

# PhD THINKERS PROGRAM REPORT 2021



*PREPARED BY*  
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## ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The Psychosocial Safety Climate Global Observatory (PSC-GO) is a world-first platform that conducts ground-breaking, interdisciplinary, international research, bringing together world class experts that conduct rigorous research with the potential to positively impact workplace policy-making globally. PSC-GO was established in 2020 by Australian Research Council (ARC) Australian Laureate Fellow, Professor Maureen Dollard. The PSC-GO team work together on an expansive and significant 5-year project called 'Mind the Worker: Transformative Change for a Human-Centred Corporate Climate', as well as a range of other industry focused projects.

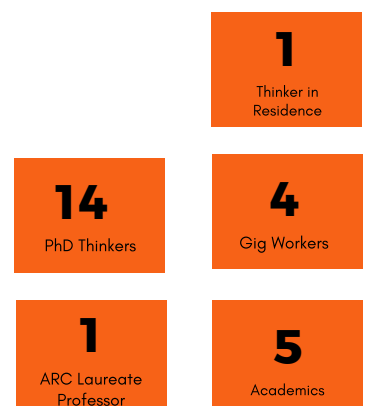
As part of the ARC Laureate Fellowship, Professor Maureen Dollard also received an Kathleen Fitzpatrick award to grow the next generation of Australian interdisciplinary women researchers. Kathleen Fitzpatrick was a passionate advocate for women, as well as a humanities and social sciences researcher. From this award, the PhD Thinkers Program was born.

The PhD Thinkers program is an interactive 2-day workshop that focuses on discussing innovative interdisciplinary research on a contemporary work health and safety workplace issue. The program aims to provide opportunities to network and build links with between a group of Australian female PhD candidates, developing skills in creative thinking and methodological approaches, and boosting career advancement and future academic endeavours.

Each year, 10 female Australian PhD students (50 in total) will be invited to join. PhD candidates will be selected from diverse disciplines (e.g. STEM, AI, industrial law, sociology) especially where female researchers are under-represented.

Collaboration with Match Studio - who are experts in interdisciplinary and creative thinking - is integral to the success of this program. While learning about human centered design thinking, PhD Thinkers tackle that year's specific work health and safety issue and develop a research proposal. Each component of the workshop acts as a scaffold; building from one section to another. The PhD Thinkers are also exposed to guest speakers, experts, applied tools and techniques and will have the opportunity to discuss and produce research outputs with others. The program is designed with ample time to connect on a interpersonal level, over food and coffee, to boost social connections.

Overall, the PhD Thinkers program aims to create a community of academic women who keep connected and lean on one another for both social support and academic input in the future.







## THINKER IN RESIDENCE 2021

### Marie Boland

Marie is UniSA's inaugural Thinker in Residence for 2021. Marie actively engaged with the PhD Thinkers workshop, sharing her knowledge and experience in work health and safety (WHS).

Marie is a distinguished national leader in WHS and industrial relations, as well as a highly respected industrial relations lawyer and union organiser. She has held numerous executive roles at SafeWork SA including Executive Director, Policy and Strategy Director, Community Engagement Director, and Chief Policy Officer Industrial Relations. In 2018 Marie Boland reviewed the model WHS laws and recommended that the regulations should be amended to support the management of risks associated with psychological injury in the workplace (the Boland Review).

### Public Lecture

#### "HR: A Human Resources or a Human Rights Approach to Work Health and Safety?"

As part of her residency, Marie presented a public lecture, considering this confronting issue. In her lecture, she reflects on why the WHS regulatory framework has failed to prevent sexual harassment and its psychological and physical health impacts on workers. She also reflects on why the WHS regulatory framework has failed in the context of preventing psychological injury more generally.

Marie suggests that a key failure in the effective management of psychosocial risks and psychological injury has been its diversion into Human Resource Management Departments, where organisational safety risks are personalised and 'resolved' through individual complaints and grievance processes which invariably end with a psychologically damaged worker leaving their job or with their employment being terminated.

