers at a significant disadvantage. As Young (1990, 95) puts it, 'Only if oppressed groups are able to express their interests and experience in the public on an equal basis with other groups can group domination through formally equal processes of participation be avoided.' It is essential, therefore, that processes are implemented to circumvent such de facto systemic discrimination (Young 1990, 171). These processes will need to explicitly acknowledge the challenges faced by the care-leaver group, in a manner analogous to the acknowledgement routinely afforded other minorities with a history of dispossession, oppression and discrimination. We argue that a cultural shift is needed within the academic community, in keeping with contemporary ethical principles of inclusiveness, that acknowledges the problems specific to care-leavers and hence informs the design and implementation of research programmes. Without such a shift, it is difficult to see how the privileged/non-privileged divide can be bridged.

## Notes

1. The term 'homeless youth' as used here refers to young persons (generally between the ages of 12 and 18) who, for reasons of abuse, neglect, poverty or absence of supportive family, are unable to reside in their usual home environment and who receive minimal or no support from their family or guardians to maintain themselves in alternative accommodation. For our purpose, 'homeless youth' therefore also embraces those in 'out-of-home care', i.e. those in temporary facilities or long-term institutions. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (2012b) notes that, over and above the officially reported population of homeless youth, a probably large but indeterminate number of youth who are for practical purposes homeless do not show up reliably in census data due to the 'masking' effect of them maintaining irregular living patterns (such as 'couch surfing') and reporting a 'usual address' on census collection day, even though that address may be false or one to which they cannot actually return.
2. Under section 92 of the *Social Welfare Act* 1970 (Victoria), youth hostels were for the 'accommodation of young persons who have been placed under the control or supervision of the Department or have been inmates of a youth training centre, remand centre, children's reception centre, or children's home'.
3. Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission 1997; SCARC 2001, 2004; Royal Commission, 2013–18.
4. Studies in the UK, initiated by social work academic Sonia Jackson and her associates (Jackson and Ajayi 2007; Jackson, Ajayi, and Quigley 2005), have led to support under the Buttle UK Quality Mark scheme; Jackson has led similar studies in Denmark, Sweden, Spain and Hungary, and in each case the pattern of poor education outcomes and very low university attendance among care-leavers has been confirmed (Jackson and Cameron 2012; Cameron et al. 2012). Similar results have been obtained in American studies (Barth 1990; Blome 1997; Zetlin, Weinberg, and Shea 2010), where a number of support programmes and legislative measures have been implemented over the past decade.
5. CLAN launched the Garry O'Neill Research Grants Project at its Annual General Meeting in Launceston on 18 November 2017.

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## Notes on contributors

**Dr Jacqueline Z. Wilson** is an associate professor in the Centre for Collaborative Research in Australian History at Federation University Australia. She is a graduate of La Trobe University, where she was awarded the David Myer University Medal, and Monash University (PhD History). She has authored over 40 scholarly publications and is the sole author, editor and/or co-editor of five books, with research interests that broadly focus on heritage, activism and the representation of Australia’s historic welfare and justice systems. Jacqueline is currently a chief investigator on several collaborative research projects funded by the Sidney Myer Fund and the Australian Research Council Discovery Awards. Her most recent work is that as the lead editor for the *Palgrave Handbook of Prison Tourism* (2017).

**Dr Philip Mendes** is an associate professor and acting head in the Department of Social Work, Faculty of Medicine at Monash University, and is also the director of the Social Inclusion and Social Policy Research Unit (SISPRU). 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 most recently *Young People Transitioning from Out-of-Home Care: International Research, Policy and Practice* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016) and *Australia’s Welfare Wars* (UNSW Press, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 2017). He is currently preparing *To Empower or Control the Disadvantaged: A Critical Historical Analysis of the Modern Australian Welfare State* for publication by Routledge in late 2018.

**Frank Golding**, OAM, an honorary research fellow at Federation University Australia and a life member of the national peak body, CLAN, is a social historian with a deep interest in the institutionalisation of children stemming from his childhood inside Victorian orphanages and foster families. After a career in education, he became a researcher/activist in child welfare, and was awarded the Order of Australia Medal in 2018 for his service in this field. Frank has contributed to formal inquiries dealing with the institutionalisation of children and to projects with the National Museum, Find & Connect, the National Summit on Rights in Records, and the National Library of Australia. He has presented papers on child welfare in Sweden, Italy and Spain. He has written more than a dozen books, as well as book chapters and refereed journal articles.

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