Plunkett Centre

Annual Report 2002
Mission Statement

The Mission of the Plunkett Centre is to promote the values of compassion and fellowship, intellectual and professional excellence, and fairness and justice. Its primary focus is on the realisation of these values in the provision and the allocation of health care. The Centre expresses this commitment through research, teaching and community engagement, and by bringing a Catholic perspective to all its endeavours.

The Objectives of the Centre are:

- to deepen and advance knowledge and understanding of the ethical standards relevant to human health and well-being, and in particular to clinical practice, medical research, business and management practice, and the allocation of healthcare resources;
- to offer courses in philosophical ethics and in the ethics of health care provision, medical research and health care resource allocation; and
- to engage and where appropriate to collaborate with local, national and international bodies as they seek to respond to their intellectual and ethical needs.

The Centre realises these objectives by:

- conducting and promoting research;
- providing research training and supervision;
- developing and teaching courses;
- conducting ethical reviews of professional practice;
- offering an ethics consultation service; and
- participating in public discussion
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Management

From the University:

Professor John Coll, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and International), Chairman
Professor Elizabeth Cameron-Traub, Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences
Dr. John Ozolins, Head, School of Philosophy

From the Hospital:

Mr Steven Rubic, Executive Director, St. Vincent's Private Hospital
Mr Adrian Verryt, Director of Mission, St. Vincent's Public Hospital
Professor Terry Campbell, Professor of Medicine, St. Vincent's Public Hospital

From the Centre:

Associate Professor Bernadette Tobin, Director

In attendance:

Mrs Linda Purves, Administrative Officer (Minutes Secretary)

Ms. Mary Foley, Chief Executive Officer of St. Vincent's & Mater Health and
Professor Peter Sheehan, Vice-Chancellor, Australian Catholic University,
at a ceremony to mark the signing of a new Memorandum of Understanding in November, 2002.
From the Management Committee

The Plunkett Centre for Ethics in Health Care, a co-operative Centre jointly supported by Australian Catholic University and St Vincent's and Mater Health, Sydney, provides leadership in the field of bioethics. In keeping with its Mission, the Centre provides training and advice to the health care community on ethical issues as they impact on practice. The University and St Vincent's and Mater Health have recently signed a new five year agreement for the Plunkett Centre under the direction of Associate Professor Bernadette Tobin.

The members of the Centre have published articles and discussion papers in the areas of Ethics, Theology and Philosophy, especially those of relevance to medical and health care practitioners and managers. They also continue the important role of postgraduate teaching and research supervision. The Centre particularly focuses on issues of importance to the Catholic health care sector. In 2002 the Centre received funds from the University to enable Professor Warren Reich, Georgetown University, to visit and work at the Centre. He has an international reputation as the Editor of the *Encyclopaedia of Bioethics*.

Staff of the Centre have been active in consulting with individuals and making submissions to government on major bioethical issues surrounding organ and tissue donation, cloning and related technologies. The Centre has continued to publish *Bioethics Outlook*, its reflections and scholarly contributions on many issues in the field.

The Director and other members of the Centre are to be congratulated for their contributions to the national debate, and to the development of policy papers for Catholic health care organisations and the wider health ethics community. The Director continues to serve on a number of committees of the National Health and Medical Research Council and has recently served as Deputy Chair of the Australian Health Ethics Committee. The Centre continues to provide advice on the implementation of the recently published "*Code of Ethical Standards for Catholic Health and Aged Care Services in Australia*".

I commend this report to all interested in the continuing activities of the Plunkett Centre.

Professor John Coll
Chair
Management Committee
Staffing

Director
Bernadette Tobin MA MEd (Melb) PhD (Cantab)  
Associate Professor and Reader in Philosophy, School  
of Philosophy, Australian Catholic University  
Full-time

Academic Staff
Mary Byrne RN BHSN (ACU) BA (Hons) (Melb)  
Manager (part-time), St Vincent’s Nursing  
Research Unit  
Part-time .5

Gerald Gleeson STB (CIS) MA (Cantab) PhD (Leuven)  
Professor of Philosophy, Catholic Institute of Sydney  
Part-time .3

