



Australian Government

Australian Institute of Criminology

# AIC 2025 CONFERENCE

reducing  
online  
harms

program

HOTEL REALM | CANBERRA | MARCH 11-12

The Australian Institute of Criminology acknowledges  
the Ngunnawal people as traditional custodians of the land  
we are meeting on and recognises any other people or families  
with connection to the lands of the ACT and region.  
  
We acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and  
the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region.

# Timetable

## DAY ONE

**08:00 – 09:00**  
Registration

**09:00 – 09:15**  
Welcome to Country and introduction

**09:15 – 10:15**  
**Keynote presentation: Examining the pathways into cybercrime and online interventions**  
Professor Rutger Leukfeldt, Leiden University

**10:15 – 10:45**  
Morning tea

10:45 – 12:15	
Concurrent session 1: National Ballroom 3	Concurrent session 2: National Ballroom 4
<b>Online scams and fraud</b> Chaired by Dr Rick Brown	<b>Online sexual violence</b> Chaired by Dr Christopher Dowling
<b>Trends in cybercrime victimisation, help-seeking and harms</b> Anthony Morgan, Australian Institute of Criminology	<b>Routine online activities and dating app-facilitated sexual violence</b> Dr Heather Wolbers, Australian Institute of Criminology
<b>Australia in the World Cybercrime Index</b> Dr Miranda Bruce, University of New South Wales	<b>Underage risk-taking and harms experienced on ‘adult-based platforms’</b> Dr Tahlia Hart, Flinders University
<b>Victim experiences of searching for jobs online and recruitment fraud</b> Professor Cassandra Cross, Queensland University of Technology	<b>The prevalence of online sexual harassment and online sexual solicitation among 10–17-year-olds living in Australia</b> Claire Lister, eSafety

**12:15 – 13:00**  
Lunch

**13:00 – 13:30**  
**Keynote presentation by the Hon Mark Dreyfus KC MP, Attorney-General of Australia**

## DAY TWO

13:30 – 15:00

Concurrent session 3: National Ballroom 3	Concurrent session 4: National Ballroom 4
<b>Online hate and fringe and radical content and links with violence</b> Chaired by Dr Christopher Dowling	<b>Victim-survivor recovery and reducing risk of ongoing harms</b> Chaired by Dr Sarah Napier
<b>Changes in anti-government sentiment, conspiratorial beliefs and exposure to fringe and radical content online</b> Dr Timothy Cubitt, Australian Institute of Criminology	<b>A recommended approach: A victim-survivor perspective on the institutional use of child sexual abuse material</b> Kelly Humphries, Monash University
<b>Exposure to fringe and radical content, ideological beliefs and support for collective violence</b> Anthony Morgan, Australian Institute of Criminology	<b>The needs and experiences of adult victim-survivors of child sexual abuse material</b> Professor Michael Salter, University of New South Wales
<b>Mapping online hate in Australia using community-driven AI models</b> Associate Professor Matteo Vergani, Deakin University; Sophie Murray-Farrell, New South Wales Premier's Department	<b>Harmful sexual behaviours and technology: Towards a prevention and early intervention framework</b> Carol Ronken, Bravehearts

15:00 – 15:30

Afternoon tea

15:30 – 17:00

Concurrent session 5: National Ballroom 3	Concurrent session 6: National Ballroom 4
<b>Ransomware and cybercrime impacting businesses</b> Chaired by Anthony Morgan	<b>Internet and misogyny</b> Chaired by Dr Christopher Dowling
<b>Vulnerabilities and victim responses to ransomware attacks</b> Isabella Voce, Australian Institute of Criminology	<b>Understanding disengagement from online incel communities</b> Laura Doherty, Australian Institute of Criminology
<b>Understanding the internal operations of ransomware criminal groups: A case study of Conti</b> Professor Chad Whelan, Deakin University	<b>Pathways toward and away from online misogyny: What do men in the manosphere tell us?</b> Dr Vivian Gerrand, Deakin University
<b>Leveraging situational crime prevention to combat cybercrime and address critical cyber resilience gaps</b> Professor Ryan Ko, University of Queensland	<b>Combating the influence of online misogynistic communities and influences in schools</b> Dr Stephanie Wescott and Professor Steven Roberts, Monash University

17:00

Conclude

08:00 – 09:00

Registration

09:00 – 09:30

Opening remarks

Nathan Smyth, Deputy Secretary, Commonwealth Counter-Terrorism Coordinator and National Counter Foreign Interference Coordinator, Department of Home Affairs

09:30 – 10:30

**Keynote presentation: Technology-facilitated sexual crimes against children: Offenders, victims and environment**

Professor Ethel Quayle, University of Edinburgh

10:30 – 11:00

Morning tea

11:00 – 12:30

Concurrent session 7: National Ballroom 3	Concurrent session 8: National Ballroom 4
<b>Prevention of online harm</b> Chaired by Anthony Morgan	<b>Sextortion</b> Chaired by Dr Samantha Bricknell
<b>Experimental trial of targeted messages to prevent online abuse and profit-motivated cybercrime</b> Emma Shakespeare, Australian Federal Police; Dr Laura McVey, eSafety; and Isabella Voce, Australian Institute of Criminology	<b>Sexual extortion of children: Findings from a national survey</b> Dr Sarah Napier, Australian Institute of Criminology
<b>Online messages to prevent sexual harms to children: Examining adolescents' perceptions of messages to potential offenders, victims and bystanders</b> Professor Jeremy Prichard, Associate Professor James Sauer, University of Tasmania	<b>The impacts of sexual extortion</b> Dr Heather Wolbers, Australian Institute of Criminology
<b>Using behavioural insights to reduce financial scams and protect consumers</b> Dr Josh Rhee, Behavioural Insights Team	<b>Sextortion: The case of Amanda Todd</b> Dr Peter German, International Centre for Criminal Law Reform

12:30 – 13:15

Lunch

13:15 – 15:00

Concurrent session 9: National Ballroom 3	Concurrent session 10: National Ballroom 4
<b>Responding to online crime</b> Chaired by Anthony Morgan	<b>Online enablement of human trafficking, modern slavery and sexual exploitation</b> Chaired by Dr Christopher Dowling
<b>Using biometrics to investigate child sexual abuse</b> Associate Professor Russell Brewer, University of Adelaide; Warren Bulmer, International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children Australia	<b>Examining the experiences of women trafficked into South-East Asia's cyber-scam centres</b> Dr Siobhan Lawler, Australian Institute of Criminology
<b>Experimental study of the impact of social norms and risks of detection on improper AI use</b> Dr Alexandra Voce, Australian Institute of Criminology	<b>Streaming the unthinkable: A review of research on the live streaming of child sexual abuse</b> Dr Larissa Christensen and Jodie Woods, University of the Sunshine Coast
<b>Law enforcement responses to cybercrime and the networks that support them</b> Chief Inspector Michael Newman, Queensland Police Service	<b>Digital trap: Recruitment into labour exploitation via mobile dating apps and websites in Australia</b> Samantha Lyneham, Australian Institute of Criminology

15:00 – 15:30  
Afternoon tea

15:30 – 17:00

Concurrent session 11: National Ballroom 3	Concurrent session 12: National Ballroom 4
<b>Image-based abuse</b> Chaired by Dr Sarah Napier	<b>Harms from pornography</b> Chaired by Dr Rick Brown
<b>Insights from eSafety's Image-based abuse reporting and removal scheme</b> Dr Savannah Minihan, eSafety	<b>Understanding the relationship between pornography use and sexual violence in a community sample of Australian men</b> Dr Christopher Dowling, Australian Institute of Criminology
<b>Image-based sexual abuse help-seeking: Designing and developing a chatbot for victims, perpetrators and bystanders</b> Professor Nicola Henry, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology	<b>Blurring the lines: The vague boundary between mainstream and deviant internet pornography tags for at-risk viewers</b> Gabrielle Gane, Paris Psychology Centre
<b>Characteristics of cases of image-based abuse in Australia from the Australian Sexual Offence Statistical collection</b> Tom Sullivan and Merran McAlister, Australian Institute of Criminology	<b>Real world harms associated with exposure to pornography</b> Dr Heather McKay and Rachel Moody, Australian Institute of Family Studies

17:00  
Conclude

Presentation details

DAY ONE

09:15 – 10:15

Keynote presentation:  
Examining the pathways into cybercrime and online interventions

Professor Rutger Leukfeldt,  
Leiden University

What are pathways into cybercrime and how does someone become involved in a cybercriminal network? The first part of this presentation is based on interviews with 25 criminal hackers about their online and offline pathways into cybercrime, co-offending and desistence. Preliminary results show that the first (baby) steps towards cybercrime include gaming, Google and YouTube. In the second part of this presentation, two online interventions will be discussed. The first intervention uses Google to deter persons looking for cybercriminal tools to carry out distributed denial-of-service attacks and the second one uses Instagram to inform potential money mules.



ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Rutger Leukfeldt holds the special chair of Governing Cybercrime at Leiden University. The chair is established and managed by the Netherlands Institute for the Study of Crime and Law Enforcement (NSCR). At NSCR, Rutger is a senior researcher and director of the Centre of Expertise Cybersecurity at the Hague University of Applied Sciences. His education and research focuses on the human factor in cybercrime. Who are the perpetrators, what are their crime scripts? What are the risk profiles of victims? How can we tackle cybercrime? Rutger has more than 130 cybercrime publications to his name (including more than 70 peer-reviewed publications, seven books and numerous professional publications and reports). He is chair of the Cybercrime Working Group of the European Society of Criminology and a founder of the annual Human Factors in Cybercrime Conference.

11:00 – 12:30

## Trends in cybercrime victimisation, help-seeking and harms

**Anthony Morgan,**  
*Australian Institute of Criminology*

The Australian Cybercrime Survey measures cybercrime victimisation, help-seeking and harms among Australian computer users. The latest results show that rates of victimisation remain high, formal help-seeking remains low, and a large proportion of victims are negatively impacted by cybercrime. Cybercrime continues to have a disproportionate impact on certain sections of the community.

However, there were some promising results. The prevalence of online abuse and harassment, malware and fraud and scams were lower among 2024 respondents than in the 2023 survey. This was especially true for respondents who owned or operated a small to medium business. Poly-victimisation was also lower this year, and we observed a significant decrease in data breaches. A higher proportion of respondents sought help from police or ReportCyber for certain types of cybercrime, and victims were more likely to recover money from identity crime and misuse incidents in 2024 than in 2023.

Conversely, respondents were less likely in 2024 than in 2023 to say they were using various online safety strategies, and there was little change in the prevalence of high-risk behaviours online. Further, a higher proportion of victims reported being negatively impacted by cybercrime in 2024, particularly for social and health related harms. This presentation discusses the implications of these mixed findings.

### ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Anthony Morgan is the Research Manager of the Australian Institute of Criminology's Serious and Organised crime, Cybercrime and Radicalisation Research Program. Committed to promoting evidence-based policy, Anthony has spent nearly two decades working closely with law enforcement and policymakers to conduct rigorous, applied and policy-relevant empirical criminological research, particularly in the area of serious and organised crime. More recently his research has focused on the online environment, overseeing the development of the Australian Cybercrime Survey and the Survey of Social and Political Beliefs in Australia and leading research into cybercrime victimisation and factors that influence people's vulnerability to radicalisation.

## Australia in the World Cybercrime Index

**Dr Miranda Bruce,**  
*University of New South Wales*

Australia has one of the highest rates of cybercrime victimisation in the world—but does Australia produce as much cybercrime as it suffers? Our understanding of where cybercriminals operate, and the geography of the cybercrime economy more broadly, is extremely limited. Our response to this problem is the World Cybercrime Index (WCI), the first attempt to map cybercrime hotspots across the globe using survey data with world leading experts in cybercrime intelligence and investigations. The WCI identifies the most significant sources of cybercrime, and measures the impact of the cybercrimes produced in different countries and the skills of the cybercriminals who commit them.

The presentation briefly summarises the WCI, our methodology, and the key takeaways. Then Australia's WCI results will be explored in detail: how much of a 'hotspot' is Australia compared to the rest of the world, and what kind of cybercrime thrives here? Finally, using unpublished data from the latest WCI survey, we look at how the unique cybercriminality profile of the Asia-Pacific is changing and what this might mean for Australia's anti-cybercrime efforts.

### ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Dr Miranda Bruce is a lecturer in cyber security at UNSW Canberra and co-author of the World Cybercrime Index. Her work focuses on the geography of cybercrime—why do cybercrime hotspots develop in some countries and not others?—and the history and theory of cybersecurity in Australia.

## Victim experiences of searching for jobs online and recruitment fraud

**Professor Cassandra Cross,**  
*Queensland University of Technology*

Recruitment fraud sees offenders use the guise of a genuine job opportunity to deceive victims into sending their personal information or making a required payment (application fee, training fee, or the purchase of upfront materials). Within Australia, this type of fraud increased the fastest in 2023, costing Australians \$24.7 million, almost triple the losses reported in 2022. This presentation provides results from an online survey of 1,021 Australians who searched for employment online. It documents the application requirements for many, as well as examining the experience of those who suffered a financial loss in response to a job application. Overall, the presentation locates these findings within a broader context of online job recruitment, and demonstrates the ways that offenders are leveraging job seeking for their own criminal purposes.

### ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Dr Cassandra Cross is currently Associate Dean (Learning & Teaching), Faculty of Creative Industries, Education and Social Justice, Queensland University of Technology, and a Professor in the School of Justice at the same university. In 2021, she completed a Senior Research Fellowship with the Cybersecurity Cooperative Research Centre on the topic of romance fraud. Dr Cross started her fraud research in the Queensland Police Service in 2008. She was awarded a Churchill Fellowship in 2011 to explore the prevention and support of online fraud victims. Since taking up her position at Queensland University of Technology in 2012, she has furthered this research focus, publishing extensively on the policing, prevention and disruption of fraud and support for victims.



## Concurrent session 2

11:00 – 12:30

**Routine online activities and dating app-facilitated sexual violence****Dr Heather Wolbers,**  
**Australian Institute of Criminology**

Online dating platforms have grown in popularity over the last decade and are the method through which many people now meet romantic partners. However, these platforms have also become vehicles through which users can experience sexual harassment, aggression and violence. This study examined factors associated with dating app facilitated sexual violence (DAFSV) among a large, nationally representative sample of dating app or website users (n=9,987). Through the lens of routine activity theory, we examined the ways in which respondents used dating platforms and how this was associated with experiences of DAFSV. We focused on behaviours that increase visibility, accessibility or the chances of converging in time and space with a motivated offender without a capable guardian. We also considered whether these risks differ for DAFSV experienced online and in person. Findings give much-needed context for experiences of DAFSV, bolstering our understanding of potential mechanisms and providing direction for responses aimed at protecting individuals from harm facilitated by online dating platforms.

**ABOUT THE SPEAKER**

Dr Heather Wolbers is a Senior Research Analyst in the Australian Institute of Criminology's Online Sexual Exploitation of Children Research Program. Heather has undertaken research in the fields of family and sexual violence, the online sexual exploitation of children, and serious and organised crime. Recent projects include an examination of dating app facilitated sexual violence, child sexual offenders on the darknet, and the sexual extortion of young people. Heather holds a Bachelor of Criminology and Criminal Justice (with Honours), a Bachelor of Forensic Science, and a PhD in Criminology from Griffith University.

**Underage risk-taking and harms experienced on adult-based platforms****Dr Tahlia Hart, Flinders University**

The access to and use of adult-based platforms (eg dating apps, remunerative matchmaking services, subscription platforms, fetish communities) by minors is an under-researched topic. It is largely unknown what risk-taking behaviours children engage in on adult-based platforms and the possible psychological, physical and legal harms they experience. This presentation discusses the various risk-taking opportunities and harms experienced, both online and offline, by 46 interview participants aged 18 to 21 years who previously used these platforms while underage. The presentation also considers possible harm-reduction policies that could be implemented in Australia to mitigate access, use and eventual harm.

**ABOUT THE SPEAKER**

Dr Tahlia Hart is a lecturer and lawyer at Flinders University. Her current research interests include social media and dating platforms, juvenile delinquency and cybercrime, in particular how youth navigate and engage with online spaces intended for adults (eg dating apps).

**The prevalence of online sexual harassment and online sexual solicitation among 10–17-year-olds living in Australia****Claire Lister, eSafety**

The digital landscape plays an increasingly central role in children's lives, offering opportunities for self-expression, creativity, connection and learning. However, many online activities carry a degree of risk, and negative experiences such as online sexual violence (OSV) are becoming increasingly prevalent. This presentation describes preliminary findings from a nationally representative online survey of 3,500 children aged 10–17 and their parents in Australia, focusing on the prevalence and nature of OSV experiences. The research provides critical insights into the scale and scope of these experiences among Australian children. More specifically, this research examines children's experiences of behaviours such as online sexual harassment and online sexual solicitation, alongside demographic patterns. These findings highlight the extent of the issue, shedding light on the proportion of young people impacted and the characteristics of those most at risk. By exploring the prevalence of OSV, this presentation seeks to inform and provide crucial insights to policymakers, educators and other stakeholders about the online experiences of children. The findings guide efforts in designing targeted prevention and intervention initiatives to address OSV and promote the wellbeing of children online.

**ABOUT THE SPEAKER**

Claire Lister is a Research Officer at the eSafety Commissioner. With almost 20 years' experience in mixed methods multidisciplinary research, Claire's research currently centres on online safety issues including image-based abuse, child sexual exploitation and cyberbullying. Prior to working at eSafety, Claire worked for research agencies in the UK and Australia, conducting social research for government departments and not-for-profits. Claire is experienced in researching sensitive subjects, often with vulnerable audiences, with empathy and in alignment with ethical principles.

