



Dr Alison Wallis, Senior Psychologist

“Doing your PhD is about solving one million problems. Along the way the process will rub your face in your weaknesses, but eventually allow you to soar with achievement. Yes, it takes years. But they are flexible, challenging, interesting, growth years. Now, not only can I do research, but I can also participate intelligently in whatever issues or ideas I want to pursue”.

The Landscape of dairy farmer distress: Developing a local work stress model for SA dairy farmers

Alison Wallis undertook some innovative research looking at the impact of globalisation on SA dairy farmers. Dairy farmers have recently entered a free market economy since deregulation of their industry, which has exposed them to fluctuations in milk prices that are driven by world events. She found that dairy farmers had extremely high distress levels which exceeded that of several other Australian occupations. This was found to result from high work pressure, a lack of job autonomy, as well as globalisation, financial demands and shed conditions. These demands appear to have reached a ceiling of tolerance which cannot be moderated by the efforts of individual farmers alone. The very high distress experienced by many farmers therefore requires intervention at a community, industry and government level.

Engage with us

Our work is embedded in a worldwide research network, within the highly regarded School of Psychology at UniSA. We can provide any project with the resources of undergraduate and postgraduate research students, together with national and international expertise.

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Centre for Applied Psychological Research



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Experience. The Difference.

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Centre for Applied Psychological Research

The Centre is comprised of a vibrant team of researchers who aim to conduct high quality cooperative psychological research to promote well-being, quality of life and optimal functioning in individuals and organisations in both community and institutional settings.

We are committed to stimulating action and impact as a result of our research to address a range of social and psychological problems arising at both an individual and a system level.

Our research has been applied to a range of vexing social problems, including work stress, bullying at work, life changes, offending, mental health, anger and aggression, and substance use.

Current Australian Research Competitive Grants

- Optimal resourcing: A longitudinal study of resources, work demands, and psychological well-being in Australian frontline police officers
- Developing and testing a best practice model of enterprise bargaining in the retail sector
- Evaluation of domestic violence services in WA
- Evaluation of domestic violence services in the Gold Coast
- Back from the edge: Reducing and preventing occupational stress in the remote area nursing workforce



Research Groups

The Forensic Psychology Research Group (FPRG) conducts research and consultancy projects in the area of legal and correctional psychology. It has a particular interest in the area of offender rehabilitation and correctional program evaluation. A major strength of the FPRG has been its ability to maintain close links with the profession and contribute to professionally relevant teaching programs offered by the University of South Australia. Over half of group members are Registered Psychologists who currently practice in forensic settings, allowing us to conceptualise research in ways that are likely to be of interest and benefit to practitioners.

The Work and Stress Research Group develops and applies knowledge to improve workplace practices and policies for humane production. Key researchers have both national and international reputations in such areas as:

- the work environment and other factors affecting well-being and productivity
- unemployment, underemployment, social alienation and social exclusion
- bullying, violence in the workplace
- workers compensation
- impact of globalisation on workers in the world

The Lifespan Development Group has interests in cultural and other aspects of diversity in development (particularly in relation to Indigenous Australians) and cognitive development during childhood, adolescence and young adulthood. Their research includes the impact of lifestyle factors, such as nutrition, on cognitive performance and cognitive and psychosocial development in mid-life.

The Counselling/Clinical Research focuses on clinical supervision and applied practice issues including the development of professionals as well as their supervisors, clinic procedures, client attendance in therapy, and the multifaceted work activities of clinical and counselling university academic staff. Counselling research focuses on describing the Australian counselling workplace and examinations of policy and other counselling professionalisation issues. Similarly, aspects of the use of technology in psychological and counselling services have been examined. Research has involved quantitative publications, content analyses, as well as scholarly text and article publications.

PhD and Masters

Our PhD program provides training and education with the objective of producing graduates with the capacity to conduct research independently at a high level of originality and quality. By the end of the degree program, the PhD student will be capable of conceiving, designing and carrying to completion a research program without supervision.

The purpose of the PhD is to advance knowledge and/or the application of knowledge through the preparation of a substantial piece of work which represents a significant contribution to a particular field of study.

Recent PhD completions

- **Dr Sarah Cotton**
'Flash point' in the third sector: A longitudinal examination of clergy well-being using a participatory and integrated framework of theory
- **Dr Michael Daffern**
A functional analysis of psychiatric inpatient aggression
- **Dr Michael Proeve**
Remorse: Its description and its interpersonal effects
- **Alison Wallis**
The landscape of dairy farmer distress: Developing a work stress model among SA dairy farmers
- **Dr Peter Winwood**
Development and validation of the occupational fatigue exhaustion recovery scale: Investigating the significance of non-work time activity in buffering the effects of work strain.

“The research we conduct has a strong applied focus. Our experience as professional psychologists has been critical in the development of a broad research agenda that is relevant to professionals, academics and the community. Our research utilises a strong psychological perspective to inform the development of public policy”