Stephen Buckle MA Hons (MaqU), PhD (ANU)  
Senior Lecturer in Philosophy, School of Philosophy,  
Australian Catholic University  
Part-time .5

Research Students
Helen McCabe RN BHA (UNSW) MA (ACU)  
Full-time

Kristine Morrison RN CM BHSc (UWS) PostDip  
Nursing (UTS) PostDip Christian Studies (Aust. College  
of Theology)  
Full-time

Mary Self MBBS Hons (Qld) MA (ACU) FRACS  
Full-time

Administrative Staff
Linda Purves JP  
Full-time
From the Director

Once again, we are pleased to sketch the range of our activities during the preceding year: research, teaching, ethics consultation and various forms of community service. Each member of the Centre tends to focus on a particular part of that range. And so:

Stephen Buckle continued his work on the historical origins of modern medical ethics and maintained his Postgraduate Seminar Program on clinical ethical theories each Monday morning at the Centre.

Gerald Gleeson concentrated on developing his account of the Catholic Christian understanding of the human person.

Mary Byrne conducted in-service programs for health care practitioners in Catholic health care institutions based on the Code of Ethical Standards.

Bernadette Tobin served on several committees associated with the National Health and Medical Research Council.

And Linda Purves made sure that we were open to the world and functioning!

Our international links were well maintained during the year. Emeritus Professor Warren Reich of Georgetown University addressed a seminar at Australian Catholic University on the subject of ‘vulnerability as a principle for bioethics’. Professor Nancy Dubler of Montefiore Hospital in New York addressed Grand Rounds at St Vincent’s Hospital on the subject ‘bioethics consultation in settings beset by conflict’. And the Director was invited to address a meeting of the New York Academy of Medicine and of the Division of Surgery at the Singapore General Hospital.

Our Intensive Bioethics Course is worthy of special note: we reshaped it so that it catered for teachers of the NSW Board of Studies Studies in Religion curriculum.

Finally, we shall miss Mary Byne who left us to concentrate on her responsibilities in the hospital’s Nursing Research Unit: she played an integral part in the life of the Centre.

Bernadette Tobin
18.2.03
## Financial Report for 2002

### Income

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### Expenditure

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Research Projects

Australian Research Council (Spirt Program) Grant
Industry Partner: Catholic Health Australia

Project: Managed Care in Australia: a philosophical inquiry into the ethical issues

Funding:
1999-2000  $21,756 (PhD scholarship) + $5000 to Plunkett Centre
2000-2001  $21,756 (PhD scholarship) + $5000 to Plunkett Centre
2001-2002  $21,756 (PhD scholarship) + $5000 to Plunkett Centre

Australian Research Council (Spirt Program) Grant
Industry Partner: Royal Australasian College of Surgeons

Project: Surgical practice in a changing health system: resolving the ethical questions

Funding:
2000-2001  $20,822 (scholarship) + $5000 to Plunkett Centre
2001-2002  $20,822 (scholarship) + $5000 to Plunkett Centre
2002-2003  $20,822 (scholarship) + $5000 to Plunkett Centre

Australian Research Council (Spirt Program) Grant
Industry Partner: St. Vincent's Private Hospital

Project: Professionalism vs. caring: toward a coherent ethic of nursing

Funding:
2001-2002  $23,590 (M.Phil scholarship) + $5000 to Plunkett Centre
2002-2003  $23,590 (M.Phil scholarship) + $5000 to Plunkett Centre

Australian Catholic University (Vice Chancellor's Strategic Planning Fund) Grant:
Project: The Crisis of Care in Modern Medicine

Funding for Stage 1: Care-as-Community v Care-as-Medical-Attention-to-the-person
2001-2002  $25,000

Funding for Stage 2: Historical Foundations of the union of scientific care and personal care: how to respond to the conflict between them in today's health care world
2002-2003  $35,000
Clinical Ethics Program

The need for rehabilitation of a man who lives on the streets (Social Work, St Vincent’s)

The case of a pregnant client whose physical and behavioural disorders threaten the well-being of her to-be-born baby (Social Work, St Vincent’s)

The case of a woman with “multiple system atrophy” (Social Work, St Vincent’s)

The use of non-psychotropic medication in community treatment order management plan (Mental Health Unit, St Vincent’s)

