Well-being, Personal Wholeness and the Social Fabric

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Edited by

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and James R. Harrison

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCING WELL-BEING,
PERSONAL WHOLENESS
AND THE AUSTRALIAN SOCIAL FABRIC:
ANCIENT AND MODERN PERSPECTIVES

JAMES R. HARRISON

In discussing well-being and the social fabric, a pressing question is what definition of "well-being" should be adopted for our study and under what discipline should we investigate the concept. We could, for example, begin with the WHO-5 Well-being Index.[1] This questionnaire consists of "5 simple and non-invasive questions".[2] It is designed to investigate the "subjective well-being of the respondents" and has research applications for clinical practice as a useful screening tool for depression and for the comparison of well-being between groups.[3] But to adopt a sharply focused psychological approach to well-being overlooks the different approaches to well-being in antiquity and its contribution to the Western intellectual tradition. Further, the clinical focus of the questionnaire means that it will not capture the wider social and cultural dimensions of personal well-being, the focus of this volume in an Australian context. So rather than adopt an overly precise definition of well-being from the outset that

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[1] For an assessment of the effectiveness of the WHO questionnaire, see Christian Winther Topp, Søren Dinesen Østergaard, Susan Søndergaard, and Per Bech, "The WHO-5 Well-being Index: A Systematic Review of the Literature", *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics* 84 (2015) 167-76. DOI: 10.1159/000376585, accessed 9 September, 2015.

[2] The questionnaire asks respondents to rate from 5 ("All of the time") to 0 ("At no time") how they felt over the last two weeks regarding these five statements: (a) "I have felt cheerful and in good spirits", (b) "I have felt calm and relaxed", (c) "I have felt active and vigorous", (d) "I woke up feeling fresh and rested", (e) "my daily life has been filled with things that interest me".

[3] Topp, Østergaard, Søndergaard, and Bech, "The WHO-5 Well-being Index", 174.

generates our entire approach in this interdisciplinary volume, we will introduce readers to a variety of disciplinary approaches to well-being and its definition, drawing from past and present paradigms.

This introduction will discuss the Jewish and Graeco-Roman understandings of "well-being" so that we can understand better what voices from antiquity said on the issue. If we properly situate the early Christian and patristic perspectives on human welfare in their historical context, we are more likely to hear better the distinctive contributions of believers to ancient conceptions of human flourishing. In terms of the contemporary context, the modern scholarly literature on "happiness", which draws upon ancient eudaimonic language and (in some cases) the virtue theory of antiquity, will be explored as well. This will throw light on how traditional and modern theologies of well-being intersect with contemporary concerns. We will confine our investigation to the "happiness" literature dating from the year 2000 onwards, given the explosion of research in the area.

Additionally, a brief exploration of "social" well-being in contemporary Australia will be undertaken, focusing upon (a) Australian measures of well-being, (b) indigenous and regional perspectives on the issue, and (c) a series of institutional approaches to human flourishing (i.e. the family, educational, workplace and ecclesiastical contexts). While this overview does not exhaust or represent all Australian engagements with well-being in our diverse, pluralist, multicultural and increasingly secular country, it nonetheless provides an aperture through which we can view where many Australians are currently situated in terms of their personal and communal happiness and how the Christian tradition, ancient and modern, engages that. It is hoped that the perspectives aired on well-being in Australia in this introduction to the book will spark flashes of recognition among readers from other countries. Last, we will conclude by looking at the outbreak of (what I would term) a "cancer of the Australian soul", which, I will argue, is diminishing our capacity as a historically compassionate people to respond to international crises and mass movements of refugees in a way that enhances well-being in Australia and South-East Asia more widely.

