

# AUSTRALIAN ETHICS

JUNE, 2012

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT BY BETTY CHAAR

### ETHICS: APPLIED AND PROFESSIONAL

- ◆ Business
- ◆ Education
- ◆ Engineering
- ◆ Environment
- ◆ Law
- ◆ Medical
- ◆ Nursing
- ◆ Police
- ◆ Public Policy
- ◆ Public Sector
- ◆ Social Work
- ◆ Teaching

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Dear AAPAE members,

Welcome to the latest edition of the Australian Ethics!

In correspondence with one of my learned colleagues in the UK, a highly regarded Professor of Professional Ethics in Pharmacy, Professor Wingfield wrote a line that made me reflect. She wrote: *"It is sad... academia is so limited in their understanding of concepts of professionalism."*

Concepts of professionalism are indeed difficult to construct and convey in academia. They are neither philosophical nor scientific, but perhaps a blend of both. Application of ethical principles onto a scaffolding of professional values and practices is a challenge, whatever specific profession is under analysis.

This is why the Australian Association for Professional and Applied Ethics is such a unique, special Association. Our very title reflects the importance of the *application* of moral theory in the context of professional practice. Not just the rhetoric or the logical reasoning of philosophical analysis. Nor is it a reflection of a scientific approach to a problem, with well defined rules to follow and clear outcomes and conclusions.

Professional ethics has deeper, more meaningful implications. Look at any

news article in today's papers. You will find the notion of professional ethics at the core of so many problems in professions such as politics, journalism and economics for example. Some fundamentally disturbing contemporary issues in professions such as these have caused major societal concern lately, with long term implications on trustworthiness, reliability and transparency. For example, ethics

*"Academia is so limited in their understanding of concepts of professionalism...."*

in journalism is today under great scrutiny in the aftermath of the Rupert Murdoch saga. One incident of 'phone hacking' unraveled into an almost unbelievable series of events and exposure.

What was missing? Professional ethics. A moral compass in the context of professional practice.

The Australian Association for Professional and Applied Ethics is concerned with such issues and a broad range of other issues in the context of professional practice. These issues shape our lives, influence our decision making, and make us more responsible human beings. Highlighting issues of professional and applied ethics to the public that are important to you and your profession, sharing your analysis and recommendations are all part of being a member of this Association. And where better to convey your message than at the annual con-

# The 19<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL AAPAE CONFERENCE

## Ethics, Values and Civil Society

Please see the conference web site for all details! <http://www.stjohns.uq.edu.au/aapae2012/>

**Thursday 28th June — Sunday 1st July, 2012**  
**St John's College, University of Queensland, Brisbane.**

Applications and papers are beginning to flow in for the Annual Conference of AAPAE.

Although the theme was announced as *Ethics, Values and Civil Society*, papers covering any aspect of applied and professional ethics are invited and welcome.

The Conference – planned as mostly residential – will be held in the garden setting of St John's College at the University of Queensland. Brisbane in late June is a warm contrast to the southern capital cities.

We invite you to join us for the 19th Annual Conference.

We look forward to seeing you.

John Morgan

**The 2012 AAPAE Conference Convener is Rev. Prof. John Morgan, St John's College, the University of Queensland.**

Please feel free to email with any queries about the conference or paper presentation: [aapae2012@stjohns.uq.edu.au](mailto:aapae2012@stjohns.uq.edu.au)



### PRESIDENT'S REPORT (CONT'D)

ference?

This edition of *Australian Ethics* comes to you just before our 19<sup>th</sup> annual conference, in Brisbane, which I urge you all to attend. Come and join us for a great program of invited speakers and contributed papers; and for what can only be described as an enchanting river cruise for the conference dinner.

Located within the University of Queensland campus, St

John's College is situated in a garden setting, providing both a beautiful and practical conference location. The conference convener, Reverend Professor John Morgan, has lined up an exciting selection of events, papers and guest speakers under the theme of:

**Ethics, Values and Civil Society - Ethical, Historical, Professional and Political Perspectives**

We will also be honoring

some long standing founding members of the AAPAE at the conference this year. All this, with new opportunities to publish papers submitted to the conference to be announced, will make the effort to attend this conference worth your while.

