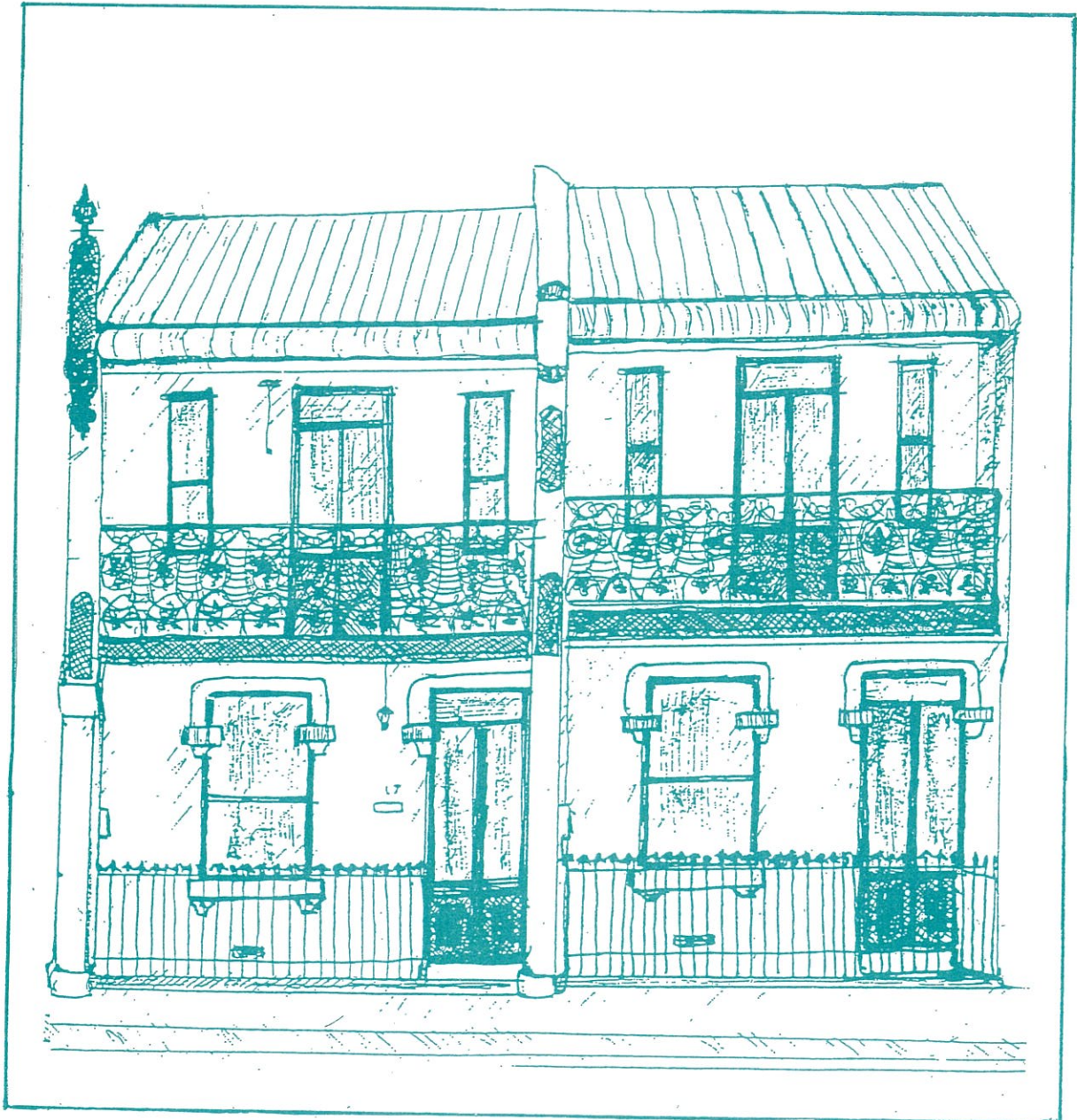


# Plunkett Centre



Annual Report 2006



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY



St Vincents  
& Mater Health  
Sydney

## 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.



# Management Committee

## **From the University:**

Professor John Coll, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and International)  
Chairman, until March, 2006  
Professor Peter Wilson Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and International),  
Chairman, from May, 2006  
Dr John Ozolins, Head, School of Philosophy