Graeco-Roman and Jewish Concepts of Well-being

The Graeco-Roman concept of *eudaimonia*:
Socrates and Aristotle

In the Graeco-Roman world the concept of personal and communal well-being is linked to *eudaimonia* (εὐδαιμονία: "prosperity", "happiness", or, possibly, "human flourishing"; εὐδαίμων: "with a good spirit" [or "destiny"], "fortunate").[4] In the ancient mind, human virtue (or "excellence": ἀρετή) and happiness are intimately connected. The moral excellences are "the psychological basis for carrying out the activities of a human life well". [5] This produces the fruits of personal happiness for the morally worthy, but mediocre and even deleterious results for individuals occur when a life is lived imprudently without the proper moral restraints and discipline. It is important to realise, however, that ancient philosophers, in contrast to modernity, spoke of "happiness" as the consistent, disciplined, active exercise of virtue in the soul, as opposed to the ephemeral experience of happy emotions espoused in modern popular culture. Furthermore, as Richard Parry observes,[6] "ancient moral theory is *agent-centered* while modern moral theory is *action-centered*". As Parry elaborates,

> … ancient moral theory explains morality in terms that focus on the moral agent. These thinkers are interested in what constitutes, e.g., a just person. They are concerned about the state of mind and character, the set of values, the attitudes to oneself and to others, and the conception of one's own place in the common life of a community that belong to just persons simply insofar as they are just.[7]

Two brief case studies of the Greek philosophers Socrates and Aristotle will demonstrate this.

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[4] For a general discussion of *eudaimonia*, see Øyvind Rabbås, Eyjólfur K. Emilsson, Hallvard Fossheim, and Miira Tuominen, eds., *The Quest for the Good Life: Ancient Philosophers on Happiness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), *passim.*
[5] Richard Parry, "Ancient Ethical Theory", in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2014 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, URL = http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2014/entries/ethics-ancient/>, accessed 10 September, 2016.
[6] Parry, "Ancient Ethical Theory".
[7] Parry, "Ancient Ethical Theory".

Greek moral philosophers conceived the goal of human beings and happiness itself as "godlikeness", which was achieved through the emulation of the deity, a sentiment found in Plato and Aristotle (Plato, *Theaet.* 176a5-e4; *Tim.* 90c; Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 10.7.1117a12-b34). [8] Indeed, Plato considers virtue to be the most important constituent of happiness in the soul (*Resp.* 580b-c; cf. 441d-e; 442c; 442b-d; 443d), rebutting the proposition of the sophist Thrasymachus that conventional morality, including the virtue of justice, stymied the strong man from achieving *eudaimonia* (*Resp.* 338d). However, while the predecessors of the moral philosophers—spanning the period from Homer, Hesiod, Solon, Pindar, Xenophanes and Heraclitus [9]—worked tentatively towards this ethical ideal, they did not demonstrate the largely anthropocentric viewpoint of their philosophical successors. In the view of the Greek predecessors to Socrates, happiness was not secured by intellectual excellence alone because the favour of gods was not entirely at the prerogative of human beings. The early Greek poets and tragedians espoused a fatalistic view of happiness, viewing "as something beyond human agency, controlled by luck and the gods".[10] Nor was the idea of intellectual excellence as a good of the soul clearly articulated in this earlier period, being rather an idea that developed over a period of time.[11]

By contrast, Socrates, as depicted by Plato,[12] presents happiness as more subject to human control.[13] He argues that *eudaimonia* is experienced when the just and virtuous man places moral considerations ahead of all other things by acting virtuously and justly (Plato, *Apol.* 28b-C; *Crito* 49a-b). The pattern of justice lived out by the virtuous ensures the

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[8] Parry, "Ancient Ethical Theory".

[9] For discussion of the evidence, see Svavar Hrafn Svavarsson, "The Quest for the Good Life: Ancient Philosophers on Happiness", in *The Quest for the Good Life*, ed. Rabbås, Emilsson, Fossheim and Tuominen, 28-47, at 35-46.

[10] Shigehiro Oishi, Jesse Graham, Selin Kesebir, and Iolanda Costa Galinha, "Concepts of Happiness Across Time and Cultures", *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 39.5 (2013): 559-77, at 561.

[11] Svavarsson, "The Quest for the Good Life", 47.

[12] On *eudaimonia* in Socrates, see N. Reshotko, "Socrates and Plato on 'Sophia, Eudaimonia', and Their Facsimiles", *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 26.1 (2009): 1-19; C. Bobonich, "Socrates and *Eudaimonia*", in *The Cambridge Companion to Socrates*, ed. D. R. Morrison (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 293-332; Don Adams, "Sophia, Eutuchia and Eudaimonia in the Euthydemus", *Apeiron* 47.1 (2014): 48-80.