On behalf of the Executive Committee, I look forward to seeing you all in Brisbane in June.

Best wishes,  
Betty

## Call for Papers

### 2012 CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

The overall aim of the AAPAE is to increase awareness and encourage discussion about the issues in applied ethics. This conference will focus on the ethical concerns within and around *civil society*; a sector distinct from government and epitomised by non-profit organizations, though potentially encompassing aspects of business. The concept of civil society alone already faces ethical questions in terms of defining those organisations which should be considered to make up this sector. Within civil society too there are ethical issues when looking at the structure of organisations, participation within the organisation, and said organisation's interaction with outside influences. For more on the concept and practice of civil society please visit the Civil Society International homepage: <http://www.civilsoc.org/>

### Call for Papers:

**The conference will have both a refereed and a non-refereed stream**

**Refereed track papers** are to be submitted consistent with *Australian Journal of Professional and Applied Ethics* author guidelines. Abstracts and full papers from the refereed track will be published in a Conference Proceedings CD. Authors should submit a short biography of no more than 100 words and an abstract of no more than 200 words with their paper. Papers for this track must be no more than 5000 words, and should be submitted to the Conference Convenor by **8th June 2012**. An invitation to submit the manuscript to the AAPAE will follow after the conference proceedings.

**Non-refereed track papers** should be proposed by way of an abstract of approximately 250 words to the Conference Convenor by **8th June 2012**. Presenters in this category should clarify that their paper is intended for the non-refereed stream in the Subject Line of the email submission of their abstract.

### Ethics and Journalism

A principal feature of the conference will be a public symposium and conference sessions on journalism ethics and the role of the media in contemporary society. This is being organised and presented by the Department of Journalism, the University of Queensland.

### Special Offer! - Registration Fees for Academics

This conference offers a registration fee for academics that will include (along with satchel, lanyard, program, CD of presentations and catering):

One free registration for one of your students as a bonus to encourage younger generations to attend and participate in this conference.  
(Accommodation extra)

### Key Speakers

**Professor Daniel E. Wueste:** Director, Rutland Institute for Ethics; Professor of Philosophy, Clemson University, South Carolina, USA; President of the Society of Ethics Across the Curriculum

**Carrie Quinlan:** Columnist for *The Guardian* newspaper UK; actress and comedian

**Dr. Simon Longstaff:** Director of St James Ethics Centre, Sydney

**Dr. John Harrison:** Department of Journalism, the University of Queensland

**Dr. John Edwards:** Economist; member of the Board of the Reserve Bank of Australia

**Mark Leishman:** Director of Forensic Services and Partner, KPMG



## Research in Ethical Issues in Organizations and the AAPAE

Michael Schwartz

*Research in Ethical Issues in Organizations* was founded by two very close friends: Moses Pava of Yeshiva University in New York, and Father Patrick Primeaux who was Chair of the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at St. John's University in New York. Together they edited the series for some years until Patrick's unfortunate demise. Their statement of



purpose was that, "the purpose of the series is to explore the central and unique role of organizational ethics in creating and sustaining a flourishing, pluralistic, free enterprise economy. The primary goal of the research studies published here is to examine how profit-seeking and not-for-profit organizations can be conceived and designed to satisfy legitimate human needs in an ethical and meaningful way".

In pursuing that statement of purpose they devoted one volume to the, "crisis and opportunity in the professions" and as we know there is much interest in professional ethics. Another volume was "a symposium on health care ethics" which amongst other excellent papers contained one by Alice Gaudine and Linda Thorne titled

"Ethical conflict in professionals: Nurses' accounts of ethical conflict with organizations". That paper has relevance to the recent Victorian nurses' strike. Patrick and Moses established an editorial board with some of the most prominent international applied ethicists on it. They also attracted contributions to their publication from leading applied ethicists with outstanding academic reputations. The AAPAE has entered a partnership agreement with its publisher, Emerald, regarding the publication of *Research in Ethical Issues in Organizations* whereby it is published in association with the AAPAE. In doing so the AAPAE is indebted to both Moses Pava and Patrick Primeaux.

