

Reflection on SPRC Internship

Tarsha Gavin

Bachelor of Economic & Social Sciences (1st class Hons)/ Bachelor of Laws,
University of Sydney

From October 2009 to January 2010 I undertook an internship at the Social Policy Research Centre. Having completed honours in Government and International Relations at the University of Sydney and written a thesis in the area of social policy, I was interested in pursuing further research work in the field. SPRC's reputation as a premier social policy research institution in Australia is what attracted me to pursue this internship opportunity.

During my time at SPRC I worked on an Australian Research Council funded project that examines the views of young people experiencing economic adversity and social exclusion within a number of Australian states. This project closely aligned with my academic interests and gave me an insight into the dynamics of working on top-tier research projects. Through my contribution to this project I developed important research skills, including undertaking qualitative data analysis through use of the NVivo analysis software, and writing literature reviews. Furthermore, the flexibility and innovation of the internship program meant I had the chance to explore new and emerging areas of research. For example, I had the freedom to develop ideas for a research dissemination strategy for children and young people that would accompany the project, and I was able to make visits to research sites and meet with project partners in order to further cultivate this strategy.

Throughout the internship there were also numerous opportunities to pursue my academic interests and build knowledge and awareness of other areas of social policy research. I was able to attend monthly SPRC research seminars and conferences including the International Symposium on Child Inclusive Research, and a symposium on Capabilities, Freedoms and Policy Making in the Pacific Region held at UNSW.

Undertaking an internship at SPRC has been an invaluable experience and has equipped me with the skills and experience to pursue further research work. Working in partnership with an individual supervisor throughout the internship allowed me to tailor the internship to my specific research interests and future aspirations. Overall, it has been a pleasure to learn and work in a professional, collegial, teamwork environment with a group of renowned social policy researchers and academics.