1300 – 1330

### Keynote presentation

#### **Mark Dreyfus KC MP, Attorney-General of the Commonwealth of Australia**

The Hon Mark Dreyfus KC MP was appointed Attorney-General of the Commonwealth of Australia on 1 June 2022.

Mark is a passionate defender of the rule of law, freedom of the press and the need for a powerful and independent national anti-corruption commission.

Mark is a strong advocate for social justice and believes in creating a sustainable economy and environment for future generations.

Mark was first elected to the House of Representatives as the Member for Isaacs in November 2007.

In 2010 Mark was appointed as Cabinet Secretary and Parliamentary Secretary for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency and in February 2013, Attorney-General and Minister for Emergency Management.

Prior to entering Parliament Mark was a Melbourne barrister and was appointed Queen's Counsel in 1999. He appeared for and advised federal, state and local governments and appeared in a number of landmark cases in the High Court, including the Stolen Generations litigation.



## THE SHADOWS OF THE WEB: PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN IN THE DIGITAL WORLD

Shadows of the Web is an educational documentary that explores tech companies' role in protecting young people online, the rising threat of online child exploitation and abuse, Australia's response and the challenges in safeguarding young people in the digital age.

The film includes interviews with the Commonwealth Attorney-General, the Hon Mark Dreyfus KC MP, the eSafety Commissioner, the AFP-led Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation, New South Wales Police and leading academics and civil society advocates, including people with lived experience.

It explores the evolving threat of online child sexual exploitation and abuse, which has become more prevalent, commodified, organised and extreme in recent years. Increased internet connectivity and the popularity of social media amongst children has allowed offenders to groom, coerce and exploit victims at scale. The prolific rise of this crime type is a key concern for global law enforcement.

Raising awareness of child sexual exploitation and abuse is an important way to help prevent it from occurring, reduce shame and stigma when it does and ensure the children in our lives know help is available.

Shadows of the Web is available for viewing by  
Australian audiences on the Stan streaming platform.



## THE SHADOWS OF THE WEB

PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN  
IN THE DIGITAL WORLD



13:30 – 15:00

## Changes in anti-government sentiment, conspiratorial beliefs and exposure to fringe and radical content online

**Dr Timothy Cubitt,**  
**Australian Institute of Criminology**

Online domains play an increasingly important role in shaping contemporary belief systems. In recent years there has been a proliferation of mis- and disinformation online, some of which has been shared by malicious actors in support of political, religious or ideological goals. Separately, the growth of some platforms and significant changes to others have affected the ways in which people can access and share fringe and radical content and interact with radicalised individuals online.

In 2022, the Australian Institute of Criminology conducted the first Survey of Social and Political Beliefs, a large national survey of more than 10,000 Australians, developed in collaboration with government partners, to measure the experiences of Australians online. This survey was then repeated in late 2024. With this survey now in its second iteration, this presentation discusses anti-government sentiment, conspiratorial beliefs and exposure to fringe and radical content among online Australians, including how these have changed over the past two years. It then considers the characteristics of those who actively engage with radical content.

The findings from these surveys hold valuable evidence on the beliefs and experiences of online Australians. They have important implications for efforts to prevent and respond to harmful content online.

### ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Dr Timothy Cubitt is a Principal Research Analyst in the Serious and Organised Crime, Cybercrime and Radicalisation Research Program at the Australian Institute of Criminology. Tim's research focuses on radicalisation, online sexual exploitation of children, law enforcement responses to outlaw motorcycle gangs, and police misconduct. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Criminology from the University of New South Wales, a Masters in Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism from Macquarie University, and a PhD in Criminology from Western Sydney University.

## Exposure to fringe and radical content, ideological beliefs and support for collective violence

**Anthony Morgan,**  
**Australian Institute of Criminology**

This presentation outlines the results from two connected studies that used data from the Survey of Social and Political Beliefs in Australia to better understand how the online environment shapes people's vulnerability to radicalisation. In the first study we explored the relationship between various measures of exposure to fringe and radical content online and support for violence. Results showed that respondents who intentionally accessed fringe or radical content, particularly violent content, or who were members of online groups promoting fringe and radical content, were more likely to justify the use of violence to support ideological goals. In the second study we explored the relationship between anti-government sentiment—distrust of the electoral process, dissatisfaction with democracy and perceived political corruption—and radical attitudes. It also considered the role of conspiratorial thinking. Having a conspiratorial mindset was directly related to support for ideological violence, but also explained most of the relationship between anti-government sentiment and radicalised attitudes. These findings illustrate the importance of measures that can prevent, reduce or counteract the attraction and effects of fringe and conspiratorial content online among people who may be vulnerable to radicalisation.

### ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Anthony Morgan is the Research Manager of the Australian Institute of Criminology's Serious and Organised crime, Cybercrime and Radicalisation Research Program. Committed to promoting evidence-based policy, Anthony has spent nearly two decades working closely with law enforcement and policymakers to conduct rigorous, applied and policy-relevant empirical criminological research, particularly in the area of serious and organised crime. More recently his research has focused on the online environment, overseeing the development of the Australian Cybercrime Survey and Survey of Social and Political Beliefs in Australia and leading research into cybercrime victimisation and factors that influence people's vulnerability to radicalisation.

## Mapping online hate in Australia using community-driven AI models

**Associate Professor Matteo Vergani,**  
**Deakin University**

**Sophie Murray-Farrell,**  
**NSW Premier's Department**

In early 2023, Australia witnessed a significant surge in anti-trans and anti-drag mobilisation, both online and offline. Drawing on findings from a research initiative the NSW Premier's Department is leading in partnership with Deakin University and the Victorian Government to map online hate in Australia, we present analyses on the intersection of digital hostility and real-world events targeting gender-diverse communities. This research draws on a dataset of over 86,000 social media content items.

Our findings reveal a clear relationship between spikes in online discourse and offline confrontations, with far-right networks playing a crucial role in amplifying and coordinating narratives. Violent events were often preceded by a marked increase in online hostility towards politicians, suggesting that anti-politics discourse may serve as an early warning indicator of potential violence. Furthermore, while discussions explicitly referencing events tend to fade quickly, hostility targeting gender-diverse communities persist and even expand over time following the events. This underscores the need for long-term monitoring beyond immediate crises.

### ABOUT THE SPEAKERS

Sophie Murray-Farrell oversees the NSW Government's Countering Violent Extremism Program from within the NSW Premier's Department. In addition to coordinating this program, Sophie leads whole-of-government coordination of social cohesion policy and programs, working closely with interjurisdictional and Commonwealth government counterparts to strengthen social cohesion and overcome hate and extremism.

Dr Matteo Vergani specialises in applied research on online hate, extremism and terrorism, employing interdisciplinary methods that blend sociology, psychology and data science. He leads multiple research projects funded by key agencies including the Department of Home Affairs, Public Safety Canada and the Australian Human Rights Commission. He convenes practitioner and community groups focused on tackling hate and extremism in Australia and South-East Asia. He serves on Deakin University's Human Research Ethics Committee and leads the Tackling Hate project at the Centre for Resilient and Inclusive Societies. He has a recent focus on the ethical use of generative AI and a strong track record in methodological innovation.



13:30 – 15:00

## A recommended approach: A victim-survivor perspective on the institutional use of child sexual abuse material

**Kelly Humphries, Monash University**

Victims and survivors of child sexual abuse and exploitation need to be heard and their voices echoed in policy, practice and process. Historically there are significant harms from the systemic failings of institutions in Australia, where appropriate, considered, trauma-informed responses and actions have failed to address the needs of victims and survivors of this crime type in a meaningful way. While there have been incredible steps made to repair harm and reduce retraumatisation within these systems, there are still gaps—in particular, understanding ways victims and survivors perceive institutions and their use of child sexual abuse material (CSAM).

In our research project, conducted by the Artificial Intelligence for Law Enforcement and Community Safety (AiLECS) Lab, in partnership with Bravehearts and funded by the National Centre for Action on Child Sexual Abuse, we asked victims and survivors for their perspectives, input and ideas about this through a number of approaches. A number of recommendations arise from this, highlighting ways in which systemic responses to and approaches of institutions regarding use (investigative, legal, crime prevention and research pathways) of CSAM can help or harm. By extension, these recommendations speak more broadly to whole-of-system responses which would significantly impact victim and survivor organisational engagement, recovery, healing, and future pathways for victim-survivor autonomy and agency.

### ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Kelly is a victim survivor of child sexual abuse. She is an author, speaker, advocate, coach and a Research Fellow in the AiLECS Lab at Monash University. Kel has over 16 years of first response policing, and this, coupled with her lived experience, has enabled a very rare insight into the needs of victims and survivors throughout the investigative process. This insight has led her to speak at various conferences and work alongside Bravehearts, the Daniel Morcombe Foundation and the Australian Federal Police-led Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation.