## **From the Hospital:**

Ms. Mary Foley, Chief Executive Officer, St. Vincents & Mater Health  
Mr. Mark Hales, Director of Mission, St. Vincents & Mater Health

## **From the Centre:**

Associate Professor Bernadette Tobin, Director

## **In attendance:**

Mrs Linda Purves, Administrative Officer (Minutes Secretary)  
Dr Stephen Buckle, Senior Lecturer in Philosophy

## From the Management Committee



The year 2006 was another highly successful year for the Plunkett Centre. The Centre continued its research, education and participation in public discussion of ethical issues in health care and medical research. The many important initiatives of the Centre during 2006 are described in this report.

The Plunkett Centre is named after John Hubert Plunkett, a great friend and benefactor of the first Sisters of Charity in Australia, at various times the chief law officer in New South Wales, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sydney, and the man personally responsible for extending the protection of the law in this state to convicts, assigned servants and aborigines.

The Centre is committed to providing leadership in bioethics and the ethics of medical research. It operates on the basis of an agreement between Australian Catholic University and St Vincents & Mater Health, an agreement which goes back to 1989.

In my capacity as Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and International) at Australian Catholic University, and on behalf of Ms Mary Foley, the Chief Executive Officer of St Vincents & Mater Health, I wish to acknowledge the valuable work of the Centre and to express the appreciation of the Management Committee on the very significant work of the Centre. The Centre's staff are to be congratulated on the success of their undertakings in 2006. As I took up my position in May, 2006. I would also like to acknowledge the work of my predecessor in the role, Professor John Coll. It has been a great pleasure to become acquainted with the work of staff of the Plunkett Centre in my own first year at the University.

**Peter Wilson**  
**Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and International)**  
**Australian Catholic University**  
**24<sup>th</sup> April 2006**

# Staffing

## Director

Bernadette Tobin MA Med (Melb), PhD (Cantab)  
Associate Professor and Reader in Philosophy,  
School of Philosophy, Australian Catholic University  
Contact: [b.tobin@plunkett.acu.edu.au](mailto:b.tobin@plunkett.acu.edu.au)

## Academic Staff

Gerald Gleeson STB (CIS) MA (Cantab) PhD (Leuven)  
Professor of Philosophy, Catholic Institute of Sydney  
Contact: [g.gleeson@cis.catholic.edu.au](mailto:g.gleeson@cis.catholic.edu.au)

Stephen Buckle MA Hons (MaqU), PhD (ANU)  
Senior Lecturer in Philosophy, School of Philosophy,  
Australian Catholic University  
Contact: [s.buckle@plunkett.acu.edu.au](mailto:s.buckle@plunkett.acu.edu.au)

Helen McCabe RN BHA (UNSW) MA (ACU) PhD (ACU)  
Research Associate, Plunkett Centre for Ethics  
Contact: [h.mccabe@plunkett.acu.edu.au](mailto:h.mccabe@plunkett.acu.edu.au)

## Visiting

Warren Reich BA (St. Joseph's College, Alabama), STB  
(Catholic University of America), STL (Catholic University of  
America), STD (Gregorian University, Rome), Distinguished  
Professor of Religion and Ethics, Professor Emeritus of  
Bioethics, Georgetown University.  
Contact: [wreich01@georgetown.edu](mailto:wreich01@georgetown.edu)

## Research Student

Mr David Wu, Faculty of Medicine, University of New  
South Wales

## Administrative Staff

Linda Purves JP  
Contact: [l.purves@plunkett.acu.edu.au](mailto:l.purves@plunkett.acu.edu.au)  
[plunkett@plunkett.acu.edu.au](mailto:plunkett@plunkett.acu.edu.au)

## From the Director

You will find in the following pages a summary of the research, teaching, consultation and public service that characterizes the work of the Plunkett Centre. Three projects are worth highlighting.