The agreement the AAPAE has allows the logo of the AAPAE to appear on the cover of *Research in Ethical Issues in Organizations* along with the designation "Published in Association with the AAPAE". Furthermore, Emer-

ald agrees to promote events run by the AAPAE on the publication homepage. In turn the AAPAE may include details of *Research in Ethical Issues in Organizations* on its website including a link to the Publication homepage

*Research in Ethical Issues in Organizations* provides a recognised publication outlet for selected AAPAE conference papers. Significantly, there is no obligation upon the AAPAE to purchase copies of *Research in Ethical Issues in Organizations* although

members do receive a 30% discount to the list price if they choose to purchase it. Furthermore, members whose work is published in it receive a complimentary copy. Our agreement with Emerald regarding *Research in Ethical*

*Issues in Organizations* presents a significant opportunity to the AAPAE and we are most fortunate to have it. It augments the AAPAE at no cost to the AAPAE.

Michael Schwartz,  
RMIT.

**"The purpose of the series is to explore the central and unique role of organizational ethics in creating and sustaining a flourishing, pluralistic, free enterprise economy."**

***Research in Ethical Issues in Organizations***

<http://www.emeraldinsight.com/books.htm?issn=1529-2096>



## Conference Report: APPE conference Cincinnati Ohio 1-4 March 2012

Howard Harris

The 21st annual conference of the Association for Practical and Professional Ethics, APPE, was held in Cincinnati, Ohio. There were 283 delegates but not many from outside the US – 3 from Australia (Seumas Miller, Ed Spence and myself), one each from Japan, Chile, Netherlands. All the sessions were during the day on Friday and Saturday. There were 8 or 9 parallel sessions for most of the time, with a total of 80 separate sessions, some with 4-5 speakers in a panel or roundtable. So some sessions were quite small, with only 3 or 4 present. There was almost no free time, with the first day starting with the Keynote address at 8:15am and ending with the conference dinner.

The key note address was given by a practitioner, lawyer Kenneth Feinberg, who has been the individual appointed to administer the distribution of trust funds to victims of 9/11, of the Virginia Tech shootings, and the \$20 billion trust set up with funds from BP after the Deep-water Horizon disaster. These 'special funds' could not be subject to rules in advance – "if this predetermined number of people are killed there will be a fund" – he argued; only the people and the politicians can determine action after the event.

Hence 'yes' for 9/11, but not for Hurricane Katrina. Were these funds, he asked, well intentioned mistakes, choosing as they did to prefer some citizens above others?

As to the personal qualities needed to be the 'Special Master' or administrator of such trusts, Feinberg saw the ability to persevere whilst in the cross-hairs of those denied compensation by the terms of the trust, and a capacity 'not to get sick' whilst wrestling with the ethical issues as the key requirements.

The conference officially had an 'international' focus but this was not accompanied by any significant number of papers on an international theme.

Among the innovations at this year's conference – the first under new executive director Stuart Yoak – were a series of special interest group meetings, often at breakfast or lunch. There were groups for business ethics, healthcare ethics, technology ethics and biomedical ethics among others. Another innovation was themed lunchtable discussions, with a person agreeing to host and lead discussion on an advertised topic with any who choose to join the table. The opportunities for authors to promote newly published books were also enhanced with additional sessions. There is a large book display at the conference with over 20 publishers providing books for sale at a discount and the Association receiving a share of sales (although it meets the cost

of the Bookroom operation).

Another innovation was to especially welcome all new members and first-time attendees at the welcome reception. For these people their name badges were marked with a ribbon, and attendees were asked to make them welcome and speak with them.

At the Members meeting (the AGM)

**"These 'special funds' could not be subject to rules in advance – 'if this predetermined number of people are killed there will be a fund'."**

the interim financial report showed the Association facing a deficit on its annual operations. The major expenditure items were staff salaries with income from subscrip-

tions, conference surplus and a grant from the university at which the Association is based. Differences in accounting years between the Association and the university, and unfamiliarity with systems meant the situation was unclear, however. Another topic of discussion was the mis-match between the March conference date and January-December subscription year, but no change was proposed. A third topic of discussion was the publication of conference papers. Although a full paper must be submitted for review months ahead of the conference and acceptances are announced in December only abstracts are published, and the possibility of publishing the full papers, perhaps in a CD available only to attendees, was briefly considered but no decisions made.

