

## ***‘Rights, compensation and the experience of receiving support services in Victoria’***

Presented by

***Raelene West***

**PhD Candidate**

Raelene West is a PhD candidate at the Centre for Health and Society, School of Population Health. She has worked in a number of areas within the ‘disability’ sector including advocacy and peer-support and has personal experience of living with an impairment and receiving support services. In addition to this recent health related research, Raelene also has an academic background in both historical and environmental studies.

This qualitative PhD study explores the experiences of adults who have acquired a permanent impairment of Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) receiving support services in Victoria, with particular emphasis on the experiences and understandings of associated compensatory processes and rights.

The study explores both the support and impact of the complex matrix of funding arrangements associated with the receipt of support services that has emerged across the state since the mid 1980s, most notably in relation to the establishment of community-based models of support for people with impairment following deinstitutionalisation. This complex matrix of funding arrangements has come to include the provision of support services through multiple numbers of support service programs, all with distinctly differing parameters and limitations and all funded by a variety of state based statutory authorities and varying levels of government. The study also explores the further complexity of experiences of receipt or non-receipt of compensation and the impact of these experiences associated with receipt of support services. The study concludes by exploring general understanding and knowledge of rights and rights based legal instruments and then the specific influence of rights and rights based instruments on the experience of receiving support services.

The study utilises a relativist framework and interpretivist approach to explore how participants have individually constructed and understood these experiences, while examining the inter-relationships, shared social realities and common impacts of policy on these experiences. Data was obtained through document analysis and in depth semi structured interviews of people with a SCI receiving support services provided the state’s major funders of support services: the Transport Accident Commission (TAC), the Victorian WorkCover Authority (VWA) and the Department of Human Services (DHS). A Constructivist Grounded Theory analysis approach was utilised to draw on the subjective viewpoints and interpretations of participant experiences and generate knowledge and theory from these experiences.

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**Thursday 7th May**

**1-2pm**

**Room 410, Level 4, 207 Bouverie Street, Carlton**

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*Confirmation Seminar*