## The needs and experiences of adult victim-survivors of child sexual abuse material

**Professor Michael Salter,  
University of New South Wales**

The production and distribution of child sexual abuse material (CSAM) constitutes a distinct and cumulative harm to victims of child sexual abuse and exploitation. However, Australia, like most countries, has failed to marshal a specific response to this cohort of victims. This presentation draws on multiple research studies to outline the needs and experiences of adult victim-survivors of CSAM, including:

- a capacity mapping analysis of the readiness of Australian sexual assault and child abuse services to work with CSAM victims;
- an analysis of the content and distribution of highly-traded CSAM series depicting Australian children; and
- qualitative data from a survey of 74 adult survivors of child sexual abuse material.

Considering the growing population of CSAM survivors, the presentation advocates for the development of a comprehensive health–justice partnership approach to support this group and protect them from revictimisation.

### ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Professor Michael Salter is the inaugural director of the Childlight East Asia and Pacific Hub, a partnership between the University of New South Wales, the University of Edinburgh and the Human Dignity Foundation. Childlight conducts research to combat child sexual exploitation and abuse with a focus on improving the data foundations of global child protection. Professor Salter is the Chairperson of the Grace Tame Foundation and the past president of the International Society for the Study of Trauma and Dissociation. He sits on the editorial boards of *Child Abuse Review* and the *Journal of Trauma and Dissociation*.

## Harmful sexual behaviours and technology: Towards a prevention and early intervention framework

**Carol Ronken, Bravehearts**

The integration of technology, online environments and digital communication into the daily routines of children has reached a point where it is nearly impossible to distinguish online interactions from other elements of their social lives. Although not inherently inappropriate, children's engagement in sexual behaviour via technology presents a complex issue. While children may consensually produce images of themselves within the context of a sexual relationship, some may share such images due to solicitation, coercive acts, or sexual extortion. Reviewing Bravehearts' data on Turning Corners clients, engagement in sexual behaviour via technology is a prevailing behavioural issue behind referral to the program. This presentation provides an overview of the data relating to the online sexual behaviours of clients between the ages of 10 and 18 who have participated in the counselling program for young people who have engaged in or are at risk of engaging in harmful sexual behaviour. Implications for prevention and intervention will be discussed.

### ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Appointed in 2003, Carol Ronken is responsible for leading the program of research at Bravehearts. Carol is passionate about ensuring Bravehearts is actively involved in research, policy and legislative development that aims to prevent and respond to the incidence of child sexual abuse in the community. She is a member of several working groups, including Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation Research Working Group, the International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children's Safer AI for Children Coalition, the Stopping Gender Violence Advisory Board, and the Australian Child Rights Taskforce. Carol is also a Visiting Fellow in the School of Justice, Queensland University of Technology.

15:30 – 17:00

**Vulnerabilities and victim responses to ransomware attacks**

**Isabella Voce,**  
**Australian Institute of Criminology**

Ransomware research has grown in the past decade, yet little attention has been paid to the human factor in victimisation and the real experiences of the businesses and individuals involved. This presentation uses quantitative and qualitative data collected from Australian ransomware victims to understand how ransomware attacks against individuals and small to medium business owners occur, including how they respond during and after an attack, and the consequences of these attacks. This research can inform efforts to reduce the vulnerability of individuals and businesses to ransomware, and support victims during and immediately after ransomware attacks.

**ABOUT THE SPEAKER**

Isabella is a Principal Research Analyst at the Australian Institute of Criminology with expertise in serious and organised crime. Her research interests include cybercrime, outlaw motorcycle gangs and illicit drug markets. She has also published in the areas of domestic violence and juvenile justice.

**Understanding the internal operations of ransomware criminal groups: A case study of Conti**

**Professor Chad Whelan,**  
**Deakin University**

Ransomware is widely regarded as one of the most significant cyber threats facing the Asia-Pacific and the West. Highly sophisticated ransomware groups are of particular concern, yet there is very little known about the internal structure and dynamics of these criminal groups. This study aims to establish the internal organisational structure of the Conti ransomware group. It analysed leaked chat logs (n=168,740) to define and assign roles to key individual users followed by an analysis of communication patterns to analyse how Conti organised its activities. Insights for cybercrime scholarship as well as policy and practice are discussed.

**ABOUT THE SPEAKER**

Chad Whelan is Professor of Criminology and Deputy Director, Deakin Cyber Research and Innovation Centre, Deakin University. He conducts research on organised crime, cybercrime and cybersecurity, and multi-agency responses to such problems across organisational boundaries and professional disciplines. Much of his research adopts a network perspective. His research has attracted over \$5 million from various funding sources, nationally and internationally, and has appeared in more than 50 publications in leading outlets addressing these and related topics. Recent publications have appeared in *Current Issues in Criminal Justice*, *Deviant Behavior*, *Global Crime*, *Journal of Criminology*, and *Social Networks*.

**Leveraging situational crime prevention to combat cybercrime and address critical cyber resilience gaps**

**Professor Ryan Ko,**  
**University of Queensland**

Cybercrime continues to escalate in both scale and sophistication, presenting profound challenges to law enforcement, policymakers and organisations worldwide. Traditional crime science frameworks, particularly situational crime prevention (SCP), which emphasises reducing opportunities for crime through environmental manipulation, offer a valuable paradigm for addressing this evolving threat. This paper applies SCP theory to the cybercrime context, positing that targeted interventions in digital environments—such as increasing perceived risks, enhancing barriers to entry, and reducing rewards for offenders—can significantly diminish the incidence of cybercriminal activity.

This talk explores key SCP strategies such as target hardening, access control and monitoring in the context of cyberspace, with a particular focus on their application to organisational cyber resilience. Drawing on criminological theory and case studies, the talk examines the ways in which these preventive measures can be integrated into cybersecurity frameworks to enhance both deterrence and the capacity for rapid recovery from cyberattacks. It also highlights the critical gaps in current cyber resilience strategies, arguing that the incorporation of SCP principles is essential for addressing vulnerabilities that cybercriminals routinely exploit. By bridging criminology and cybersecurity, this research contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how situational factors can be leveraged to intervene and prevent cybercrime.

**ABOUT THE SPEAKER**

Professor Ryan Ko is Chair Professor and founding Director of the interdisciplinary UQ Cyber Research Centre at the University of Queensland. He has contributed to international ISO cyber standards, co-authored Australia's SMB1001 standard, New Zealand's level-6 cyber curriculum, and co-chaired Singapore's Cyber Essentials standard. Previously, he founded the New Zealand Institute of Security and Crime Science and New Zealand's first cyber security lab. His research spans data provenance, privacy, cybercrime prevention and organisational resilience, with over 160 publications. Professor Ko has advised governments and organisations worldwide, including Interpol and ORCID. He holds a Bachelor of Engineering and a PhD from Nanyang Technological University Singapore, and is a Fellow of the Australian Computer Society, Queensland Academy of Arts and Sciences, and Cloud Security Alliance.

15:30 – 17:00

## Understanding disengagement from online incel communities

**Laura Doherty,**  
**Australian Institute of Criminology**

'Incel' is a term associated with an online subculture of people, primarily heterosexual men, who are involuntarily celibate (that is, are unable to secure a romantic or sexual partner despite a desire to do so). While those who identify as incels hold a variety of views, many online communities for incels promote misogynistic and anti-feminist attitudes, and encourage and celebrate violence against those viewed as responsible for their circumstances, primarily women. It therefore follows that supporting men to disengage from incel communities may contribute to violence prevention efforts. This presentation discusses the findings from a qualitative survey of self-identified former incels to determine motivations for disengagement from online incel communities (including the establishment of new connections outside of the community and growing dissatisfaction with the community), and steps taken to facilitate this process.

### ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Laura Doherty is a Senior Research Analyst in the Australian Institute of Criminology's Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Research Program. She holds a Master of Criminology and Criminal Justice and a Bachelor of Criminology and Criminal Justice (Hons). Laura contributes to research on sexual violence and human trafficking and modern slavery. She has previously undertaken research on homicide, deaths in custody, and drug use.

## Pathways toward and away from online misogyny: What do men in the manosphere tell us?

**Dr Vivian Gerrand, Deakin University**

In a digital ecology that is increasingly conducive to social harms, misogynist ideology operates across a spectrum of primarily online actors known colloquially as 'the Manosphere'. These individuals and movements very often advocate or threaten violence against feminists and women in online spaces. This has significant consequences for women's safety and capacity to participate in democratic exchange in the online public sphere. By framing contemporary gender politics as a 'war against men', the manosphere subverts the genealogy of violence, often inciting followers to sexual and terrorist violence against women and, in some cases, men. The online psychological and emotional abuse of women and the coercive behaviours that take place without the use of physical force are terrifying, controlling and injurious. Through in-depth interviews with male manosphere participants, our study considers the pathways that shape men's participation in anti-women online spaces, including insights into how masculinity is weaponised within such spaces to drive online harms. We consider the role played by socio-economic factors, rhetorical strategies, emotional appeal, technological affordances and algorithmic design. Finally, drawing on the data collected, we present a preliminary identification of key intervention strategies to support disengagement from the manosphere.

### ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Dr Vivian Gerrand is a Research Fellow and an associate investigator on the Australian Research Council funded Anti-Women Online Movements Project at the Alfred Deakin Institute, Deakin University. She is an Executive member of the Addressing Violent Extremism and Radicalisation to Terrorism (AVERT) Research Network. Vivian has been awarded prestigious Australian European University Institute Fellowships Association, Endeavour and Max Weber Fellowships at the European University Institute and was a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Centre for Resilient and Inclusive Societies (2021–24). Vivian was a Chief Investigator on the European Commission funded BRaVE (Building Resilience against Violent Extremism and Polarization) project. Vivian holds a PhD from the University of Melbourne and is the author of *Possible spaces of Somali belonging*.

## Combating the influence of online misogynistic communities and influences in schools

**Dr Stephanie Wescott and Professor Steven Roberts, Monash University**

A growing body of research has begun to document the ubiquity of the manosphere and its impact on boys' and young men's views and attitudes towards women and girls. Australian schools have seen a particularly acute rise in incidents of gender-based violence, with women teachers experiencing the presence of extremist manosphere ideologies in their classrooms. Although Australian federal and state governments have recently introduced some measures to thwart manosphere-inspired misogyny, policy, curriculum and program interventions labour under ideological, structural and institutional challenges. These challenges are historical, continuing to influence and inform how education in Australia is imagined, and they are also tied to institutional and structural norms of the schooling system. While the available evaluations of programs and initiatives highlight these limitations, progress on their recommendations has not yet occurred. This presentation surveys the landscape of available programs and initiatives that seek to intervene in the process of misogynist radicalisation, explain barriers encountered by contemporary policy and curriculum responses, and outline the radical transformation that needs to take place for interventions to succeed.

### ABOUT THE SPEAKERS

Dr Stephanie Wescott is a feminist researcher and lecturer in humanities and social sciences in Monash University's School of Education, Culture and Society. Using a feminist and social justice lens, her research examines how education practice and policy intersects with and is influenced by current socio-political conditions, and she is particularly interested in post-truth and its relationship to knowledge and expertise in education. At present, she is researching the influence of the manosphere on boys' behaviour in schools across Australia.

Steve Roberts is Professor of Education and Social Justice and Head of the School of Education, Culture and Society at Monash University. Steve is a sociologist and an internationally recognised expert in two areas: changes and continuities in boys' and men's masculinity practices, and inequalities in young people's transitions to adulthood. The former includes boys' and men's engagement with risky drinking, sexting, emotionality, computer gaming, violence, domestic labour, compulsory and post-compulsory education, and employment. Steve has published widely in a variety of esteemed international journals, including *The Sociological Review*, *Sociology*, *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, *Continuing Studies in Education*, *Boyhood Studies*, *British Educational Research Journal*, *Journal of Youth Studies*, and *New Media and Society*.



09:00 – 09:30

**Opening remarks**

**Nathan Smyth, Deputy Secretary, Commonwealth Counter-Terrorism Coordinator and National Counter Foreign Interference Coordinator, Department of Home Affairs**

Mr Nathan Smyth was appointed Deputy Secretary National Security and Resilience within the Department of Home Affairs in July 2023. In this role, Mr Smyth is responsible for domestic and international engagement on national security, while broadening our approach to countering terrorism and foreign interference, and strengthening our democratic and national resilience. Concurrently, Mr Smyth was appointed as the Commonwealth's Counter-Terrorism Coordinator and National Counter Foreign Interference Coordinator. Mr Smyth is focused on developing a more secure and resilient nation.

Before taking up his current position, Mr Smyth served as Deputy Secretary Employment and National Workforce within the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.

In that role, Mr Smyth was responsible for the transformative change to the delivery of employment services including the delivery and implementation of the new employment services model and the Seasonal Worker Programme, which provides access to Australian work opportunities to nine Pacific Island countries and Timor-Leste.

Mr Smyth has held a range of senior positions across government including at the Department of Health, where he was responsible for the implementation and oversight of tobacco plain packaging, as well as the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development, the Department of Finance, and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Mr Smyth holds a Bachelor Degree (Political Science) from the University of New South Wales and a Master of Business Administration from the University of Sydney and the University of New South Wales.

09:30 – 10:30

**Keynote presentation**

**Technology-facilitated sexual crimes against children: Offenders, victims and environment**

**Professor Ethel Quayle, University of Edinburgh**

While there is no evidence that online abuse and exploitation are more serious or pervasive offences than crimes occurring offline, recent research has suggested that a considerable proportion of children and young people have experienced technology-facilitated sexual abuse. The affordances offered by online social media may present a significant risk factor for some children to experience harm from adults and peers motivated by a sexual interest in children. Three factors play an important role in this complex and dynamic scenario: potential perpetrators and victims, the social context in which criminal activities take place and the rapidly changing medium. Online sexual crimes against children are committed by people who are motivated to sexually offend, and their online activities are purposive and goal directed. However, even if motivation and facilitation factors are present, sexual offences cannot take place without opportunities to act. There is a person–environment interaction, in that individuals who are strongly motivated to commit sexual offences are more likely to seek out or create opportunities to offend. This presentation examines the interaction between offender motivation, victim vulnerabilities and the affordances offered by technology.

**ABOUT THE SPEAKER**

Professor Ethel Quayle is a psychologist and academic specialising in forensic clinical psychology, with a focus on online offending, child protection, and situational crime prevention. Based at the University of Edinburgh, her research examines the psychological and behavioural dynamics of internet-facilitated sexual offending, alongside strategies to mitigate risks and reduce harm. Her work frequently applies the principles of situational crime prevention, exploring how changes to environments—both digital and physical—can deter offending and protect potential victims. Professor Quayle has contributed to the development of practical interventions, such as tools to disrupt access to harmful content, reduce opportunities for exploitation and enhance online safety frameworks. In addition to her academic work, she collaborates with law enforcement and child protection agencies to apply research insights to real-world challenges. Her contributions span offender behaviour, victim support, and prevention strategies, emphasising the integration of research into actionable policies and practices.

11:00 – 12:30

## Experimental trial of targeted messages to prevent online abuse and profit-motivated cybercrime

**Emma Shakespeare,**  
**Australian Federal Police**

**Dr Laura McVey, eSafety**

**Isabella Voce,**  
**Australian Institute of Criminology**

The Australian Institute of Criminology, eSafety Commissioner and Australian Federal Police's Joint Policing Cybercrime Coordination Centre recently collaborated to conduct an experimental study of the impact of targeted cybercrime and online harm prevention messages. More than 3,000 respondents to the Australian Cybercrime Survey were randomly assigned to one of two intervention groups or a control group. The intervention groups received monthly prevention messages from either eSafety or the AFP. This joint agency presentation will discuss the implementation and outcomes of the trial, including impacts on the prevalence of cybercrimes and online harm, cybercrime resilience and online safety behaviours. This trial provides high quality evidence on how the public responds to education and awareness campaigns and can inform future cybercrime prevention efforts.

### ABOUT THE SPEAKERS

Emma Shakespeare works at the Australian Federal Police in the Cybercrime Prevention team as part of the Joint Policing Cybercrime Coordination Centre. She is passionate about fostering collaboration between academia and law enforcement, particularly in the cybercrime prevention space. Emma is also a PhD candidate at Griffith University. Her thesis examines interactions between police officers and conspiracy theorists, including sovereign citizens, through a procedural justice framework.

Dr Laura McVey is an Assistant Manager in eSafety's Gender and Tech team. As a part of the Education, Prevention and Inclusion Branch, the Gender and Tech team works to prevent and address technology-facilitated abuse, including within the context of family, domestic and sexual violence, as well as to promote safe, inclusive and gender equal online spaces. Laura also works closely with eSafety's Research Team

across a range of qualitative and quantitative projects. Prior to joining eSafety, Laura worked across family, domestic and sexual violence services, as well as academia, with her PhD focused on violence against women in the user-generated pornography market.

Isabella Voce is a Principal Research Analyst at the Australian Institute of Criminology with expertise in serious and organised crime. Her research interests include cybercrime, outlaw motorcycle gangs and illicit drug markets. She has also published in the areas of domestic violence and juvenile justice.