Howard Harris.



## An examination of ethical mindsets' role in enhancing the ethical climate in Australian organizations leading to a more sustainable business. *An Idea for a Project.*

Dr Theodora Issa

Threats facing the global society in which Australia is a part are threatening the survival and sustainability of organizations. Bansal (2012) argues that while regulations may coerce firms to respond to an issue, it is difficult to ensure that they are applied equitably. Despite the increased attention being paid to ethics and ethical standards in organizations, accompanied by what can be seen as increased ethics curricula in business schools, businesses generally fail to show meaningful reduction in their unethical behaviour.

Harned (2008) notes that business has suffered greatly in the area of ethics, and expresses deep concern about the deterioration in ethical behaviour in the workplace. Skidelsky and Skidelsky (2010) paint a bleak picture of society, claiming that in some circles, leisure has merged with work entirely, where parties are an opportunity to network, or to holiday. Venn (2010) contends that self-interest and calculation have derailed individuals' values. To get back on track, individuals must remember the effective bonds that link them to one another, concluding that their current moral discourse lacks a compelling vision of what it is to be human.

Chakraborty (2010) maintains that economic fundamentalism has crowded out alternative ways of thinking, leaving scant room for social considerations, whereas shareholder value is shorthand for doing whatever it takes to pump up the stock price. Milbank (2010) asserts that the financial meltdown has pitched democracy itself into crisis, whereas it is vital that efforts be exerted to overthrow the assumptions that

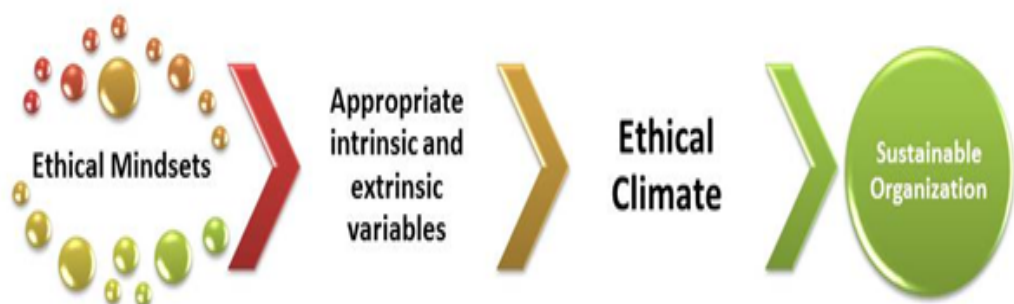
undermine trust, gift-giving and meaning, concluding that what human beings most desire is not material wealth, but social recognition. Hutton (2008b, 2008a, 2010) has been critical of the lack of leadership, hinting to the rise and fall of capitalism. He argues that capitalism has been undermined by an abuse of the very principle that is its cornerstone: fairness. It is essential that the idea of just rewards be reclaimed, contending that profit is ethical to the extent it is proportionate to effort and not due to good luck or brute power. Recently, Bansal (2012) posits that one of the largest barriers to sustainable development is its failure to be institutionalized in the minds of key stakeholders. This is a very complex situation, and it would be difficult to solve, however, a step in the right direction is to examine, evaluate and understand ethical mindsets in the Australian context and how the existence of ethical mindsets would affect the ethical climate in Australia, leading to more sustainable organizations.

Building on Issa's (2009) findings on the existence of and components of ethical mindsets, this project intends to examine the impact of ethical mindsets on ethical climates in an attempt to safeguard Australia from corporate fraud and contribute to the

sustainable development of Australian organizations, and the region. The findings of this project will have several theoretical, practical and methodological implications. This project has the potential to contribute to the corporate world by offering a better understanding of ethical mindsets, their components and the impact on ethical climate providing a framework or a model that would assist in the selection and recruitment of employees who would enhance the ethical climate of organizations within Australia and the region leading to more sustainable organizations.