[13] Oishi, Graham, Kesebir, and Costa Galinha, "Concepts of Happiness Across Time and Cultures", 561.

stability of the city as opposed to its moral decline (*Resp.* 443a-b). Virtue, therefore, is necessary for happiness (*Gorg.* 470e), as is the quality of moderation for the proper running of the household and city (*Charm* 171e−172a). Furthermore, perfecting the soul in virtue leads to a healthy psychological self-esteem (*Apol.* 29d-e, 47e-48a). Moreover, precisely because nobody knowingly does bad (*Meno* 78a-b), virtue is based on knowledge (*Euthyd.* 280b-d, 281b-c). Wisdom is sufficient for the experience of genuine happiness (*Euthyd.* 279a-c, 281d-e, 282a-b). But, as C. Bobonich points out, there are gaps in the thinking of Socrates regarding *eudaimonia*. For example, Socrates does not provide any detailed account of what is actually "good" for human beings.[14] Later writers in the Greek ethical tradition would fill in this lacuna by subjecting human nature to a more rigorous analysis than Socrates (e.g. the Stoic depiction of the rationality of the human mind).[15] But how does Aristotle build upon the eudaimonic views of Socrates?

In the case of Aristotle,[16] the *Nichomachean Ethics* is the work that sets out best the philosopher's understanding of *eudaimonia*. Happiness is the supreme good, motivating all human actions, intellectual investigations, and crafts (Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 1049a). The happy life—whether that is understood as a life of political activity, the pursuit of philosophical study, or the enjoyment of bodily pleasure—is regarded as an end in itself (*Eth. nic.*1097a-1097b) and represents the supreme psychological good for its recipients (1098b). In Aristotle's ethics, a disciplined life steers between the extremes of behaviour, which were understood as either a state of excess or deficiency.[17] The disciplined pursuit of the ethical mean is essential lest vice becomes an accustomed habit or virtue deteriorates into excessive behaviour. A disciplined moral

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[14] Bobonich, "Socrates and *Eudaimonia*", 330.

[15] Bobonich, "Socrates and *Eudaimonia*", 331.

[16] On *eudaimonia* in Aristotle, see J. C. Dybikowski, "Is Aristotelian *Eudaimonia* Happiness?" *Dialogue* 20.2 (1981): 185-200; R. Heinaman, "Eudaimonia and Self-sufficiency in the Nicomachean Ethics", *Phronesis* 33.1 (1988): 31-53; R. Heinaman, "Rationality, Eudaimonia and Kakodaimonia in Aristotle", *Phronesis* 38.1 (1993): 31-56; M. A. Young, *Negotiating the Good Life: Aristotle and the Civil Society* (Hants: Aldershot, 2006); J. Yu, "Aristotle on 'Eudaimonia': After Plato's 'Republic'", *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 18.2 (2001): 115-38; G. Frölich, "Die aristotelische 'eudaimonia' und der Doppelsinn: vom guten Leben", *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte* 54 (2012): 21-44; C. Capuccino, "Happiness and Aristotle's Definition of *Eudaimonia*", *Philosophical Topics* 41.1 (2013): 1-26.

[17] Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 2.2.7; 2.6.12-14, 20; 2.7.4; 2.9.1; 3.7.13; 4.1.1, 24; 4.4.4-5; 4.5.1, 15; 4.8.5; 5.1.1-2; 5.3.1, 12; 5.4.7.

life, lived out under providence and exhibiting piety towards the god(s), fosters lasting harmony and happiness within the household and the polis.

In sum, for Aristotle the highest virtue is located in the best part of the soul (*Eth. nic.* 1177a). As the philosopher writes (*Eth. nic.* 1098a):

> … the function of man is to live a certain kind of life, and this activity implies a rational principle, and the function of a good man is the good and noble performance of these, and if any action is well performed it is performed in accord with the appropriate excellence: if this is the case, then happiness turns out to be an activity of the soul in accordance with virtue.