The case of a mentally-ill homeless person who “only needs accommodation” (Mental Health Unit, St Vincent’s)

The patient and his barrister-brother (Palliative Care, St Vincent’s)

A patient with an infectious disease that would put other people at risk (Intensive Care Unit, St Vincent’s)

The care of a heart transplant recipient (Intensive Care Unit, St Vincent’s)

Admission and long term care of a patient whose family do not accept that there is little hope of recovery (Intensive Care Unit, St Vincent’s)

Care of an older woman who is refusing to eat (Accident and Emergency, St Vincent’s)

Withholding diagnosis from a patient (Accident and Emergency, St Vincent’s)

A request by a father to donate his second kidney to his daughter when the first kidney donated had failed (Outpatients Unit, St Vincent’s)

The offer by a grandmother to donate her heart and lungs to her grandson who is in need of a transplant (Outpatients Unit, St Vincent’s)

The care of women in theatre (St Vincent’s)

Factors influencing a mother’s pain relief choices (St Vincent’s)

The care of a woman who regrets undergoing surgery (St Vincent’s)

The refusal of further diagnostic tests and treatment (St Vincent’s)

The case of a HIV positive pregnant woman who refuses anti retroviral therapy for herself and for her to-be-born baby (Children’s Hospital, Westmead)

Withdrawing/withholding neonatal intensive care (Children’s Hospital, Westmead)

Feeding children who have cerebral palsy (Children’s Hospital, Westmead)

Disagreement in the family over treatment for an elderly, confused woman with multiple organ disease (Geriatric Unit, Prince of Wales)

Deciding whether to commence PEG tube feeding (Geriatric Unit, Prince of Wales)

Determining whether to provide antibiotics and a feeding tube for an elderly patient who is reluctant to eat (Geriatric Unit, Prince of Wales)

Publications

Peer Reviewed Publications


Byrne M, "The Use of Advance Directives" in *St Vincent's Health Care Campus Nursing Monograph* (2002), Sydney, 13-16


Other Publications


"Ethical issues in health care near the end of life", *Bioethics Outlook*, (2002) 13 (3) 1-7


"The embryo debate is not over", *Health Matters*, (2002) 17 4-5
"The Embryo Stem Cell Debate" (with Tobin B), *Bioethics Outlook*, (2002) 13 (4) 1-4


"The Embryo Stem Cell Debate" *Bioethics Outlook*, (2002) 13 (4) 1-4 (with Gerald Gleeson)


The Monday Morning Seminar: Back Row: Kristine Morrison, Stephen Buckle, Mary Byrne, Mary Self. Front Row: Gary Nieukamp and Megan Best
Consultancies

Overall number of consultations undertaken by staff of the Centre: 38
  from within the Catholic Health Care Sector 24
  from outside the Catholic Health Care Sector 14

Range of people seeking a consultation
  Health care administrators 10
  Doctors 6
  Nurses 4
  Allied health workers 7
  Media 5
  Other 6

Selection of issues on which consultation was sought:
  • Theological understanding of illness and the causes of disease
  • Caring for pregnant women who have used IVF services
  • Care of newborn infant
  • Moral interpretation of the embryonic stem cell debate
  • Use of foetal cells in research
  • Cloning
  • Stem cells derived from cord blood
  • Donor conception
  • Family planning services
  • Results of prenatal tests
  • Catholic theology relating to the beginning of life and the status of the embryo
  • Prenatal Genetic Diagnosis
  • Care of a person with chronic pain and suicidal thoughts
  • Lack of self esteem underpinning poor access to treatment
  • Guardianship
  • Not for resuscitation orders
• Patients with advance care directives
• Patient treatment decision – difference of medical opinion
• Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease
• Assessing death by the brain function criterion
• Withdrawal of feeding
• Parliamentary euthanasia bill
• Withdrawing life-sustaining treatment
• Catholic theology relating to the sanctity of life
• Pharmaceutical services in a Catholic facility
• Collaborative services with a non-Catholic facility
• Urgent “elective” surgery on a public holiday
• Accessing healthcare information for clients with sexually transmitted diseases
• Needle exchange programmes
• Resource allocation
• Development of a Code of Ethics
• Historically-based differential pay rates in a large organisation
• Professional association taking on a political role
• Publication of information about novel, high risk activity
• Employment contract requiring participation in activities one judges to be wrong

