Plunkett Centre
for Ethics in Health Care

AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

ST VINCENTS & MATER HEALTH SYDNEY
"Monday Morning Seminar"

Pictured Left to Right: Megan Best, Kristine Morrison, Mary Self, Mary Byrne, Stephen Buckle. In front: Gary Nieukamp
From the Management Committee

The Plunkett Centre for Ethics in Health Care, a co-operative Centre jointly supported by the 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 continues to provide training and advice to the medical community on ethical issues as they impact on practice.

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. The Centre received funds to enable Professor Warren Reich, Georgetown University, to visit and work at the Centre. A world authority in the area of Bioethics and health care, Professor Reich will be a visiting scholar at the Centre from early 2002.

Staff of the Centre have also been active in providing advice to individuals and submissions to government on major bioethical issues surrounding organ and tissue donation and 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. In 2001 the Director was honoured by an invitation from the NSW Minister for Health to become a founding member of the Ministerial Advisory Council on Biotechnology and by an invitation from the Prime Minister to become a Director of the Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation. The Centre ensured the timely publication of the “Code of Ethical Standards for Catholic Health and Aged Care Services in Australia” in the course of the year. Details are available within this report.

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

Professor John C Coll  
Chair  
Management Committee

June 2002
“Tuesday Morning Tea”

Pictured Left to Right: Mary Byrne and Helen McCabe
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“Administration”

Pictured: Linda Purves, Administrative Officer for the Centre
Mission Statement

The Mission of the Plunkett Centre for Ethics in Health Care is to examine the ethical aspects of contemporary practices in health care and bioethics and, by research, teaching and community service, to contribute a Catholic perspective to public discussion about what constitutes good conduct and wise decision-making in health care and biomedical science in Australia.

The aims of the Centre are:

- to promote research in the areas of ethics and theology relevant to health care and medical science,
- to apply the techniques of philosophical and theological analysis to professional discussions of issues in clinical practice and medical research, and
- to enrich the standard of discussion about the ethics of health care by contributing a Catholic perspective to public debates about health care and medical research.

These aims will be achieved by:

- conducting and supervising research,
- conducting post-graduate and clinical education,
- providing a consultation service for, and undertaking consultation with, healthcare professionals, and
- participating, through written and oral presentations, in the public forum on ethical issues.
“The Code Drafting Group”

Pictured Left to Right: Gerald Gleeson, Bernadette Tobin, Anthony Fisher and Mary Byrne
From the Director

The single most important event in the life of the Plunkett Centre in 2001 was the publication of the Code of Ethical Standards for Catholic Health and Aged Care Services in Australia. Our Centre was commissioned by Catholic Health Australia to produce this 'ethical first' for Australia, and fulfilling that commission challenged us to think hard and to work hard. Many people contributed to the writing of the Code, in particular the members of the Steering Committee (so ably chaired by Bishop Michael Putney), the members of the Drafting Group and all those others who made suggestions as to content and wording. But in the end it was the staff of the Plunkett Centre who ensured that the idea, first mooted several years ago, was translated into reality.

During the year Dr. Stephen Buckle's book Hume's Enlightenment Tract: The Unity and Purpose of an Enquiry concerning Human Understanding was published by the Clarendon Press in Oxford. Dr. Gerald Gleson spent six months as Visiting Scholar at St. Edmund's College in Cambridge where he worked on a monograph entitled “The Human Person in Catholic Teaching”. Dr. Bernadette Tobin was asked to chair a Committee to Revise the Ethical Guidelines on Assisted Reproductive Technology for the National Health and Medical Research Council. And, at the end of the year, both Dr. Buckle and Dr. Tobin were successful in their applications for academic promotion.

Our other activities are listed in the pages that follow: a series of publications in the peer-reviewed literature as well as the quarterly publication of our own Bioethics Outlook; preparation of applications for competitive grants; teaching of clinical ethics to medical students and philosophical ethics to students undertaking our Master's course; supervision of postgraduate research projects; running of an annual Intensive Bioethics Course as well as participating in other people's conferences; undertaking clinical consultations with health care practitioners. I hope that the details of all these efforts will be of interest to our colleagues and supporters.

The Plunkett Centre itself is a very pleasant working environment, particularly now that refurbishments have been made to No 15 Leichhardt Street. Our Monday philosophical ethics seminar, and our Tuesday 'working morning tea' are the two occasions on which we regularly meet each other. On each occasion we are indebted to Linda for her catering (and sometimes for her cooking): without her contribution to those occasions the life of a 'Plunketeer' would lack something of its spice!