Notwithstanding, Aristotle still underscores the importance of friends, health and resources in fostering *eudaimonia*. Happiness, therefore, is not entirely an intellectual exercise performed in the soul of the virtuous. As Aristotle observes, "Nevertheless, it is evident that *eudaimonia* stands in need of good things from outside, as we have said; for it is impossible or difficult to do fine things without resources" (*Eth. nic.* 1099a).[18]

However, in contrast to Aristotle on this issue, subsequent philosophical movements such as the Epicureans and the Cynics/Stoics depict happiness as involving detachment from bodily and external goods, placing one's psychological state under the control of the will of the individual. More could be said on the understanding of Graeco-Roman happiness in other philosophical movements and individual thinkers of antiquity (e.g. the Cyrenaics, Pyrrhonian skeptics, et al.), but sufficient space has been devoted here to demonstrate that the Greek philosophers gradually moved towards locating virtue and its corollary, happiness, in the human soul, with or without the necessity of further external resources (including the help from the gods) apart from the human will to facilitate this. But what understanding of well-being emanates from the Jewish world in antiquity? And how is this different from happiness in the Graeco-Roman world?

Shalom and the Jewish Understanding of Well-being

It is often stated that the Hebrew word *shalom* ("peace") encapsulates the Jewish understanding of well-being. Surprisingly, little attention has been paid to *shalom* in Old Testament theologies, the place where one would

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[18] Oishi, Graham, Kesebir, and Galinha, "Concepts of Happiness Across Time and Cultures", 561.

expect the term to be discussed.[19] Moreover, the Hebrew word *berakah* ("blessing") is an equally viable alternative for the happiness attached to a long life and enjoyment of God's good creation,[20] a word also discussed by Old Testament theologians.[21] Nevertheless, several authors have discussed *shalom* and have come to a comprehensive understanding of its theological and social import.[22] Their conclusions can be summarised thus:[23]

- Healey speaks positively about *shalom* as wholeness (Ps 34:14), physical and social health (Pss 4;8; 73:3; Mic. 3:5; Zech. 8:12; Mal. 2:5) and completeness (Gen. 1:31; 2:2);[24]
- von Rad views *shalom* as a "comprehensive" term, strongly emphasising material welfare (Judg. 19:20; 1 Sam. 16:5; 2 Sam. 18:28; Ezr 5:7), as well as covenantal (Num. 25:12; Ezek. 34:25; 37:26; 54:10), prophetic (Isa. 48:18; 54:13; 57:19; Jer. 6:5, 16),

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[19] For discussion, see Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. *Toward an Old Testament Theology* (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 1978), 178-181; C. Westermann, *Elements of Old Testament Theology* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1978), 113-14.

[20] See E. Jacob, *Theology of the Old Testament* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1971; Fr. orig. 1955), 179; Westermann, *Elements of Old Testament Theology*, 115-17.

[21] E.g. W. Zimmerli, *Old Testament Theology in Outline* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1978), 64-69; H. D. Preuss, *Old Testament Theology Volume 1* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 179-83; W. Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997), 341-42, 528-31.

[22] See G. von Rad, "Shalom in the OT", in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Volume II: Δ-H*, ed. G. Kittel (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 402-06; H. Beck and C. Brown, "Peace", in *Dictionary of the New Testament Vol. 2*, ed. Colin Brown (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1971), 776-83; P. D. Hansen, "War and Peace in Hebrew Scripture", *Interpretation* 38 (1984): 341-62; P. B. Yoder, *Shalom: The Bible's Word for Salvation* (Newton, KS: Faith and Life, 1987); W. Brueggemann, "Peace (*Shalom*) in the Old Testament", in *The Meaning of Peace: Biblical Studies*, ed. P. B. Yoder and W. M. Swartley (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1992), 16-48; J. P. Healey, "Peace (Old Testament)", in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary Volume 5: O−Sh,* D. N. Freedman (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1992), 206-07; W. M. Swartley, *Peace: Living towards a Vision* (St Louis: Chalice, 2001); W. M. Swartley, "Peace", in *The Westminster Theological Wordbook of the Bible*, ed. D. E. Gowen (Louiseville/London: John Knox, 2003), 354-60; idem, *The Covenant of Peace: The Missing Peace in New Testament Theology and Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 27-34.

[23] We will omit Hansen ("War and Peace") who posits differences between the royal and exilic views of *shalom* in the Hebrew tradition.