Submissions

To Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee: re research on human embryos (Gerald Gleeson)

To Senate Committee: re Stem Cells (Bernadette Tobin)

To NSW Health Department: re Draft Guidelines for Decision Making at the End of Life (Bernadette Tobin)

To NSW Health Department: re Draft Guidelines for Decision Making at the End of Life (Gerald Gleeson)

To Australian Health Ethics Committee: re Draft Guidelines on Ethical Matters in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research (Mary Byrne)
Presentations

Mary Byrne

“Introduction to Clinical Ethics” National Leadership Development Program, Little Company of Mary Health Care, Canberra, Adelaide (2 sessions), Sydney, Hobart (2 sessions), Melbourne and Wagga.

“Ethical Issues at the end of life” Catholic Women’s League, Manly Parish.

“Ethical Issues in Aged Care” Nursing in Aged Care, Prince of Wales Hospital, Randwick.

“Ethical issues in Palliative Care” Ethical and Legal Aspects of Palliative Care, Sacred Heart Palliative Care Service, Sydney.

“Ethics and Ethical Standards in Health and Aged Care” Catholic Health Australia Education Programme, North Sydney.

“Ethics and Ethical Standards in Health and Aged Care” Catholic Health Australia Education Programme, Port Macquarie.

“Ethical Issues in Aged Care” Nursing in Aged Care, Prince of Wales Hospital, Randwick.

“Euthanasia” Clinical Pastoral Education Seminar, St Vincent’s Hospital, Sydney.


“Ethical decision making at the clinical level” Staff Development Sessions, (7 sessions) Calvary Health Care, Adelaide.

“Ethical issues in Aged Care: a case study” Staff Development Sessions (2 sessions) Little Company of Mary Aged Care, Dalton Gardens, Ryde.

“Ethical Issues relating to Organ Donation” Future Problem Solving Forum, Loreto College Normanhurst.

“Advance Care Planning” Geriatric Registrar Training Session, Sydney.
“Ethical issues and ageing”, *New South Wales Pastoral Care Conference*, Sydney.

“Ethical issues in palliative care”, *Ethical and Legal Aspects of Palliative Care, Clinical Pastoral Education Seminar*, (2 sessions) St Vincent’s Hospital, Sydney.

*Ethical Issues in health and aged care at the end of life*, Mercy Health Services Training Unit, Albury.

“Ethics and Ethical Standards in Health and Aged Care”, *Unit 4: Catholic Health Australia Education Programme*, Canberra.


“Ethical Issues in stem cell research”, *Educational Night*, St Nicholas of Myra Parish, Penrith.

**Gerald Gleeson**

“Ethics”, *Natural Family Planning Teacher Training Course*, Pymble.


“Medical Ethics Hypothetical”, University of New South Wales.


"Conscience and Conversion", *Vatican II: 40 Years On*, Melbourne.


Bernadette Tobin

“The goals of medicine”, Medicine, Law and Ethics Conference, Gosford and Wyong Emergency Departments, Terrigal.

“Ethical Issues in Xenografting”, World Police Medical Officers Conference, Sydney.

“Ethical challenges in end of life decision making”, Mental Health for Older People Conference, South East Health Education Seminars, Sydney.

“Stem cells: ethical issues”, School of Philosophy Public Lecture Series 2002, Australian Catholic University, Strathfield.

“Forgoing neo-natal intensive care”, Children’s Hospital, Westmead.

“Terminal Sedation and Refusal of Hydration and Nutrition: ethical issues” Palliative Care in General Practice, Sacred Heart Hospice, Sydney.


“Ethical Issues in the allocation of health care resources”, Singapore General Hospital.

“Ethics of decision making in cancer”, Department of Medicine, Concord Hospital, Sydney.

“Addressing the ethical issues in hospital planning”, Foundation Day, Royal North Shore Hospital, Sydney.

“Ethical Issues in end of life care”, Palliative Care Association of NSW State Conference, Terrigal.

“Public health ethics and genetics”, Genetics and Public Health Short Course, University of Sydney.