Bernadette Tobin
18.2.02
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:

Dr Bernadette Tobin, Director

In attendance:

Mrs Linda Purves, Administrative Officer (Minutes Secretary)
Staffing

Director:

Bernadette Tobin MA MEd (Melb) PhD (Cantab) Full-time
Senior Lecturer in Philosophy, School of Philosophy
Australian Catholic University

Academic Staff:

Mary Byrne RN BHSN (ACU) BA (Hons) (Melb) Part-time .6
Manager, St Vincent's Campus Nursing
Research Unit (From July) Part-time .5

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

John Quilter BA (Syd) MA (Pitt) Honorary
Lecturer in Philosophy, School of Philosophy,
Australian Catholic University

Stephen Buckle MA Hons (MaU), PhD (ANU) Part-time .1
Lecturer in Philosophy, School of Philosophy
Australian Catholic University

Doctoral Students:

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

Peter Madden BA (UNSW) Part-time

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

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

Administrative Staff:

Linda Purves JP Full-time
“The Code Steering Group”

Pictured Left to Right: Mr. Francis Sullivan, Dr. Norman Ford, Dr. Walter Black,
Dr. Elizabeth Hepburn, Dr. Gerry Gleeson, Mr. Ray Campbell, Dr. Laurence McNamara,
Ms. Mary Byrne, Rev. William Uren, Dr. Warwick Neville, Bishop Michael Putney,
Dr. Bernadette Tobin, Mr. Nick Tonti-Filippini and Prof. Anthony Fisher

Absent: Dr. John Fleming


Publications

Buckle, S


“Tully, Locke and America”, British Journal for the History of Philosophy, 2001, 9(2) 245-281


Byrne, M

Senior Editor, “Nursing Monograph” St. Vincent’s Health Care Campus, Sydney, Focus Press, 2001


“Ethics, assisted reproductive technologies and cloning”, Reform 79 Spring 2001, 22-26, 71

“Practice Dilemma - Suspected Elder Abuse: Ethicist's Comments”, Medical Observer 15 June 2001, 43

“Practice Dilemma – Filling in … and Falling out: Ethicist's Comments”, Medical Observer 13 July 2001, 41

Gleeson, G

“Sustaining Life in a World of Limits – the Role of Catholic Ethical Standards”, Bioethics Outlook, 12(2) June 2001, 1-11


Tobin, B


“At the margins of moral responsibility: why we need a sense of the virtues of professional practice”, *BHERT News, Business and Higher Education Round Table*, 10, March 2001, 26-27


“Responsibilities to those who are dying”, Plunkett Centre’s Submission to NSW Health Department’s review of ‘Dying with Dignity’ Guidelines, *Bioethics Outlook*, 12 (1) March 2001, 1-8


“Withdrawing and withholding treatment”, *Journal of Medical Legal Society of NSW*, 18 (1) 7-9, 10-11
Consultancies

Overall number of consultations undertaken by staff of the Centre:

- from within the Catholic Health Care Sector: 35
- from outside the Catholic Health Care Sector: 29

Range of people seeking a consultation:

- Health care administrators: 22
- Doctors: 12
- Nurses: 6
- Allied health workers: 2
- Media: 11
- Other: 11

Types of issues on which consultation is sought:

- Feeding a patient with swallowing difficulties
- Care of a pregnant woman with metastatic cancer
- Interactions with grateful previous patients
- Refusal of treatment
- Involuntary treatment of a person in prison for a medical emergency
- Health care for people in prison
- Patient request to cease all active treatment
- Requests for extraordinary treatment for children
- Mediating the decision making by family members who disagree about the care of mother with Alzheimer’s disease
- The role of different family members in decision making for a woman with Alzheimer’s disease
- Informing adult children of deceased patient who had been adopted
- Appropriate care for a person in a prolonged coma
- Care of a patient following heart transplant
- Surgery and medical care for people who smoke
- The Dying with Dignity Guidelines and advance directives
- Information on ethical protocols concerning death and dying
- Respect for the bodies of deceased people
- Advance directives in aged care
- Withdrawing life sustaining treatment
- Not for resuscitation orders
- Catholic teaching and philosophical issues relating to organ donations
- Organ donations for people with a disability
- Care of a pregnant woman with renal failure
- Genetic testing
- Harm minimisation and the provision of methadone
Researching the possibility of a nurse practitioner in mental health
The use of regional Human Research Ethics Committees
Providing pathology tests to measure hormone levels
Practical and ethical difficulties associated with assessing the risks of bereavement in a hospice
Obstetric outcomes
The effects of breast feeding on pregnancy
Catholic teaching on the use of IUD's
Catholic teaching on intra-cytoplasmic sperm injection
Foetal surgery
Participation in assessment of abortion clinics
Cloning and abortion
Decision making about pregnancies involving foetal abnormalities
Tubal ligations
Research on human embryonic stem cells
Use of foetal cells in research
Storage of embryos
Ethical issues in reproductive technologies
Anonymity for donors and donor conceived children
Use of cloning techniques to produce embryos and stem cells
Funding of nuchal transluency screening
Research policy and conscientious objection
Ovum donation
Partnerships between Catholic healthcare facilities and other healthcare facilities
The formation and functioning of ethics committees
Ethical aspects of responsible investing
Response to a failed vasectomy procedure

