

FROM THE INTERNS

The SPRC Internship Program is now up and running. The program provides an opportunity for exceptional students from Australia and overseas to gain practical social policy research and evaluation experience in a multi-disciplinary environment. During second semester 2007, the SPRC has been hosting four undergraduate students: Samantha Ner (Social Work, UNSW); Matthew Hatton (Social Science, University of Sydney); Elise Trask (Social Sciences/Law, Macquarie University) and Priyatharsheni Balachandran (Economics/Social Sciences, UNSW). Below, two of these interns describe their experiences at the SPRC.

Samantha Ner: I am currently studying social work and took a four-month internship at the SPRC to experience indirect methods of intervention such as research, policy and administration. So far, I have worked on projects about young carers, grandparents raising grandchildren and early intervention, which the SPRC intern coordinator matched to my interests.

I was incredibly fortunate to be able to attend the Australian Social Policy Conference, which was extremely interesting, as well as other seminars within the centre. My tasks have been transcription, developing a resource directory, using SPSS and endnote software programs, coding and assisting with literature reviews, and presenting my experiences in the intern/postgraduate workshop.

The skills that I have strengthened include administrative skills, data entry, listening, information gathering, writing, communication and organisation. During my time here I have cultivated a greater understanding of the role of research within the social policy arena and have acquired knowledge of research methodology and the issues facing disadvantaged groups.

Overall it has been a wonderful opportunity to learn from such professional staff with such a high level of expertise.

Matthew Hatton: As a fourth year Bachelor of Social Sciences student at the University of Sydney, I feel fortunate to have undertaken my internship at SPRC. It has a great reputation for research in areas related to my

interests (history, sociology and social policy).

The internship gave me the opportunity to participate in a research project concerning Horn of Africa young people and the ways mentoring can address their needs. I organised resources, and planned and wrote sections of the literature review for the project.

I also attended workshops and seminars as well as the Australian Social Policy Conference. SPRC has introduced me to a professional social research environment and improved my understanding of research methods and issues in Australian social policy research.

I have greatly benefited from this experience, having developed my writing and research skills and my appreciation for conducting social research.