"Developments in public policy concerning end-of-life care and the use of reproductive technology", New York Academy of Medicine, New York.

"Reproductive Ethics", University of New South Wales.

Emeritus Professor Warren Reich
(Georgetown University)
Visiting Professor to the
Plunkett Centre
Media

Gerald Gleeson

ABC Radio 702: The Drive Programme: "Is abortion worse than child abuse?" September.


Bernadette Tobin

BBC World Service: "Ethical Issues in the use of stem cells derived from embryos", January.

Channel 7 News: "Ethical issues associated with allowing clinical trials in Xenotransplantion", July.

ABC Radio Perth: "Woman who miscarries at 19 weeks who wants death certificate for baby", July.


ABC Radio Adelaide: The Breakfast Programme "Xenotransplantation", July.

2NUR Newcastle Radio Morning Magazine: "Xenotransplantation", July.


Morning Tea with Professor Nancy Dubler, Professor of Medical Ethics, Montefiore Medical Centre, New York.
L to R: Nancy Dubler, Mary Byrne, Helen McCabe, Linda Purves and Mary Self.
Teaching

Stephen Buckle
Supervisor, PhD. Thesis, Surgical practice in a changing health system: resolving the ethical questions (with Bernadette Tobin)

Lecturer, Graduate Certificate in Applied Ethics (Health Care), Master of Arts in Applied Ethics (Health Care)

Lecturer in Philosophy, Bachelor of Arts, Australian Catholic University

Presenter, Philosophy Seminar for postgraduate students, Plunkett Centre for Ethics, St. Vincent's Hospital, Sydney

Mary Byrne
Presenter, Registrar Training Programme, Accident & Emergency Centre, St. Vincent's Hospital

Presenter, Clinical ethics for health care professionals (Intensive Care, Outpatients, Division of Nursing (St. Vincent's Private Hospital), St. Vincent's Hospital

Presenter, Clinical ethics for medical students (third and fourth years), St. Vincent's Hospital

Presenter, Intensive Bioethics Course, Sydney

Gerald Gleeson
Presenter, Intensive Bioethics Course, Sydney

Mary Self
Presenter, Clinical ethics for medical students (fourth year), St. Vincent's Hospital

Bernadette Tobin
Lecturer, Master of Arts in Applied Ethics (Health Care)

Presenter, Clinical ethics for medical students (fourth and sixth years) St. Vincent's Hospital

Presenter, Clinical ethics for health care practitioners (Social Work, Palliative Care, Mental Health) St. Vincent's Hospital

Presenter, Intensive Bioethics Course, Sydney

Supervisor, PhD. Thesis, Managed Care in Australia: A philosophical inquiry into the ethical issues (with John Quilter)
Supervisor, PhD. Thesis, Surgical practice in a changing health system: resolving the ethical questions (with Stephen Buckle)

Supervisor, MPhil. Thesis, Professionalism v Caring: toward a coherent ethic of nursing for Australia (with Peter Coghlan)

Other Appointments

Stephen Buckle
Editorial Board, Australasian Journal of Philosophy
Member, Australasian Association of Philosophy
Member, British Society for the History of Philosophy

Mary Byrne
Human Research Ethics Committee, St Vincent’s Hospital, Sydney
Bioethics Consultative Committee, St Vincent’s Hospital, Sydney

Gerald Gleeson
Bioethics Consultative Committee, St. Vincent’s Hospital, Sydney
National Board, Sisters of Charity Health Service
Garvan Institute of Medical Research (Director)

Bernadette Tobin
Australian Health Ethics Committee (NHMRC)
Committee to Revise Ethical Guidelines on Assisted Reproductive Technology (NHMRC) (Chair)
Bioethics Consultative Committee, St. Vincent’s Health Care Campus, Sydney
Mary Philippa Brazill Trust (Founder & Trustee)
Guild of St. Luke (Member of Council)
Regional Mission and Values Committee, St. Vincent’s Health Care Campus, Sydney
Australians Donate (Member of Council)
Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation (Director)
Ministerial Advisory Council on Biotechnology (NSW)
Bioethics Panel of Ministerial Advisory Council on Biotechnology
NHMRC Working Party on Persistent Vegetative States
NHMRC Working Party on Xenotransplantation