Submissions

To the New South Wales Department of Health: Dying with Dignity Guidelines
(Bernadette Tobin, Gerry Gleeson and Mary Byrne)

To the Australian Health Ethics Committee: Revision of the Ethical Guidelines on Assisted Reproductive Technology (Mary Byrne)
Teaching

Buckle, S
Supervisor, PhD. Thesis, Surgical practice in a changing health system: resolving the ethical questions (with Bernadette Tobin)
Lecturer in Philosophy, Bachelor of Arts, Lecturer in Healthcare Ethics, Bachelor of Nursing, Lecturer in Ethics, Bachelor of Information Systems, Australian Catholic University

Byrne, M
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, Mary MacKillop Place, Sydney

Gleeson, GP
Presenter, Intensive Bioethics Course, Mary MacKillop Place, Sydney

McCabe, H
Presenter, Clinical ethics for health care practitioners (Division of Nursing), St. Vincent’s Private Hospital

Self, MB
Presenter, Clinical ethics for medical students (fourth year), St. Vincent’s Hospital
Tobin, BM

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, Mary Mackillop Place, 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)
Presentations

Buckle, S  
*Is science really ahead of ethics?*, Keynote Address, Intensive Bioethics Course, Sydney

Byrne, M  
Palliative Care Ethics, Sacred Heart Palliative Care Service External Education Programme, Sydney

*Not for Resuscitation Orders, Legal Risk: Protecting Nurses and Midwives*, Ausmed National Conference, Sydney

*Treatment decision making and Children*, Royal Far West Children’s Health Scheme, Manly, NSW

*Ethical Issues in new Genetic developments*, Catholic Young Adults Group – Dialogue, North Sydney

*Introduction to the Code of Ethical Standards*, Directors of Mission, Little Company of Mary Health Services, Calvary Conference Centre, Kogarah

Ethical Issues in Genetics, Uniting Church, Roseville

Palliative Care Ethics, Sacred Heart Palliative Care Service External Education Programme, Sydney

*Workload, Clinical Performance and Outcome: Where do we go after Bristol?*, Panel Discussion, International Conference on Scientific Basis of Health Services, Sydney

Dying Ethics, Politics & Policy – Ethics in Practice, Masters in Social Work, University of Sydney

*Code of Ethics for Supervisors in Clinical Pastoral Education*, NSW College of Supervisors in Palliative Care, Parramatta, NSW

Ethical Issues in Palliative Care, NSW State Palliative Care Conference, Albury

Ethical Issues in Genetics, NSW State Infection Control Conference, Sydney

Clinical Ethics Case Studies, Calvary Hospital, Canberra

*Introduction to the Catholic Health Australia Code of Ethical Standards*, National Board, Little Company of Mary Healthcare, Sydney

Gleeson, GP  
*Evangelisation in Health Care: Ethical Issues*, Address to conference for 9th World Day of the Sick, Sydney
Sustaining Life in a World of Limits, Address to Mercy Health Care Conference, Auckland, New Zealand

Tobin, B.M.
Withdrawal and withholding life sustaining treatment, Medico-Legal Society of NSW, Sydney

Family at the Crossroads, Goals Steering Soirée, Kincoppal Rose-Bay, Sydney

Intensive Care for newborn infants: ethical principles, Postgraduate Medical Course, University of Sydney

Are there enough safeguards to protect patients in Australian clinical trials? Annual Clinical Conference, Association of Regulatory and Clinical Scientists, Sydney,

The ethical challenges of human cloning, Intensive Bioethics Course, Plunkett Centre for Ethics in Health Care, Sydney

The case of a 15 year old girl raped by ‘friend of the family’, Children’s Hospital Westmead

The old ethic and the new are we rationally required to give up the old and embrace the new? Address to Mercy Health Care Conference, Auckland, New Zealand

Ethical principles which inform care of people who are dying, Dying with Dignity Seminar, War Memorial Hospital

Ethic issues in contemporary health care, Forum on Bioethics, Catalyst for Renewal, Sydney

Unreasonable requests for treatment, Children’s Hospital Westmead

Ethical Lives, a debate with Professor Peter Singer, The Sydney Institute, Sydney

And the baby drops out! A response to the ethical views of Peter Singer, Kevin Lee Memorial Lecture, Sancta Sophia College, University of Sydney,