[24] Healey, "Peace (Old Testament)", 206.

messianic and eschatological perspectives on the restoration of the world and its inhabitants (Isa. 9:5 [Eng. 9:6]; Zech. 9:9-10);[25]

- Westermann argues that *shalom* is a "statal" term, denoting soundness and wholeness of human community, including well-being and welfare because all things have been and will continue to be placed in order between God and his people;[26]
- Kaiser proposes that Old Testament eudaimonism is experienced when the wise man studies the divine plan and order in all things (Eccl 3:1−5:20; 16:9; 19:21; 20:24; 21:2), with the result that he fears God (Eccl 3:17);[27]
- Brueggemann writes that *shalom* is never the private property of a few but rather leads to the emergence of a community of peace (Num. 6:22-27), where righteousness (Ps 72:7; Isa. 48:18; 54:13-14; 60:17) and justice (Isa. 59:8) are performed;[28]
- Yoder emphasises the moral quality of *shalom* that upholds the divine order of human life by standing against oppression, fraud and deceit (Gen. 44:17; 2 Kgs 5:19).[29]

Whatever interpretative differences exist between the authors above, an overall consensus about *shalom* has emerged. *Shalom* is holistic and communal happiness lived out before God, moral and material in its scope, reflecting the divine order of things. While it is acquired as a soteriological gift of God's grace (1 Kgs 2:23; Isa. 52:7; Pss 35:27; 85:10-13; 122:6; Eccl 2:24; 3:13; 5:18-20; 8:15; 9:9; Isa. 43:7; Jer. 29:11), it is nonetheless appropriated through wise and just living, both individually and communally. The difference between the Jewish and Graeco-Roman worlds over what constitutes well-being could not be sharper. In Jewish thought *shalom* and well-being are located in the divine ordering of the world and in God's soteriological acts, as opposed to the Graeco-Roman notion of the human will instilling the moral virtues in the soul.

Now that we have established the ancient conceptions of well-being that have informed the Western intellectual tradition, what does modern scholarly literature say about happiness? What traditions inform its worldview and what continuity is there with the world of antiquity?

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[25] von Rad, "Shalom in the OT", 402, 406-08.
[26] Westermann, *Elements of Old Testament Theology*, 117.
[27] Kaiser, Jr. *Toward an Old Testament Theology*, 179, 181.
[28] Brueggemann, "Peace (*Shalom*) in the Old Testament", 7, 19-20.
[29] Yoder, Shalom, *passim*.

Modern Literature on Happiness

Modern scholarly literature on happiness up to and postdating 2001 has concentrated around two foci of discussion: the "hedonic" and "eudaimonic" approaches to well-being. In the case of the hedonic approach, we are referring to human happiness that interprets well-being in terms of pleasure attainment and pain avoidance, whereas the eudaimonic approach concentrates on the meaning and self-realisation in human beings, with well-being emerging when a person is functioning fully.[30] It is important, however, to distinguish the modern eudaimonic approach from the versions of antiquity, outlined above. As we have seen, in the ancient understanding of *eudaimonia*, human flourishing was equated with the active exercise of virtue and was the primary way to happiness. Indeed, according to Aristotle, hedonic happiness was an ideal that enslaved its adherents to the passions if unwisely pursued.[31] For the modern person, however, meaning and self-realisation do not necessarily involve the pursuit of virtue and its establishment in the soul as Sophocles and Aristotle understood it: it is more to be understood in light of modern psychological theory as opposed to traditional virtue ethics. But the idea that one should be living in accordance with their *daimon*, or true self, does have resonances with psychological theories of "personal expressiveness", "human actualisation", and "self-determination".[32] Furthermore, there are continuities between Aristotle and the modern eudaimonic and hedonic approaches. We see this in the modern recognition that the pursuit of the true self might be aided by external factors (e.g. money, social class, attachment, relatedness).[33]

The modern hedonic approach of popular and academic psychology is indebted to the thought of the Greek philosopher from North African Cyrene, Aristippus (435−356 BC), who argued that pleasure is the end or goal of life. Happiness is the sum of *particular* pleasures (Diogenes

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[30] For a discussion of the technical literature up to 2001, see Richard M. Ryan and Edward L. Deci, "On Happiness and Human Potentials: A Review of Research on Hedonic and Eudaimonic Well-being", *Annual Review of Psychology* 52 (2001): 141-66. See also Veronika Huta and Richard M. Ryan, "Pursuing Pleasure or Virtue: The Differential and Overlapping Well-Being Benefits of Hedonic and Eudaimonic Motives", *Journal of Happiness Studies* 11.6 (2009): 735-62.