Marie proposes that it would be naïve of us to think that legal provisions are all that are required to make our workplaces safe from psychological injury whether within the WHS or Sex Discrimination legal framework. Rather she suggests that entire organisational structures will need to be transformed and that traditional approaches to Human Resource Management will need to be disrupted if we are to truly recognise and support the right of workers to be safe at work.





## THINKER IN RESIDENCE 2021

**Lecture recording available:**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iE0U7gwV6lo>







## 2021 DISCUSSION TOPIC

### The Gig Worker

**Each year the workshops will address a new work related/social topic. The 2021 topic is on the WHS of gig workers.**

To kick off the first workshop PhD Thinkers discussed "Is there a Psychosocial Safety Climate for non-standard workers?" The concept of PSC works well when considering standard work arrangements. The issue of developing a corporate climate conducive to worker psychological health is a wicked problem that requires an interdisciplinary gaze.

Now spanning various industries, gig workers (13% of Australian workers) often contracted by huge profit digital platforms companies like Uber, Lyft, and Deliveroo, who have no 'employer' or job security, and often work in poor labour conditions with little protection, with some job control but mental health concerns have emerged.

Internationally there are 2 billion workers (61% of all workers) who are non-standard (informal). In Australia 5 fast food drivers have been killed in recent months drawing attention to the lack of protection for gig economy workers.

During the workshops, 4 gig workers spoke to the PhD Thinkers about their real life work experiences. The stories were eye-opening. The PhD Thinkers also engaged in an interactive question and answer time with the gig workers.

As stated earlier, over the 2 days, the PhD Thinkers worked together to develop an innovative interdisciplinary research proposal to tackle the issue. Each team of PhD Thinkers presented a research proposal at the end of the 2 day workshop.

***"I really liked talking to the gig workers, this was so useful to connect with the human side of the issue - a really good "why". So often we forget there are people just like us at the other end of our research."***



## HUMAN CENTERED DESIGN THINKING

The workshop used human-centered design and systems-thinking approach to develop the foundation of real-world research proposals. Over the 2 days, Founding Director of Match Studio, Dr Jane Andrews helped lead the group through a series of activities, tools and techniques that encourage creative and interdisciplinary thinking. The workshop provided students with the rare opportunity to be engage with others from utterly different backgrounds on an important societal and work-related issue – gig workers. For instance, earth science PhDs worked with physiotherapy PhDs. Law PhDs worked with Public Health PhDs. Each bringing in new perspectives and methodologies. At the end of the workshop, student groups presented back their proposals to the group.

*“Match Studio expertly guided us through the process of collaborating and visualising achievable proposals for the global gig worker issues. Their framework allowed us to find the areas that required further action and then also guided us to create a feasible project that a stakeholder could undertake. All in the space of two days...amazing. It just goes to show what a well organised program, designed to create change in global problem areas, can achieve in two days with an interdisciplinary group of intelligent women.”*



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## PhD Thinkers in Residence Program 2021



Location: GK5-15, George Kingston Building, City West Campus, University of South Australia

	Day 1 9th Tuesday November	Day 2 10th Wednesday November
9:00am	Welcome & Overview Professor Maureen Dollard  Introductions: <i>PhD Thinkers</i>  Presentation from Thinker in Residence Marie Boland	Welcome & Re-Cap Professor Maureen Dollard  Interactive Group-Work Session: Match Studio Team-based idea generation
10:30am	MORNING TEA (30 mins)  Presentation: Professor Andrew Stewart  Q & A: <i>Gig Workers</i>	MORNING TEA (30 mins)  Interactive Group-Work Session: Match Studio Is our research idea valuable and feasible?
12:30pm	LUNCH (1 hour): Peter Rabbit, Hindley Street  Introduction: <i>Match Studio</i> An introduction to Design Thinking and applying it to your research  Interactive Session: Mitigating troublesome teamwork through creative collaboration	LUNCH (1 hour): Food Lore, Jeffrey Smart  Interactive Group-Work Session: Match Studio Are we on the same page? Creating collaborative research proposals  Presentation & Discussion of Ideas <i>PhD Thinkers</i>
2:30pm	AFTERNOON TEA (30 mins)  Interactive Session: <i>Match Studio</i>	AFTERNOON TEA (30 mins)  Preparing ARC Grant Applications
5:00pm	Mapping the problem space to find the 'Gap'. Using Design Thinking framework and tools	Professor Maureen Dollard Workshop Conclusion
		DINNER: Parlamento Restaurant



### **Professor Maureen Dollard**

Throughout the program Maureen engaged with all the PhD Thinkers. As a unique contribution, Maureen gave an insightful presentation about her story as a successful female academic, how to thrive in academia in the current climate and importantly tips for writing ARC research grants applications.