In 2006, Catholic Health Australia published two new sets of guidelines which respond to contemporary interest in 'advance directives': *A guide for people considering their future health care* and *A guide for health care professionals implementing a future health care plan*. Their publication represented the result of work of Bishop Anthony Fisher, Dr Elizabeth Hepburn, Dr Nicholas Tonti-Filippini and two of us from the Centre. The first guideline recommends the appointment of 'health care proxies' and counsels against the execution of 'living wills', and the second guideline advises professionals who care for people who have planned their future care.

At the same time, we began a research project designed to find out how people with chronic illness would wish decisions about their treatment and care to be made, both in circumstances in which they are able to participate in the decision-making and in circumstances in which they are not able to do so. David Wu, a third-year medical student from the University of New South Wales, interviewed patients in the Dialysis Centre and the Diabetes Outpatients' Centre at St Vincent's Hospital as part of his 'Independent Learning Project'. We shall now complete the project by talking to outpatients in both the Oncology Centre and the Hospice.

And, finally, the Centre held its Annual Symposium at the Justice and Police Museum last year on the theme "*Today's Moral Directions: Tomorrow's Moral Values*". Speakers included Raimond Gaita from Melbourne and Warren Reich from Washington DC.

**Bernadette Tobin**  
**Director**  
**15 March 2007**





Plunkett Centre Management Committee in 2006  
pictured left to right  
Mr. Mark Hales, Ms. Mary Foley, Professor John Coll,  
A/Professor John Ozolins and A/Professor Bernadette Tobin



# Financial Report for 2006

<b>Income</b>	
C/Forward	28,428
SV&MH	153,125
ACU	119,474
Subscriptions	5,450
Seminars	2,904
RIBG	15,174
Other grants	13,156
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>337,711</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	
Salaries	238,393
Rent	26,854
Running Costs	
Computer Maintenance	8,800
Other	1,680
General Costs	
Stationery & Furniture	5,153
Other	
Internet Access	1,108
Books	4,738
Journals	10,121
Photocopier/lease	4,872
Printing	3,690
Travel	6,635
Internal Non-Salary	5,472
Computer Purc/asset	5,323
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>323,839</b>
<b>Carried Forward</b>	<b>13,872</b>



Dr. Stephen Buckle (Plunkett Centre) and Ms. Miriam Cosic (*Sydney Morning Herald*) at the Justice and Police Museum Seminar, June, 2006.

Mr. David Leary (Come In Centre) and Dr. Gerry Gleeson (Plunkett Centre) at the Justice and Police Museum Seminar, June 2006.



Mr. Steven Rubic (St. Vincent's Private Hospital), Professor Genevieve Lloyd (Macquarie University) and Professor Warren Reich (Georgetown University) at the Justice and Police Museum Seminar, June, 2006.

## **Research Projects**

*Throughout the year, each member of the Centre conducts his or her own research. This research reflects either an existing intellectual interest of the individual researcher or a new matter that invites philosophical reflection. Listed below are general descriptions of the subjects, both continuing and new, on which our staff were engaged last year.*

### **Stephen Buckle**

David Hume's philosophy

Utilitarian and related trends in modern moral thought.

### **Gerald Gleeson**

Problems of co-operation as analysed in the Catholic tradition

### **Helen McCabe**

Managing pain ethically

Advance Care Planning

### **Warren Reich**

Georgetown Chivalry Project

### **Bernadette Tobin**

Ethical issues in the medical treatment and nursing care of children

Patients' preferences about control over medical decision making



## Clinical Ethics In-Service Program

*One of the marks of a good teaching hospital is that it provides plenty of opportunity for in-service education of its staff. For some years now St Vincent's Hospital, the Mater Hospital and the Children's Hospital at Westmead, have included 'cases which raise significant ethical issues' in their in-service programmes. Generally a case is presented by a health care professional, commented on by a member of the Plunkett Centre and then the case is discussed by the presenter's colleagues. Such in-service education also offers opportunities for staff of our Centre to appreciate the contemporary ethical challenges in the provision of health care at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.*