[31] See Aristotle, *Eth. nic* 2.3.10; 7.14.4-7; 10:3.8-13; 10.5.3-5 on the limits to and dangers regarding profligate pleasure.

[32] Ryan and Deci, "On Happiness and Human Potentials", 146-47.

[33] Ryan and Deci, "On Happiness and Human Potentials", 152-55.

Laertius 2.87-88) as opposed to the relentless accumulation of undefined pleasures (Diogenes Laertius 2.90). In the view of the school of Aristippus, bodily pleasures provide greater gratification than mental pleasures. The other chief representative of the hedonic viewpoint in antiquity is Epicurus (341−270 BC). However, while Epicurus argues that pleasure is the ultimate good (*Letter to Menoeceus* 128-129), nonetheless he suggests that the soul and body had to be free from disturbance (*ataraxia*: 128). So freeing oneself from bodily pain and mental distress was an important aspect of the pursuit of pleasure (*Letter to Menoeceus* 131-32). In sum, there are differences in emphasis between ancient hedonic theorists, depending on whether one included the mind in the accumulation of pleasure or not.

There exists, however, a major difference between modern psychological approaches and Aristippus' version of the hedonic theory in antiquity. Modern hedonic theory has "tended to focus on a broad conception of hedonism that includes the preferences and pleasures of the mind as well as the body".[34] In sum, as Ryan and Deci observe, "Happiness is thus not reducible to physical hedonism, for it can be derived from attainment of goals or valued outcomes in varied realms".[35] Thus, when pleasure is differentiated from pain as a goal, hedonistic psychology is provided with an "unambiguous target of research and intervention, namely maximizing human happiness".[36] By contrast, modern hedonic theory has more in common with the view of Epicurus. His recognition that both the body and the mind had to be involved in the quest for pleasure has a peculiarly modern psychological ring about it.

Thus, given the enduring significance of ancient eudaimonic and hedonic approaches to pleasure, it is hardly surprising that modern psychological literature continues to engage with the Graeco-Roman worldview of happiness.[37] Gratifyingly, a recent publication has also

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[34] Ryan and Deci, "On Happiness and Human Potentials", 144.
[35] Ryan and Deci, "On Happiness and Human Potentials", 144.
[36] Ryan and Deci, "On Happiness and Human Potentials", 144.
[37] See M. Joseph Sirgy, *The Psychology of Quality of Life : Hedonic Well-being, Life Satisfaction, and Eudaimonia* (New York, NY: Springer, 2012); Daniel C. Russel, *Happiness for Humans* (Oxford: Oxford Unversity Press, 2012); Kachana Kamtekar, *Virtue and Happiness: Essays in Honour of Julia Annas* (Oxford: Oxford Unversity Press, 2013)*;* Alan S, Waterman, ed., *The Best Within Us: Positive Psychology Perspectives on Eudaimonia* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2013).

brought Confucian, Daoist and Buddhist traditions regarding happiness into the dialogue about human flourishing, providing further insight into the impact that eastern traditions are making upon notions of well-being in popular western culture.[38] But an important question still remains: how do the ancient hedonic and eudaimonic traditions of well-being and happiness intersect with the Jewish and early Christian understanding of human flourishing? And what difference do they make to modern psychological approaches to happiness?