### **Professor Andrew Stewart**



Professor Andrew Stewart is the John Bray Professor of Law at Adelaide University. Andrew is also part of several research teams, who have been awarded ARC funding to examine the regulation and experience of work through digital platforms. During the workshops David presented research about gig workers to the PhD Thinkers, providing recent and valuable information from an Australian context. David was also instrumental in connecting the gig workers with this workshop.

### **UniSA Student Film Crew**



A UniSA student film crew was commissioned to capture both the 2-day workshop and the public lecture. The crew consisted of Mia Fountain, Maddy Walsh, Connor Patterson and Adon Langhorn. Filming these events was hugely important to ensure the materials are documented. We are proud to have given this opportunity to such a hard-working, professional and highly talented group of UniSA students.

Thank you!!!



## FEEDBACK

"I would like to say thank you for the opportunity to be a part of this workshop. It has been such a wonderful experience and one of the best experiences of my postgraduate journey. The workshop is an absolute credit to all your hard work to make it happen. The positive and supportive atmosphere created by this amazing group of women has kept me on a high all week. I have taken every opportunity to tell anyone that will listen about this fantastic workshop. I have also advised my supervisors to highly recommend it next year. I feel so fortunate to have been able to share two days with these superstar women."

"I thought it was a fantastic two days. There are such few opportunities to collaborate with (female) PhD students from other universities, and to genuinely network – I think these were key outcomes of the workshop. All the frills were excellent, but I think these key guts are where the real benefit of the workshops were. I think developing a way of maintaining (and building) connection within the cohorts across the 5 years would be really valuable too."

"The energy and positive vibe these two days brought was truly amazing. Public speaking is an area of special interest for me, and I always look forward to presentations and face-to-face conversations. Right from the start, I was excited to see such a brilliant group of presenters under one roof, and that was just the beginning of a wonderful two days. It was inspiring to meet you all. I look forward to staying in touch."



"As a PhD student we can often feel a bit on the bottom of the ladder, but these two days made me feel so valued and respected. I felt truly spoiled by the quality of the presentations, the colleagues present, and all the resources, good food and coffee supplied."

"I thoroughly enjoyed myself and the experience – it was THE BEST workshop experience I've ever had. EVERRRRR!! Seriously! Given half the chance I'd totally do it again and am looking forward to the new year catch up!!"

"Thank you for forwarding this and for organizing a wonderful two days with some brilliant women. It was a pleasure getting to meet everyone and being able to build connections with fellow students. Definitely my favourite part of the two days, plus the Q&A with the Gig workers. Fabulous and so informative!"



"Through this [workshop], I came to understand the entire process of moving on a broad topic to a narrow topic and eventually writing a business model and applying for a research fund. It will be the most important thing to apply for research funding from researchers who will work on research in the future and coordinate ideas from other majors to suit their purpose."

"Thank you very much for hosting the two-day workshop for us. I really have enjoyed myself and took a lot from it. Hope I have also contributed some aspects to the proposal too. Appreciate all your sharing and efforts (esp in the food and tea catering!) Hope to keep in touch."

"Thanks so much for your hard work with the workshop - it ran so smoothly, was really enjoyable and I got soooooo much out of it on so many levels! It was great to meet everyone - both the other PhD candidates plus yourself, Maureen and Marie. Everyone was so chilled, open and willing to share, it was really such a great vibe!"

"I find public speaking difficult (especially with the cameras present) but felt so much better about myself for having done so. I do not have any negatives to report. The food and company were also superb."





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