- John and Jane who do not wish to be moved to a nursing home  
\*with Ms Michelle Henderson, Sacred Heart Hospice and the Social Work Department of St Vincent's Hospital
- Paul: the survivor of extensive burns  
\* with Dr Jonathan Egan, Paediatric Intensive Care, Children's Hospital at Westmead
- Patient who refuses treatment and care: Is he capable of making his own decisions? If not, who is the decision-maker?  
\*with Ms Leslie Sinclair, Nurse Unit Manager, Sacred Heart Hospice
- Further ethical issues in the care of a woman who does not wish to be moved to a nursing home  
\*with Social Department, St Vincent's Hospital
- Decision-making about placement from Palliative Care  
\*with Ms Lesley Sinclair and Mr Stewart Clarke of Sacred Heart Hospice
- Ethical challenges for social workers because of their access to a 'Samaritan Fund'  
\* with Social Work Department, St Vincent's Hospital
- Severe obesity: when does this become a matter for child protection authorities?  
\*with Dr Louise Baur, Ms Shirley Alexander, Children's Hospital at Westmead.

## **Publications**

*Peer-reviewed publications are a recognized mark of intellectual accomplishment within the academic community. At the Plunkett Centre, we also value other kinds of publications, in particular those which appear in the informal ethical literature which is read more widely by health care professionals.*

### **Book Chapters**

McCabe H.M. "Christianity's contribution to the understanding of the role of the family in Australian Society", *Shaping the Good Society in Australia*, Australian Christian National Forum, edited by Stuart Piggin, (2006) 127-137

Tobin B.M. "Our Genetic Future", *Issues for Church and Society in Australia*, St Paul's Publications, Sydney, (2006) 33-46

### **Peer Reviewed Publications**

Buckle S. "Consequentialism and Utilitarianism: Form and Content in Recent Moral Theory", *Ethics Education*, Melbourne, (2006) 12 No.2, 13-21.

Tobin B.M. "Withdrawal of neonatal mechanical ventilation against the parents' wishes", *Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health*, (with David Isaacs, Henry Kilham, Adrienne Gordon, Heather Jeffery, William Tarnow-Mordi, Janet Woolnough, Julie Hamblin) (2006) 42 311-315

### **Other Publications**

Gleeson G. "Cooperation without Complicity" in *Bioethics Outlook* (2006) 17:2 9-12

McCabe H.M. "The Provider-insurer relationship: understanding its ethical nature", *Health Matters* (July, 2006) 37, 8-10

McCabe H.M. "The Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme – is it a fair thing?", *Health Matters* (September, 2006) 38, 8-10

McCabe H.M. "Paying attention to the pharmaceutical industry", *Health Matters* (December, 2006) 39, 18-20

Tobin B.M. "Future Care Planning", *Bioethics Outlook*, (2006), 17 No 4, pp 9-11

### **Book Reviews**

McCabe H.M. "Rationing Sanity", *Bioethics Outlook*, (2006) Vol.17: 3, 7-12



**John Hubert Plunkett**



## Consultancies

*The Plunkett Centre offers a confidential 'ethics consultation' service to health care professionals in St Vincent's & Mater Health in Sydney and also to other health professionals in other institutions in Sydney, New South Wales and beyond. Our sponsoring institutions consider the use of this service by external health professions as a form of community service: it is also a valuable source of 'ethical data' for members of the Centre.*

### **Total number of consultations undertaken by staff of the Centre:**

- from within St Vincent's and Mater Health: 9
- from other healthcare institutions/practitioners: 19

### **Selection of issues addressed:**

- Ethical issues in using prison labour for health care service
- Guidance on ethical issues in palliative care
- Ethical issues in administering symptom relief to incompetent patient
- General principles implicit in *Code of Ethical Standards for Catholic Health and Aged Care Service in Australia*
- Medical treatment and nursing care for an elderly man
- Ethical issues in tendering to conduct examination of decision-making processes of HRECs
- Ethical issues in institutional response to possibility of nosocomial contagion:
- Attitudes of doctors to providing nutrition and hydration to patients who are in a post-coma unresponsive state
- Problems of cooperation for nurses involved in research project which investigates attitudes of patients to problems of infertility
- Protocol which addresses ethics of organ donation following 'cardiac' (as distinct from 'brain') death
- Proposed Charter of Care in a paediatric hospital
- Future Care Planning
- Discussions about NFR: are they always necessary?