## Online messages to prevent sexual harms to children: Examining adolescents' perceptions of messages to potential offenders, victims and bystanders

**Professor Jeremy Prichard and**  
**Associate Professor James D Sauer,**  
**University of Tasmania**

Evidence is mounting that online messages are a useful additional tool to address child sexual abuse material (CSAM). Randomised controlled experiments have demonstrated that online messages can dissuade users from viewing deviant pornography, reduce image-based abuse and encourage users to seek support for problematic pornography use. Crucially, a recent study of 2.2 million UK Pornhub users found that warning messages reduced CSAM searches over 18 months.

However, despite the high prevalence of CSAM-related offending among adolescents, to date no research has considered message effectiveness for this cohort. Nor has research examined how messages might be designed to reach children who are at risk of victimisation, or children who witness CSAM offending (eg in a school context).

We present the results of a mixed-methods study involving 298 Australian adolescents (16–18 years). Participants read vignettes describing CSAM and cyberbullying, CSAM distribution among adolescent peers, and sextortion. Following each vignette, participants ranked the potential effectiveness of online messages targeted at the hypothetical

individuals depicted in the vignette (offenders, potential offenders, victims and bystanders). Participants generally agreed that the messages would attract attention and promote reflection or help-seeking among offenders, victims and bystanders. However, they felt victims were more likely than offenders to actively engage with support services that were advertised in the messages. Participants were divided on preference for text-only versus text-and-image messages. We discuss the implications of the findings for policy, practice and future research.

### ABOUT THE SPEAKERS

Jeremy is a Professor of Criminal Law and the Director of the Tasmania Law Reform Institute, which is located at the University of Tasmania's Law School. His discipline backgrounds are law and psychology. His research career began at the Australian Institute of Criminology and Queensland's Crime and Misconduct Commission. He then worked in policy formation (child protection and policing) within the Queensland Department of the Premier and Cabinet and the Queensland Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. From 2011 Jeremy led a multidisciplinary team which investigated the ability of online warning messages to prevent CSAM use and distribution, and encourage users towards therapeutic interventions. The team's randomised controlled experiments have been cited by the World Health Organization and independently reviewed as 'effective' by the US Department of Justice's National Institute of Justice and included in its clearinghouse. Jeremy's publications have been cited 2,354 times (h-index 25). He has secured 20 research grants and nine consultancies, worth \$3.8 million.

Associate Professor Jim Sauer (University of Tasmania) is a psychological scientist interested in the effects of digital media, especially video gameplay, on cognition and behaviour. His work on loot boxes, with colleague Dr Aaron Drummond, has supported expert testimony to Australian, UK, NZ, and US governmental inquiries, contributed to loot boxes being added to the US Entertainment Software Ratings Board (ESRB) and European (PEGI) classification descriptors, and provided a foundation for public awareness and consumer protection endeavours. More recent work, with Jeremy Prichard and Joel Scanlan, investigates online messaging to help young people avoid risky behaviours and access supports.

## Using behavioural insights to reduce financial scams and protect consumers

**Dr Josh Rhee,**  
**Behavioural Insights Team**

Vulnerability to scams and fraud is inherently a behavioural issue. Bad actors exploit a victim's sense of urgency, stress and social pressure in order to drive risky decisions. Emerging artificial intelligence (AI) technology has enabled these bad actors to increase the volume, sophistication and reach of scams. However, these technologies can also be used to protect consumers. In this presentation, we explore the interaction of AI and the human element of cybercrime, show how AI-enhanced scams can impact consumers, and provide some practical strategies for protecting consumers.

### ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Josh is a Research Advisor in the Sydney office of the Behavioural Insights Team (BIT). His work focuses on online harms, AI, and citizen engagement in policymaking. As a core member of the BIT research team, Josh has particular expertise in survey design and analysis and conducting stakeholder interviews. Josh holds a PhD in moral psychology and an LLB. His PhD looked at when, how and why everyday non-moral ideas come to be seen by people as morally relevant, and why such 'moralisation' might lead to certain patterns of cognition and behaviour.

Prior to joining BIT, Josh spent time as an Associate Research Fellow at Deakin University, where he was involved in research looking at the effectiveness of messaging interventions to increase influenza vaccination and climate change mitigation behaviours. Josh has also previously worked as a community mediator, assisting people to resolve disputes arising in workplace, neighbourhood and family contexts.



11:00 – 12:30

**Sexual extortion of children:  
Findings from a national survey****Dr Sarah Napier,  
Australian Institute of Criminology**

Sexual extortion is a form of blackmail in which a perpetrator threatens to release intimate material of a victim unless they comply with certain demands. We examine the prevalence and nature of sexual extortion among a sample of adolescents residing in Australia. We investigate the patterns in victimisation experiences, including frequency, age of first victimisation incident, and characteristics of the offence. We also examine which platforms respondents met their sexual extortion perpetrators on, whether they paid money or sent intimate material, and whether their images had been digitally manipulated. This study provides national community-level evidence on the scope and nature of sexual extortion experienced by adolescents in Australia.

**ABOUT THE SPEAKER**

Dr Sarah Napier is Research Manager of the Online Sexual Exploitation of Children Research Program at the Australian Institute of Criminology, where she conducts research into child sexual abuse, including child sexual abuse material offending, live streaming of child sexual abuse and effectiveness of prevention programs. Sarah holds a PhD from the University of Sydney, which focused on understanding and preventing child sexual abuse material offending. Sarah is currently Chair of the Australian Federal Police's Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation Research Working Group.

**The impacts of sexual extortion****Dr Heather Wolbers,  
Australian Institute of Criminology**

Sexual extortion of children, in which a perpetrator threatens to distribute sexual images or videos of a victim unless they comply demands for money or additional images, is a growing global issue. To ensure that the support needs of minors are met following experiences of sexual extortion, and to understand the seriousness of this crime from a policy perspective, this study systematically reviewed research into the impacts of sexual extortion victimisation on minors. Twelve studies were included, which varied methodologically. Victims of sexual extortion who are under the age of 18 experience diverse short- and long-term impacts, including psychological harm, socio-environmental impacts, financial costs, the risk of ongoing victimisation, and offending and criminal justice involvement. This research reveals the serious effects of sexual extortion, highlighting the support needs of victims and the urgency of targeted approaches to reduce sexual extortion.

**ABOUT THE SPEAKER**

Dr Heather Wolbers is a Senior Research Analyst in the Australian Institute of Criminology's Online Sexual Exploitation of Children Research Program. Heather has undertaken research in the fields of family and sexual violence, the online sexual exploitation of children, and serious and organised crime. Recent projects include an examination of dating app facilitated sexual violence, child sexual offenders on the darknet, and the sexual extortion of young people. Heather holds a Bachelor of Criminology and Criminal Justice (with Honours), a Bachelor of Forensic Science, and a PhD in Criminology from Griffith University.

**Sextortion: The case of  
Amanda Todd****Dr Peter German, International Centre  
for Criminal Law Reform**

The tragedy of Amanda Todd involved the death of a teen in Canada resulting from online exploitation by an individual in the Netherlands. This presentation reviews the case, the exploitation, the use of deepfake technology, and international police and prosecutorial cooperation.

**ABOUT THE SPEAKER**

Dr Peter German KC is President and Executive Director of the International Centre for Criminal Law Reform, a Program Network Institute of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. A lawyer and member of the Ontario and British Columbia Bars, he was previously Deputy Commissioner of both the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and Correctional Service Canada. He served as the initial team commander in the 2008 search for kidnapped Canadian diplomats in West Africa. Dr German holds various degrees including a Doctorate in Law from the University of London. He is the author of *Proceeds of crime and money laundering*, published by Thomson Reuters, as well as *Dirty money* and *Dirty money part 2*—reports commissioned by the Attorney General of British Columbia. He is currently teaching law at Bond University on the Gold Coast.



13:15 – 15:00

Using biometrics to investigate child sexual abuse

Associate Professor Russell Brewer, University of Adelaide

Warren Bulmer, International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (Australia)

Gathering high-quality intelligence information about the victims and offenders appearing in child sexual abuse investigations can be a painstaking and labour intensive process. Recent advances in machine learning have led to the development of new AI software tools that have improved both the scale and speed with which relevant intelligence can be identified and analysed. In this presentation, we demonstrate how these advances can be used to rapidly isolate discrete persons across a large trove of data, and reveal the contexts in which they are linked to others. This is accomplished using a custom-built software system developed by the research team to analyse 519,776 media files sourced from multiple devices/online platforms seized by Australian law enforcement during the course of a child sexual abuse investigation. The software uses a systematic method to locate and match multiple biometric modalities (face and voice), alongside other file attributes (nudity detection, geolocation and camera sensor information). These data are combined to reveal complex networks of victims and offenders, and modelled to predict who (and which files) should be priority targets of investigations. The implications of this work are discussed, offering insight into the ways this offending type is organised socially, as well as its practical implications for law enforcement.