This project will: (1) examine and evaluate the ethical mindsets, (2) assess the intrinsic and extrinsic variables of individuals (e.g. CEOs, managers, and other employees) and organizations, and, (3) evaluate ethical climate within organizations, leading to an identification of what is required to transform an organization into a 'sustainable organization' (Figure 1).

This project will utilise a refined version of the research tool developed by Issa (2009) to first collect data from individuals (e.g. CEO, managers and other employees). A statement will be added to this



**Figure 1: Conceptual framework – Ethical mindsets, Ethical climate and Sustainable Organization**

## Ethical Mindsets: Ethical Climate (Con'td)

measuring tool enquiring as to whether the respondent would be interested in participating in follow-up interviews or focus groups interviews to verify the quantitative results. Implementing appropriate research techniques, tools, samples and the application of the interpretive mixed-methods approach will assist in achieving the outcomes and the outputs of this research. This approach is chosen due to the sensitive nature of the concepts that make up this research.

Issa's (2009) findings identified eight components of ethical mindsets: (1) aesthetic spirituality, (2) religious spirituality, (3) optimism, (4) harmony and balance, (5) truth seeking, (6) pursuit of joy, peace and beauty, (7) making a difference, and, (8) professionalism. Following focus groups interviews, these eight components were reduced to six, with slight changes to the names reflecting the overall dimensions of each of these components of (1) aesthetic spirituality, (2) religious spirituality, (3) optimism, (4) contentment, (5) making a difference, and, (6) interconnectedness. This project adds to this important and unique finding on ethical mindsets. This will be the first time that an attempt has been made to link ethical mindsets to the ethical climate within organizations and to subsequently transform these organizations into sustainable organizations.

In the spirit of Issa's (2009) earlier work, this project goes past and well beyond the obvious, in an attempt to understand the ethical mindsets of individuals within Australian organizations and their impact on the ethical climates within those organizations, which might then lead to greater understanding of how to develop more sustainable organizations.

Using a mixed method design, both quantitative and qualitative data will be collected through an online survey. The online survey is composed of 40 items (including demographic questions) with the provision of space for respondents to provide their comments on any of the sections in this survey. Thereafter, and following the analysis of this quantitative and qualitative data, interviews and focus groups interviews will be held aimed at triangulation, amplification and modification of the results generated. Indeed, this project, with its mixed method design, will contribute theoretically and practically towards providing a good understanding of ethical mindsets and their impact on the ethical climate within Australian or-

**"The framework might then be used by practitioners and policy makers in their ongoing crusade to tackle the problems of unethical behaviour in Australian businesses."**

ganizations (public and private sector). The framework might then be used by practitioners and policy makers in their ongoing crusade to tackle the problems of unethical behaviour in Australian businesses.

This project will advance knowledge in the field of business ethics and sustainable organizations, contributing to ongoing academic research, and influencing the content of higher education programmes.

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# BUILDING ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR

Peter Bowden

This paper is a rework of a talk presented in May this year to Sydney's philosophy café ([www.philoagora.com](http://www.philoagora.com)) under the title *The failure of moral philosophy*. It updates the original talk with lessons that emerged during the ensuing café discussion. It sets out seven practices, not normally encompassed under the topic of moral philosophy, which will, it is argued, strengthen ethical behaviour.

The concepts outlined in the following paragraphs are primarily institutionally based. Although some of the subsequent discussions raised the belief that moral transgressions are individual actions, an issue also raised in a later paragraph, most unethical action takes place in a group or institutional setting, and is best forestalled in such a setting.

The practices are, in many cases, drawn from an examination of ethical behaviours across fourteen different disciplines, in an about-to-be-published AAPAE book, *Applied Ethics*. Some are full chapters in the book; others however, are only support to the main arguments. The final section, the implications of the findings, however, is a separate issue – an attempt to examine what are the implications of these practices.



There are seven practices in all:

(i) Strengthening our ability to recognise when we ourselves have been unethical;

- (ii) Steps to encourage us to speak out against wrongdoing;
- (iii) Developments in codes of ethics that make them effective;
- (iv) Policies adopted by private sector organisations to institutionalise ethical behaviour;
- (v) New programs for ensuring greater honesty in government;
- (vi) Building action on empirical findings, not argument.
- (vii)

**“Most unethical action takes place in a group or institutional setting, and is best forestalled in such a setting.”**

Teaching these practices

Several moral philosophers actively decry these developments, despite their benefits, a concern further discussed below. But let us first describe the practices. The first is an analysis of why we adopt practices that result in us not seeing wrongdoing, or in ignoring it when we do see it.