The Graeco-Roman world-view certainly brought the god/s into discussions of happiness, seeing virtue as an emulatory striving towards godlikeness in the non-material soul. But for the Old Testament Jew, as we have seen, true wisdom and happiness are more found in the submission to the divine order of all things, holistically conceived, materially and spiritually. The early Christians, informed by the soteriological narrative of the crucified and risen Messiah, find true happiness and personal freedom through their cruciform death to self (Mark 8:34; 2 Cor 4:10-12) and the enslaving allurements of the world (Mark 8:36-38) by serving others without partiality as an expression of their indebtedness to Christ's love (Mark 10:44-45; Rom 13:8-10). In this life of selflessness believers are empowered by the newness of the Spirit (Rom 7:6b), experience the renewal of their identity communally in the image of God (Rom 8:29; Col 3:10), and enjoy the fullness of life offered to them by the risen Christ (John 10:10). It is worth pondering whether such a countercultural message has acquired any credence among the popular heirs of the western moral tradition, namely, the modern psychologists. In a fascinating study of self-centredness, selflessness and happiness, Dambrun and Ricard have argued that modern psychological theories such as the Self-Determination Theory, founded to some extent on ancient theories of happiness, can sometimes enshrine "a self-centered orientation". Dambrun and Ricard sum up their disagreement with the modern psychological consensus thus:

> Rather than focusing on psychological qualities that foster happiness, the present model takes into account the nature of the self, and the self based psychological processes that are basic to our psychological functioning. We argue that our psychological functioning is determined by the structure

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[38] Guy Fletcher, ed., *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Well-being* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), 40-80.

of the self, and that authentic happiness can be obtained when selflessness, rather than self-centeredness, occurs.[39]

We are seeing here something of the countercultural paradox underlying Jesus' logion in Matthew 10:39: "Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it". The writer to the Hebrews also reminds us that, in light of his post-mortem prospect of the restoration of joy, Jesus endured the cross for the sake of his dependents, scorning its shame (Heb 12:3).[40] The selflessness at the core of happiness and well-being is as confronting to the modern world as it had been for Graeco-Roman society. But, as R. F. Baumeister has argued, [41] the psychological search for self has increasingly become a "problem" for researchers, given the many historical shifts in self-definition processes over the years, the very real problem of self-deception, and the failure of modern society to provide meaning and purpose for the individual's notion of self. Nevertheless, Baumeister was confident that researchers could overcome some of these methodological problems. But the paradigm of an other-centred selflessness as the basis for well-being, grounded in the believer's new identity in Christ and in humanity's status as the image of God, provides an important alternative paradigm for social and psychological thought and transformation. The research of Dambrun and Ricard points in the right direction by acknowledging those psychological studies that "seem to indicate that intrinsic religiosity and spirituality could favor selflessness". [42]

Having surveyed the various understandings of well-being in the western intellectual tradition, we turn to how well-being is understood in contemporary Australia. What pressures are eroding well-being in our personal, family, work and civic lives?

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[39] Michaël Dambrun and Matthieu Ricard, "Self-Centeredness and Selflessness: A Theory of Self-Based Psychological Functioning and Its Consequences for Happiness", *Review of General Psychology* 15.2 (2011): 138-57, at 152.

[40] See the famous study of O. Cullmann ("Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead?" in *Immortality and Resurrection. Death in the Western World: Two Conflicting Currents of Thought*, ed. Oscar Cullman *et al.* [New York: MacMillan, 1965], 9-53), comparing the vastly different ways that Socrates and Jesus faced death, explained in each case by their different understandings of the status of the body and the afterlife.

[41] See the intriguing article of R. F. Baumeister, "How the Self Became a Problem: A Psychological Review of Historical Research", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 52.1 (1987): 163-76.

[42] Dambrun and Ricard, "Self-Centeredness and Selflessness",150.

Australia, Well-being, and the Social Fabric

Australian Measures of Well-being

Several major studies have been written in the last decade on how Australians measure and understand well-being and happiness,[43] including the establishment of a well-being framework for the oversight of the economy by the Treasury of the Australian Government.[44] Further, in a research partnership between Australian Unity and the Australian Centre on Quality of Life at Deakin University (Geelong, Victoria), Australians are interviewed regarding their satisfaction with their personal lives and the quality of national life in Australia from an economic, social and environmental viewpoint. The Australian Unity Well-being Index reports have been archived since April 2001, having put out by now three editions (2001-2004; 2005-2014; 2015-). [45] In what follows we will briefly summarise the results of the most recent well-being report in Australia (2015: n. 42 *supra*).