ABOUT THE SPEAKERS

Russell Brewer is an Associate Professor of Criminology at the University of Adelaide, and the Deputy Dean (Research) for the Faculty of Arts, Business, Law and Economics. Russell leads the Adelaide Cybercrime Laboratory, which houses a diverse range of projects designed to improve our understanding of the causes, prevention and policing of cybercrime. Russell has published his research findings through leading publication outlets, held nationally competitive grants, and has been called upon by governments both domestically and abroad to advise on policy.

Warren Bulmer is Head of Data Products at the International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (Australia) and a PhD candidate at the University of Adelaide. Warren spent a combined 33 years in law enforcement in both Canada and Australia. He has an extensive background in digital evidence analysis, open-source investigations and internet-facilitated crimes against children. Warren is a published author of four textbooks in these fields as well as a lecturer in various post-secondary, undergraduate and postgraduate courses and programs.

Experimental study of the impact of social norms and risks of detection on improper AI use

Dr Alexandra Voce, Australian Institute of Criminology

There is growing concern about the potential for artificial intelligence (AI) to be exploited for harmful or criminal activities. This presentation outlines the results of a randomised experiment designed to measure the impact of changes in social norms and the risk of detection on the harmful use of AI in different contexts. More than 6,000 respondents to the Australian Cybercrime Survey were asked about their willingness to use AI in a range of hypothetical scenarios. They were randomly assigned to different groups with varying circumstances surrounding the use of AI. Overall, around one in 10 said they would view deepfake pornography of a celebrity, use an AI artwork generator to cheat in a competition, or use an AI bot to write false reviews online. A higher proportion (15%) said they would use ChatGPT to write an entire report for school or work. The likelihood of using ChatGPT was influenced by the perceived risk of detection and by the permissibility of use among the respondent's social networks. Changes in social norms or the risk of detection had no impact on people's willingness to use AI for other purposes. Implications of these results for preventing the use of AI for illegal or dishonest purposes will be discussed.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Dr Alexandra Voce is a Senior Research Analyst in the Australian Institute of Criminology's Serious and Organised Crime, Cybercrime and Radicalisation Research Program. Alexandra has worked across several teams since joining the Australian Institute of Criminology in 2019, and her research interests include organised crime, money laundering, corruption, illicit markets, homicide, violent crime, conspiratorial thinking, and prevention of child exploitation.

Law enforcement responses to cybercrime and the networks that support them

Chief Inspector Michael Newman, Queensland Police Service

This presentation, from a Churchill Fellowship, overviews international cybercrime prevention, detection, investigation and capability building practices, drawing on visits to 10 countries and consultations with over 40 agencies, including police, academics, government agencies and private sector. It highlights key strategies to improve prevention, detection and investigations. The presentation explores methods and technologies used to identify and monitor cyber threats, including protective monitoring services and collaboration with technology companies. Finally, the presentation focuses on recommendations to enhance law enforcement capabilities and highlights challenges and opportunities in combating cybercrime and the need for a collaborative approach.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Chief Inspector Mike Newman has over 30 years of policing experience. He has managed operational units (including cybercrime and intelligence), training areas, and leadership. He has received several Assistant Commissioner Certificates for his efforts across various fields. His doctoral research at the University of Queensland explores gendered advancement in policing. Mike is a graduate of the Company Directors Course run by the Australian Institute of Company Directors and has a Master of Information Systems and a Bachelor of Information Technology. Mike is committed to evidence-based policing and is recognised for this through his membership of the Evidence-Based Policing Hall of Fame. He has received the American Society of Criminology's Outstanding Law Enforcement Practitioner Award, and is an Honorary Fellow of the Academy of Experimental Criminology. Currently the Queensland Police Service's Intelligence Operations Manager, Crime Intelligence Services, he has researched international best practice in cybercrime policing.

13:15 – 15:00

### Examining the experiences of women trafficked into South-East Asia's cyber-scam centres

**Dr Siobhan Lawler,**  
*Australian Institute of Criminology*

In recent years, trafficking in persons in South-East Asia has shifted online. Forced criminality in cyber-scam centres—particularly those operating along the Thailand–Myanmar border, Cambodia and Laos—is emerging as a growing security concern. Despite the high proportion of women involved as both victims and perpetrators, little is known about the gender dynamics in this context. This presentation summarises preliminary findings from a research project led by the Australian Institute of Criminology in partnership with the Regional Support Office of the Bali Process and UN Women, based on interviews and focus groups with stakeholders and victim-survivors. It explores trafficking in persons for forced criminality, the operation of scam centres, deceptive recruitment practices, the role of technology in facilitating trafficking, women's experiences within these compounds, and their pathways to freedom.

#### ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Dr Siobhan Lawler is a Principal Research Analyst at the Australian Institute of Criminology. She currently leads a research program on elder abuse and contributes to studies on domestic, family and sexual violence, violent extremism and human trafficking. Siobhan holds a PhD in Medicine from the University of Sydney and a Bachelor of Psychological Science and Criminology (Honours) from the University of New South Wales. Prior to joining the Australian Institute of Criminology, Siobhan held research positions at the Matilda Centre (University of Sydney) and the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre (UNSW). Her research areas of interest include violence prevention, sentencing and restorative justice.

### Streaming the unthinkable: A review of research on the live streaming of child sexual abuse

**Dr Larissa Christensen,**  
*University of the Sunshine Coast*

The live streaming of child sexual abuse (CSA) is a prolific and established form of abuse. Despite being identified as a significant global threat in the realm of child sexual exploitation, there is a notable lack of research on this type of offending, limiting our understanding and response capabilities. This presentation addresses this critical gap by synthesising existing research on the live streaming of CSA. It explores the geographical prevalence of CSA live streaming, the technological and legal challenges in detecting and prosecuting such behaviour, and the characteristics of viewers and facilitators. Additionally, it examines the impact of CSA live streaming on victims. By providing a comprehensive overview, this presentation offers essential knowledge for professionals. It highlights the current gaps in combating this severe form of abuse. The insights gained from this synthesis may assist in developing targeted prevention strategies, enhancing cross-border law enforcement collaboration, and improving support systems for victims. This synthesis serves as a helpful resource for informing research, policy and practice in combating the live streaming of CSA and protecting vulnerable children globally.

#### ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Dr Larissa Christensen is Co-Leader of the Sexual Violence Research and Prevention Unit and a Senior Lecturer in Criminology and Justice at the University of the Sunshine Coast. Holding a PhD in Psychology, she is an international leader in research on female-perpetrated sexual offending, with a focus on technology-facilitated sexual violence. She is also a highly regarded educator, and her team has been recognised nationally for their excellence and innovation in teaching, along with other awards, including the Vice-Chancellor's Teaching Excellence Award. She is a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy and an Associate Editor of the *Journal of Sexual Aggression*.

### Digital trap: Recruitment into labour exploitation via mobile dating apps and websites in Australia

**Samantha Lyneham,**  
*Australian Institute of Criminology*

International research shows that new technologies, particularly social media, have broadened the ability of human trafficking and modern slavery perpetrators to profile, recruit, control and exploit victims. In this vein, online dating platforms are emerging as common sites of recruitment for sexual and labour exploitation. This presentation explores this issue in an Australian context. It presents findings from a survey of 9,962 dating app/website users in Australia to explore the prevalence and nature of labour exploitation perpetrated by someone met over these apps/websites. It also examines which users are more vulnerable to labour exploitation. The presentation highlights the implications of these findings for efforts to improve the safety of online dating platform users.

#### ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Samantha is an internationally-recognised expert and researcher on human trafficking and modern slavery. She has published extensively on a range of modern slavery issues including forced marriage, sexual and labour exploitation, orphanage trafficking, and Australia's policy and legal response to these crimes. Recently, her work has focused on developing estimates of modern slavery victimisation in Australia, measuring the attrition of cases through the Australian criminal justice system and understanding the role of technology in facilitating modern slavery. Internationally, Samantha has collaborated

with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime on forced marriage and with statistical experts to accurately quantify the prevalence of victimisation using multiple systems estimation methods. Samantha is currently undertaking a PhD at the University of New South Wales to better understand issues of consent and coercion in cases of forced marriage. She also holds a Bachelor of Social Science (Criminology, Social Research & Policy) from the University of New South Wales and a Postgraduate Diploma in Arts (Criminology) from the University of Melbourne.

15:30 – 17:00

## Insights from eSafety's image-based abuse reporting and removal scheme

**Dr Savannah Minihan, eSafety**

Image-based abuse (IBA) is a form of technology-facilitated abuse which involves the non-consensual creation, sharing or threatened sharing of intimate images. In Australia, the eSafety Commissioner oversees the IBA reporting and removal scheme. eSafety is the first government agency to implement a dedicated scheme responsible for facilitating the removal of non-consensual intimate images posted online. This presentation examines the eSafety's IBA scheme during its first five years of operation, from 2018 to 2023. It explores the types of IBA behaviour being reported under the scheme, demographic characteristics of those reporting to the scheme and changes in the nature of reports over time. Analyses revealed that, under the operation of the IBA scheme, the number of reports eSafety has been handling has increased by more than 960 percent, from 849 reports in 2018–19 to 9,060 reports in 2022–23. This has been led by an unanticipated increase in reports of sexual extortion, from 432 in 2018–19 to 6,187 in 2022–23. Comparisons with global trends in IBA prevalence rates and implications of the findings for the prevention of IBA will be discussed.

### ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Dr Savannah Minihan is a Research Officer at the eSafety Commissioner. Savannah's research currently focuses on the online experiences of children, young people and adults, as well as the prevalence and impact of online harms such as image-based abuse, online hate, and child sexual exploitation. Savannah recently completed her PhD in Psychology at the University of New South Wales, where her research focused on adolescent mental health problems during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Image-based sexual abuse help-seeking: Designing and developing a chatbot for victims, perpetrators and bystanders

**Professor Nicola Henry, RMIT**

Digital tools such as safety apps, reporting portals and chatbots are increasingly being used by victim-survivors of gender-based violence to report unlawful activity and access specialised support and information. Despite their limitations, these interventions offer a range of potential benefits, such as enhancing decisional certainty, promoting safety behaviours and fostering positive psychological outcomes. In this presentation, we introduce an innovative 'design justice' approach to the development of digital tools for addressing gender-based violence. Drawing on our experience of building a feminist chatbot focused on image-based sexual abuse, we argue that the integration of feminist principles throughout the design, content and evaluation stages is crucial for mitigating the risk of harm, as well as promoting positive outcomes. Our theory-informed and practice-led approach can guide the development of other digital tools for addressing gender-based violence. Nonetheless, more scholarly research is needed to investigate the use, efficacy and impacts of such interventions, at the core of which should be interdisciplinary collaboration between subject matter experts, technical specialists and other key stakeholders.

### ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Nicola Henry is a Professor, Australian Research Council Future Fellow and Deputy Director of the Social Equity Research Centre at RMIT University. Nicola is a socio-legal scholar with over two decades of research experience in the sexual violence field. Her research investigates the nature, prevalence and impacts of sexual violence, including legal and prevention responses in Australian and international contexts. Her current research focuses on technology-facilitated sexual violence and image-based sexual abuse. Nicola is currently undertaking an ARC Future Fellowship on digital tools, policies and platforms and image-based sexual abuse.

## Characteristics of cases of image-based abuse in Australia from the Australian Sexual Offence Statistical collection

**Tom Sullivan and Merran McAlister, Australian Institute of Criminology**

Image-based sexual abuse (IBSA) is the threatened or actual capturing or sharing of an intimate image of a person without their consent. Past studies of IBSA victimisation have shown this abuse is widespread and can have lasting negative impacts on the individuals depicted. But relatively little research has investigated the nature of IBSA perpetration. This presentation describes the findings of an analysis of individuals proceeded against by police for IBSA offences. It draws on the Australian Institute of Criminology's Australian Sexual Offence Statistical collection, which brings together police-recorded data on sexual offences, alleged offenders and victims. We analysed data for 772 individuals from four jurisdictions who the police proceeded against for IBSA offences in 2022–23. Most alleged offenders were male and the majority were younger adults. Alleged offenders were most likely to have distribution offences, followed by offences involving threats to capture or distribute images, and offences related to the capture of images. Victims were predominantly female and most were aged under 35 years. The offender was most commonly the victim's current or former intimate partner. The presentation discusses implications for the prevention and detection of IBSA offending.

### ABOUT THE SPEAKERS

Tom Sullivan is a Principal Research Analyst in the Australian Institute of Criminology's Statistical Collections and Indigenous Justice Research Program. Tom has led research into sexual offending, illicit drugs and crime prevention. He has experience in qualitative methods, the design and management of surveys and the collection and analysis of administrative data. He holds a Bachelor of Behavioural Science and Master of Arts from Flinders University.

Merran McAlister is a Research Analyst in the Australian Institute of Criminology's Statistical Collections and Indigenous Justice Research Program. Merran currently contributes to research on deaths in custody in Australia, fraud against the Commonwealth and sexual offending. Merran obtained her Bachelor of Criminology and Science (Psychology), and Master of Criminology, Justice and Regulation at the Australian National University.



15:30 – 17:00

## Understanding the relationship between pornography use and sexual violence in a community sample of Australian men

**Dr Christopher Dowling,**  
*Australian Institute of Criminology*

The availability and use of pornography has increased dramatically over the past few decades. Concerns have been raised regarding the influence of pornography, and particularly violent pornography, on sexual violence. While there is a vast body of research examining the relationship of pornography use and sexual violence, questions remain regarding the strength of this relationship, including in a contemporary Australian sample, and its underlying mechanics. Drawing on the survey responses of almost 2,000 Australian heterosexual cisgender adult men, this presentation examines the relationship between intentional pornography viewing across the life course and self-reported sexual violence perpetration in the 12 months preceding survey completion. It also examines the extent to which this relationship is explained by pornography's effect on respondents' attitudes towards sex and women. Findings provide valuable information to inform measures to obstruct and counteract the negative impacts of violent pornography on sexual behaviour.

### ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Dr Christopher Dowling is Research Manager of the Australian Institute of Criminology's Violence against Women and Children and Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery Research Programs. His published research covers a number of crime problems including domestic, family and sexual violence, youth offending and organised crime. He has also undertaken consultancy work for law enforcement and government stakeholders across Australia, focusing on improving policing and policy responses to various forms of violence, organised crime, national security issues and cybercrime.

## Blurring the lines: The vague boundary between mainstream and deviant internet pornography tags for at-risk viewers

**Gabrielle Gane,** *Paris Psychology Centre*

Illegal material is increasingly appearing on popular mainstream pornography websites. Many commentators worry about the impact of such material on adolescents' psychosexual development and the potential for some legal pornography to act as a gateway to child sexual exploitation material for users of any age. In this study, we collected publicly available data from a popular legal pornography website to assess the risk of adolescent exposure to content that may hinder healthy psychosexual development. We analysed over 27 million customer searches involving 149 video tags from this site. Five international experts on the effects of pornography rated the tags, categorising them into five overlapping genres: mainstream, incestuous, underage, aggressive and non-consensual. They also assessed the potential risk each genre posed. Our analysis found a significant positive correlation between the harm ratings and the frequency of tags used as search terms. Additionally, 11 of the 12 tags with the highest mean risk scores involved potential underage and/or incestuous content. This study highlights a concerning relationship between the harm ratings of various pornographic genres and their popularity as search terms. While exploratory, these results emphasise the need for regulatory measures to address the presence of harmful material on mainstream websites.

### ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Gabrielle Gane is a child therapist working at Paris Psychology Centre, France, where she provides therapeutic support for families in the English-speaking community in Paris. She also assists in neuropsychological assessments for children. Gabrielle holds a Master's of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology from Utrecht University in the Netherlands, and holds Graduate Membership of the British Psychological Society. She recently published a research article titled 'Blurring the lines: The vague boundary between mainstream and deviant internet pornography tags for at-risk viewers' in the *Journal of Sexual Aggression*,

alongside researchers Paul Watters, Richard Wortley and Jeremy Prichard. She presented the findings of this study at the Safer Internet Forum in 2024. Coming from a background of psychology, Gabrielle is passionate about supporting young individuals struggling with emotional, behavioural and social-cultural difficulties and creating safer digital environments for children to thrive.

## Real world harms associated with exposure to pornography

**Dr Heather McKay and Rachel Moody,**  
*Australian Institute of Family Studies*

A literature review of recent academic research investigated potential real-world harms associated with exposure to pornography (in particular violent pornography). The review had a focus on 'harm' in terms of interpersonally violent attitudes, beliefs or behaviours, especially in the context of violence against women. This work produced a series of findings relating to potentially harmful and violent behaviours:

- links between porn use (particularly porn involving gendered sexual scripts and degradation of or violence against women) and sexual violence—including sexual aggression, sexual assault, sexual coercion, sexual force, or sexual harassment;
- risk factors that may strengthen the links between porn use and violence (and other problematic factors like rape myth acceptance and hostile masculinity);
- links between porn use and intimate partner violence perpetration; and
- porn use may be a risk factor for potentially harmful online behaviours, including technology-facilitated coercive control, particularly among adolescents.

### ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Dr Heather McKay is a Senior Research Fellow in the Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Team at the Australian Institute of Family Studies. Heather has over 20 years of experience as a researcher in the areas of family, domestic and sexual violence, women's health and wellbeing, and maternal and child health. She has expertise in survey and research design as well as conducting and managing mixed-methods studies and research incorporating both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

Rachel Moody is a Senior Research Officer in the Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Team at the Australian Institute of Family Studies. Rachel has relevant experience working as a family law clerk and solicitor, and a socio-legal researcher. She has associated expertise in family law, family and domestic violence and sexual violence. Rachel primarily specialises in collecting and analysing qualitative data and conducting close legal analysis and literature reviews.

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