## I. Why we fail to do what is right

Max Bazerman and Ann Tenbrunsel (*Blind Spots*, 2011) are professors of business ethics whose research tells us we often do not recognise that our decisions have ethical implications. If we do, we need to sort our way through many competing ethical theories. Even if we reach that decision, however, we do not necessarily

implement it. There are many reasons why we do not act - a willingness to conform to accepted thinking (group think); our tendency to reduce dissonance when rejecting a suspected unethicity, our tendency to think short term and focus on the immediate outcome, and finally a near-complete failure to recognise many decisions as having unethical implications. They term their analyses “behavioural ethics”, claiming that it has grown “exponentially” in recent years. Their examples include the Challenger disaster and the Ford Pinto case, arguing that the decision-makers in these cases did not recognise the ethical overtones of the choices that they made.

This writer believes that adoption of the institutional practices suggested in this paper will help ensure that an ethical issue is recognised; and that the ethically desirable action is implemented.

## II. Speaking out against wrongdoing

People in close contact with an organisation will be the first to identify a wrongdoing. Several major research studies, world-wide, have confirmed that blowing the whistle on illegal or unethical action is the most effective way to stop it (Association of Certified Fraud Examiners, 2006, 2010; Durant, A, 2004, Dyck, Morse, and Zingales, 2007; Brown, 2008, Transparency International, 2009).

But to speak out is a dangerous practice. Whistleblowers are crucified (Alford, 2001). Legislation that encourages and protects those that speak out has now been introduced in most countries. Stock exchange listings have been expanded to require a whistleblowing facility. Even



national standards now encourage it. These practices and their multiple problems should be taught to students of moral philosophy. Examine, however, the course outline for any degree in moral philosophy anywhere in the world. Blowing the whistle on wrongdoing will not be included.

### III. Adopting codes of ethics that are effective

There is a wide cynicism about codes of ethics – that they are public relations documents written by senior management to give the impression that the organisation is honest. Alternatively they are designed to stop employees misappropriating the organisation's funds or equipment. Research in recent years, however, documented by AAPAE, has determined that codes aimed at countering the actual ethical issues faced by staff, identified and managed by those who confront these issues, are likely to be effective. Making sure that codes are effective, however, is not a topic of interest to moral philosophers, including those writing on ethics. Our particular target is the claimed *Ethics Toolkit* (Baggini and Fosl, 2007), which has nothing on codes (or any other ethics tools). Codes can in fact be effective – the underlying evidence for this comes from the behavioural sciences and development economics.

### IV. Policies adopted by private organisations to strengthen ethical practices

Probably bought on by the multitude of unethical business practices that have surfaced in recent years, including the GFC, these practices include:

*Growth in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).* Michael Por-

ter, perhaps the foremost academic in business strategy, notes the link between corporate strategy and corporate social responsibility: "CSR has emerged as an inescapable priority for business leaders in every country," he tells us.

*An ethics role for professional societies.* These institutions are codifying ethical practices for the disciplines they cover. The majority are merely exhortations to be good, and as such, are somewhat useless. A few, however, tackle actual ethical issues facing that discipline.

*Trade Practices and anti-trust.* Moves to reach agreements with members of cartels to provide evidence in return for easier treatment have become near universal in recent years.

*Legislation governing business dealings.* Typical are the Sarbanes Oxley and the Dodd Frank Acts in the US, the strengthened Corporations Act in Australia and the Bribery Act in the UK. Some of this legislation is aimed at combating one of the ethical blinkers noted by Bazerman and Tenbrunsel – motivated blindness – an inability to recognise an unethical act when it is to your advantage. They note that Enron was Arthur Andersen's second largest client – whose consulting fees were greater than auditing fees.