- Goals and objectives of Catholic medical ethics centre
- Family's role in decision-making in proposed treatment for patient with Guillame-Barré Syndrome
- Caring for patient with motor neurone disease
- Use of patient record from spouse's medical practice in research project
- Wording of institution's ethical commitments
- Surgery for patient with chronic schizophrenia
- Differing standards for assessing patient competence
- Legal advice for patients with mental illness
- Prospective patient whose living will would preclude her from receiving normal post-operative care
- Editorial committee for symposium on spirituality and medicine in a medical journal
- English citizen on transplantation waiting list
- Scientific advisor on pregnancy counselling
- Medical advisor for medical council
- Suitability of American literature on advance care planning

Year	Total number	Source by Location		Source by professional group				
		SV&MH	Other	Administrators	Doctors	Nurses	Allied health practitioners	Others
1997	34	11	23	4	5	7	4	14
1998	38	14	24	5	6	8	3	16
1999	39	15	24	6	9	9	4	13
2000	54	34	20	18	6	6	4	22
2001	64	35	29	22	12	6	2	22
2002	38	24	14	10	6	4	7	11
2003	17	9	9	8	9	8	1	5
2004	27	15	12	7	7	1	4	8
2005	32	12	20	6	6	1	7	14
2006	28	9	19	4	7	2	3	12

## **Presentations**

*Staff of the Centre are frequently asked to participate in seminars, conferences, workshops conducted by other groups. We list these below.*

### **Gerald Gleeson**

“Theology of Marriage”: *Australian Council of Natural Family Planning*, Sydney, NSW

“Sexuality in the Christian Tradition”: *Catholic Education Office Seminar*, Parramatta, NSW

“Cooperation without complicity”: *Biennial Conference, Philosophy Religion & Culture*, Strathfield, NSW

### **Helen McCabe**

“Christianity and the Family”: *Australia’s Christian Heritage Forum*, Parliament House, Canberra

“End-of-Life decision making”: *Teleforum* organised by Catholic Health Australia, ACT

“At the Right Time for the Right Reason”: *Neringah Hospital*, NSW

“CHA ethical guidelines on Advance Care Planning”: *Sacred Heart Hospice*, Sydney, NSW

### **Warren Reich**

“The Caring and Violent God: prospects for care in an angry world”: *Today’s Moral Directions: Tomorrow’s Moral Values*, Justice and Police Museum, Sydney, NSW

### **Bernadette Tobin**

“Decisions at the end of life: ethical issues”: *Rural Seminar Series of Department of Health*, Charles Sturt University, Bathurst, NSW

“Ethical Challenges in palliative care”: *Sacred Heart Hospice Seminar*, Sydney

“Ethical Teaching in the Catholic Tradition: its ‘natural law’ status”: *Seminar for Teachers*, Lidcombe

“Genetic technologies: science, ethics and religion”: *Spirituality in the Pub*, Rose Hill (with Dr Gabrielle O’Sullivan)



“Ethical challenges in advance care planning”, *Sacred Heart Hospice Seminar*, Sydney

“Future Care Planning: Guidelines for people and professionals”: *Catholic Health Australia Conference*, Melbourne

“Ethical issues in human reproduction”: *first and second year medical students*, University of New South Wales

“Ethical principles informing good palliative care”: *Sacred Heart Hospice Seminar*, Sydney

“Future Care Planning”: *a teleforum*, Catholic Health Australia

“Twenty-five years of reproductive technology: a philosopher’s perspective”, *Annual Conference*, Fertility Society of Australasia, Sydney

“*Therapeutic Cloning: What are the facts? What’s right? What should our politicians do?*”: Australian Catholic University Seminar, Melbourne,

“Future Care Planning: the new guidelines for health care professionals”: *St Joseph’s Auburn Seminar*, Sydney

24<sup>th</sup> November: ‘Bioethics in the Christian Tradition’, Parramatta Catholic Education Office Seminar, Sydney



Mr. Joseph Quilter (Honours Student, ACU) and Dr. Helen McCabe at the Justice and Police Museum Seminar “Today’s Moral Directions: Tomorrow’s Moral Values” June, 2006

# ***Bioethics Outlook***

*For seventeen years, the Centre has published its quarterly Bioethics Outlook. As indicated below, its contents normally include articles, reviews, discussions of new guidelines relevant to the conduct of medical and health care, etc. We have a loyal group of subscribers who remain with us even when, as in 2006, we were forced to raise our subscription rates!*