Ethics of Human Reproduction, Medical Students, University of New South Wales

‘Things you learn along the way’, (with Gerard Windsor), Spirituality in the Pub, Waitara

Anyone who has HAART, the right to refuse treatment: Children’s Hospital Westmead

Code of Ethical Standards for Catholic Health and Aged Care Services in Australia, Education Forum, Catholic Health Australia

The gene genie: ethical challenges, Riverview College, Sydney

Controversial issues in the resolution of the Code of Ethical Standards for Catholic Health and Aged Care Services, Annual General Meeting, Catholic Health Australia, Sydney
Public Media

Buckle, S

Tobin, B

Interviewed on ABC Radio Afternoon Show by James Valentine: re ban on smokers having surgery, in particular transplants (February)

Quoted in “Australia’s low rate of organ donation” by Leora Moldovski, Time Magazine (February)

Interviewed on SBS Current Affairs (radio) by Trish Mitchell: re alleged unethical and unlawful activities at the NSW Morgue (March)

Interviewed by Belinda Hickman, The Australian, Perth (April) re case of parents wishing for ‘extraordinary treatment’ for their child

Interviewed on ABC Evening Show, Melbourne by Tracey Hutchinson re “Ethical dilemmas” with (Peter Clark and Simon Longstaff) (April)

Quoted in “Reasons why children with disabilities might be put to the top of the queue for organ transplants”, Sydney Morning Herald, 21 April, 2001

Interviewed on ABC Radio by Joe Jelinisi re opening of Australia’s first medically-supervised injecting room, 6 May, 2001

Interviewed on ABC Radio Evening Show by Christopher Lawrence re prison ethics, May, 2001

Interviewed on ABC Radio Evening Show by James O’Laughlin re whether we have an ethical responsibility to take an interest in political debates, July 2001

Interviewed on ABC Morning Show in New England by Bill Gleeson re cigarette company’s claims about the cost effectiveness of smoking, July 2001

Quoted in “Reasons why Sydney IVF should not have gone ahead with destructive research on embryos (to obtain embryonic stem cells for Prince of Wales diabetes research program)”, Sydney Morning Herald, August, 2001

Interviewed on 2SM Morning Show by Howard Sattler re Sydney IVF’s destructive research on embryos to extract embryonic stem cells, August, 2001

Interviewed by Mr Brad McLean, Australian Doctor, re foetal surgery November, 2001

Interviewed on 2GB Mid-day Program by Kerrie-Anne Kennerly re Donor Conceived Children: the ethics of anonymity, November, 2001
“Visiting Medical Students”

Pictured Left to Right: Susanne Simma, Bernadette Tobin and Oliver Hausmann
Bioethics Outlook

Volume 12

Number 1
Responsibilities to those who are dying
Plunkett Centre's submission to NSW Health Department's review of
"Dying with Dignity" Guidelines
by Bernadette Tobin
Life and Death in Healthcare Ethics: A Short Introduction by
Helen Watt
Reviewed by Mary Byrne

Number 2
Sustaining Life in a World of Limits – The Role of Catholic Ethical Standards
by Gerald Gleeson

Number 3
Peter Singer's Ethics
by Stephen Buckle

Number 4
The Principle of Justice: a bioethical perspective
By Bernadette Tobin

Circulation
There are now 427 individuals and organisations subscribing to this quarterly publication of the Centre.
Membership of Committees

Buckle, S

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

Foundation Committee Member & Newsletter Editor, Secretary, Australasian Society for the History of Philosophy

Byrne, M

Human Research Ethics Committee, St Vincent’s Hospital, Sydney
Bioethics Consultative Committee, St Vincent’s Hospital, Sydney
Steering Group, Code of Ethics, Catholic Health Australia
Drafting Group, Code of Ethics, Catholic Health Australia

Gleeson, G

Bioethics Consultative Committee, St. Vincent’s Hospital, Sydney
Ethics Committee, Calvary Hospital, Kogarah
National Board, Sisters of Charity Health Service
Garvan Institute of Medical Research (Director)
Steering Group, Code of Ethics, Catholic Health Australia
Drafting Group, Code of Ethics, Catholic Health Australia

Tobin, B

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 (Chair)

Mary Philippa Brazil Trust (Founder & Trustee)

Guild of St. Luke (Member of Council)

Regional Mission and Values Committee, St. Vincent's Health Care Campus, Sydney

Steering Group, Code of Ethics, Catholic Health Australia

Drafting Group, Code of Ethics, Catholic Health Australia (Chair)

Reference Group on Assisted Reproductive Technology, NSW Health Department

Australians Donate (Member of Council)

Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation (Director)

Ministerial Advisory Council on Biotechnology
### Financial Report

#### Income

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#### Expenditure

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