*Securities exchanges principles.* Again there has been increased emphasis on ethical behaviour exercised through the share markets. The growth in ethical investments,

listings requiring ethical corporate governance, and the development of codes of ethics for exchange staff, are the most prominent.

### V. Ensuring honest government

Another growth field, described by some as "exponential", is Integrity Agencies. This term is specifically Australian, although it does include anti-corruption agencies (as they are termed elsewhere). All are aimed at strengthening ethical behaviour in the public sector. They cover illegal along with unethical activity. The list of wrongs that one anti-corruption agency prohibits, for instance, are actions that "could adversely affect, either directly or indirectly, the honest or impartial exercise of official functions". Other prohibited actions involve a breach of public trust, or the misuse of information or material. These actions are not necessarily illegal.

Integrity agencies range from Crime Commissions to Ombudsman Offices. The latter have expanded from their traditional role of hearing complaints about public administrators to agencies responsible for public sector ethics. Some Ombudsman Offices manage whistleblower issues. Integrity and anti-corruption agencies work in a variety of ways towards strengthening ethical practices – by education, providing ethics consulting services, advice and training, by accepting complaints on misbehaviour, and by encouraging and protecting whistleblowers.

### VI. Adoption of empirical findings

The learning processes in philosophy are based on argument. John Lachs condemns this approach. I quote from *Philosophy Now*, in an article that questions whether philosophy can still produce public intellectuals (September/October, 2009).

**"Making sure that codes of ethics are effective, however, is not a topic of interest to moral philosophers."**

## Building Ethical Behaviour

*"Young philosophers (in the US) are taught that argument is king ...that knowledge of facts is superfluous"*

Another example is Louis Pojman and Vauhn Lewis in a widely-used text, *Philosophy. The Quest for Truth*:

*"The major task (of philosophy) is to analyse and construct arguments";* and again:

*"The hallmark of philosophy is centered in the argument"*

Pojman makes the statement in the 6<sup>th</sup> edition: *"I have striven to present opposing views on virtually every topic."* It is a strange statement to make in a book questing for truth, for it is indeed rare that truth has two sides. Argument will be taught to you as the critical analytical tool in an undergraduate philosophy degree. If you have an ethics class in your children's school, they will be taught to argue – not to investigate, gather facts and analyse.

Argument is an enjoyable process when we are simply speculating. It is totally inadequate for critical analytical thinking. The inadequacy of argument is reflected in the criticism of anti-corruption and integrity agencies as instruments for bringing about greater ethical behaviour in the public sector. Some moral philosophers decry these developments. Jeff Malpas, for instance, at a recent AAPAE conference, argued that the language of ethics:

*"seems increasingly to have been appropriated by bureaucratized systems of political and managerial control based around notions of risk management, audit, accountability and*

*assurance."* He complained that it presages *"the demise in ethics."*

His contention pits argument against the techniques of empirical research – surveys, fact finding, and evaluation methodology. I can personally quote other examples. Two professors of philosophy argued with me that blowing the whistle on wrongdoing did not work. They were employing theoretical argument against the clear findings of empirical research.

### VII. Teaching a capability to implement these findings

It has long been argued that people cannot be taught to be ethical. However, in my recent chapter on teaching ethics, with Vanya Smythe, we argue that "we can provide those who wish to work within an ethical environment with the knowledge and capabilities to bring about that environment." We build this statement on research that has found: (i) the human race has evolved with at least cooperative instincts, and possibly ethical instincts; and, (ii) that people do desire to work in an ethical environment. An ethics course, built on the assertions of this paper, would to a large extent satisfy those desires.

### Implications

I turn finally to the ethical significance of these paragraphs. The immediate losers, of course, are those young people who want to work in applied ethics and who take a philosophy degree to do so. Most of them want their work to matter, to have an impact. But they have an inadequate education in ethics with which to make this impact. They are given nei-

ther the knowledge of these current practices nor the skills with which to further develop the practices. I could even claim that their teaching gives them an intellectual handicap with which to face the world. For they are given analytical approaches that are completely inadequate for decision-making in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The bigger loser however, is society at large. Research into ways that society can strengthen ethical practices is left to other disciplines. And ethics is not a mainstream component of those other disciplines. The dominant discipline for ethics is philosophy. The research, the developments and strengthening of ethical behaviour should come from that discipline. Currently it does not. And until the discipline changes, it will not.