## **Volume 17**

### Number 1

*International Colloquium of Catholic Bioethicists*

Introduction by William Sullivan MD, PhD

*Consensus Statement on Dignity in Illness, Disability, and Dying and a Reponse to UNESCO's Universal Draft Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights*

### Number 2

*The "Stranger" Across Our Borders*

by John Quilter

*Cooperation with Complicity: a debate between Bishop Anthony Fisher and Professor Cathleen Kaveny: Review by Gerald Gleeson*

### Number 3

*In my prayers I asked outright for wisdom*

by Brian Dwyer

*In Memoriam Note "Vale Brian Dwyer"*

by Bernadette Tobin

*Rationing Sanity: Review by Helen McCabe*

### Number 4

*Illness, ageing and bioethics*

By David Langsford

*Future Care Planning*

by Bernadette Tobin

## Submissions

*It is good practice for bodies such as the National Health and Medical Research Council to submit proposed guidelines, in draft form, to the community for public consultation and discussion. It is an important part of the work of the Centre that we assist the hospital's Bioethics Committee to make submissions on matters which lie within its remit. These are prepared by our staff, working with experts from medicine, nursing and other health care professions. In 2006 we prepared the following submissions:*

Developing NHMRC *Ethical Guidelines for the Care of People in Post-Coma Unresponsiveness (vegetative state) or a Minimally Responsive State* – An Issues paper: Targeted Consultation Feedback (with Mr Rodney Smith and Dr Mark Nicholls)

Submission re NHMRC Consultation Draft of February 2006: *Organ and Tissue Donation after Death* (with Dr Priya Nair and Dr Tony Evers)

Submission re NHMRC Consultation Draft of August 2006: *Organ and Tissue Donation by Living Donors* (with Dr Tim Furlong)



Linda Purves, Administrator of the Plunkett Centre



## **Media**

*Over the last twenty-five years, there has been a remarkable resurgence of interest in the challenges faced by both individual health care professionals in their daily activities and by their professions as a whole. Staff of the Centre are sometimes called upon to comment on issues of ethical import in the public domain.*

### **Bernadette Tobin**

*Sun Herald:* Sex selection: interviewed by Erin O'Dwyer

*The Australian:* Organ and tissue donation after death: interviewed by Clara Pirani

*ABC Radio National:* Background briefing re Pregnancy Counselling Services: interviewed by Gordon Taylor

*Canberra Times:* Use of sperm from donors from overseas: interviewed by editorial staff

## **Teaching**

*The Plunkett Centre belongs in the Department of Philosophy at Australian Catholic University. Staff therefore undertake normal teaching and supervision responsibilities.*

### **Stephen Buckle**

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

Supervisor, PhD. Thesis, Informed Consent and Evidence Based Medicine.

Senior Lecturer in Philosophy, Bachelor of Arts, Australian Catholic University

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

### **Gerald Gleeson**

Presenter, *Intensive Bioethics Seminar*, Sydney

### **Helen McCabe**

Tutor, Ethics and Informatics 206, Australian Catholic University

### **Bernadette Tobin**

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 Seminar*, Sydney

Co-Supervisor, PhD. Thesis, On the distinction between killing and letting die from a medical perspective, University of Melbourne

## Other Appointments

### Stephen Buckle

Member, British Society for the History of Philosophy

### Gerald Gleeson

Member, Bioethics Committee, St. Vincents & Mater Health, Sydney

Member, Bioethics Committee, Calvary Hurstville Community Hospital, Sydney

Member of Council, St John's College, University of Sydney

### Bernadette Tobin

Member, Bioethics Committee, St. Vincents & Mater Health, Sydney

Founder & Trustee, Mary Philippa Brazill Trust

Member of Council, Guild of St. Luke

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

Director, Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation

Member, Clinical Ethics Advisory Panel, NSW Department of Health

Member of Editorial Board, *Theoretical Medicine and Bioethics*

Director, Garvan Institute of Medical Research



Dr. Van Nguyen, PhD Student at UNSW,  
who is the statistician for our research into patients' preferences  
about how medical decisions are made