There are other losers, however - those moral philosophers who enjoy arguing. Or who wish to advance themselves in departments of philosophy. They will also lose the joy of arguing through the philosophical thoughts of history. Those that wish to make a difference in applied ethics will also not have much fun, for they will need to learn a much wider range of analytical skills and practices - sampling techniques, evaluation research, and statistical analysis for a start.

They might in the process, however, make the world a more ethical place in which to live. So the issue raised a question for our philosophy café. And other cafes philo around the world. What path should we follow?

Peter Bowden.

## Are you currently facing an ethical challenge in your professional life?

John Neil

John Neil, a PhD candidate from the University of New South Wales, is conducting a study exploring the emotional dimensions of people's experiences of ethically challenging situations in organisations. John is particularly keen to discuss these issues with people who are dealing with such a dilemma at the moment to establish how they deal with the situation as it unfolds or develops over time. John would like to interview you to explore the ethical challenge you are facing, the emotional dimensions of your experience and how the organisation you work in responds to the issue.

The research has been approved by the UNSW human research ethics committee (approval notification 11-134) and any information you provide will remain confidential and will be de-identified in any reports or journal articles written from the research.

If you are interested in partici-

pating, please go to the study website or Facebook page (see links below) to find out more about this research and how you can contact him.

This is a great opportunity to have your experiences heard as well as to contribute to a better understanding of ethically challenging workplaces.

**Summary aim:** This study will contribute to a better understanding of lived experience of ethical challenges in organisations. Through an examination of the experience of individuals involved in ethical challenges, the study will explore the affective/emotional dimensions of ethical dilemmas and the ways in which ethics is directly experienced and enacted in organisational life. The study will explore the affective-emotional contexts in which individuals navigate ethical challenges in their professional lives, and the contexts in which ethics and ethical challenges are understood and managed. These con-

texts include the formal processes of reporting, compliance, formal ethics codes, along with the influence of organisational culture, leadership and the 'feeling rules' that circulate in organisations. The study aims to better understand how affect-emotion impinges upon, influences and colours the contexts in which ethical situations are experienced including decisions leading to ethical action/inaction.

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### ***Journal Notice: Solidarity Second Issue.***

The second issue has appeared of *Solidarity: The Journal of Catholic Social Thought and Secular Ethics*. It is published by the University of Notre Dame, Sydney campus.

The lead article is by John Finnis. His contribution, 'Equality and Different' was presented at the University of Notre Dame as the inaugural Michael O'Dea oration. Other articles are:

Global Justice: An Anti-Collectivist and Pro-Causal Ethic (James Franklin)

Ecological Disaster & Jacques Ellul's Theological Vision (Paul Tyson and Matthew John Paul Tan)

Universalism in Catholic Social Thought: 'Accompaniment' as Trinitarian Praxis (Kathleen Glenister Roberts)

Bioethics, Culture and Collaboration (Nicholas Tonti-Fillipini)

Nature and Grace and the Appearance of Insincerity. Silencing the Catholic Voice (Gerard A. O'Shea)

Review: *Justice: Rights and Wrongs*, Nicholas Wolterstorff (Jeffery Nicholas)

Review: *Catholic Bioethics for a New Millennium*, Anthony Fisher (Nicholas Tonti-Fillipini)

Submissions to the journal are welcome. The journal's website is <http://researchonline.nd.edu.au/solidarity/>

"Making the right moves...."

# AAPAE

## AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION FOR PROFESSIONAL AND APPLIED ETHICS

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The broad purpose of the AAPAE is to encourage awareness of, and foster discussion of issues in, applied and professional ethics. It provides a meeting point for practitioners from various fields and academics with specialist expertise and welcomes everyone who wants or needs to think and talk about applied or professional ethics.

The AAPAE fosters and publishes research in applied and professional ethics as well as attempting to create connections with special interest groups. The AAPAE does not endorse any particular viewpoint, but rather aims to promote a climate in which different and differing views, concerns, and approaches can be expressed and discussed.

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