The Third Edition (2015) of the Australian Unity Well-being Index report ("What Makes Us Happy?") addresses the issue from the perspective a PWI Index (Personal Well-being Index) and a NWI Index (National Well-being Index). In the case of the PWI Index, Australian Unity approaches personal well-being from the psychological theory of *homeostasis*, which asserts that people have an inbuilt mechanism of

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[43] See Clive Hamilton and Emma Rush, "The Attitudes of Australians to Happiness and Social Well-being", The Australia Institute, Webpaper September 2006: http//www.tai.org.au/sites/defualt/files/WP90_8.pdf, accessed 13 September, 2016. See also Robert Cummins, "What Makes Us Happy?" Third Edition, 2015, Australian Unity: http://www.australianunity.com.au/about-us/news.../what-makes-us-happy, accessed 14 September, 2016. Additionally, note Lynne Casey and Rachel Pui-Tak Liang, "Stress and Well-being in Australia Survey 2014", Australian Psychological Society, October 2014:
https://www.psychology.org.au/.../2014-APS-NPW-Survey-WEB-reduced.pdf, accessed 13 September, 2016.
[44] See Stephanie Gorecki and James Kelly, "Treasury's Well-being Framework", *Economic Roundup* 3 (2012): http//www.treasury.gov.au/...3/.../Treasury8217s-Well-being-Framework, accessed 14 September, 2016.
[45] See http//www.australianunity.com.au/about-us/well-being/auwbi, accessed 13 September, 2016. See R. Cummins, "What Makes Us Happy?" (Melbourne: Australian Unity, 2014):
http//www.australianunity.com.au/.../What%20Makes%20Us%20Happy%202015.ashx, accessed 13 September, 2016.

recovery that allows them to return to their normal level of well-being after disruptive events in their lives.[46] Consequently, in an Australian context, the PWI Index fluctuates little, having remained from 2010-2015 around 76% in terms of personal contentment.[47] For Australians, the golden triangle of happiness consists of (a) strong personal relationships (including family relationships with children and mother-in-laws), (b) financial control (the necessity of a comfortable level of income), and (c) sense of purpose (the significance work and volunteerism, graceful ageing, the connectivity of social media, good health, wise time usage, place of residence, the future, etc.).[48]

However, the NWI Index is much more volatile, ranging from 55-65%.[49] The national issues raised by the Australian Unity report are (a) satisfaction with the economy and business, (b) satisfaction with national security, (c) satisfaction with the government.[50] The fluctuations in the Australian sense of well-being that occurred in these Indexes from 2005-2015, owing to local and international economic and political events, are not worth pursuing here. We turn to three fundamental areas for the establishment of social well-being in the period discussed above: namely the family, the school, and the workplace.

Well-being: Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Family Experience

Indigenous Experience

A revised 2010 report of the AMA (Australian Medical Association) makes some pertinent comments on the health and well-being of Australia's aboriginal and Torres Strait islander children and young people. The history of dispossession and intergenerational poverty has placed these children at great risk in terms of well-being due to unemployment, overcrowded and inadequate accommodation, and geographical isolation affecting the quality of food, health, goods, and services:

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[46] Cummins, "What Makes Us Happy?" 4.
[47] Cummins, "What Makes Us Happy?" 6.
[48] Cummins, "What Makes Us Happy?" 8, 12-33.
[49] Cummins, "What Makes Us Happy?" 6.
[50] Cummins, "What Makes Us Happy?" 34-37.

> Parenting skills are likely to have been influenced by the effects of disadvantage. Family risk factors may include a high proportion of single parent families, mental health problems and substance abuse, having a father in gaol and early exposure to violence.[51]

Consequently, both Liberal and Labor Federal Governments have intervened in the Northern Territory from 2007 onwards to extricate indigenous and Torres Strait islander children at risk of sexual abuse and other forms of mistreatment in families.[52] This policy recalls the "Stolen Generations" of indigenous children removed by the Australian Governments from 1906 to 1969, though each generation of government authorities saw its policies as well intentioned, rightly or wrongly, for the welfare of the children. Insufficient progress has been made in the Northern Territory. The recent Northern Territory Juvenile Detention Royal Commission announced by Prime Minister Turnbull into the abuse of detainee children, including the teargassing of six boys in an isolation unit at the Don Dale Detention Centre at Darwin, amply shows this. Brooke Prentis, the Aboriginal spokesperson for the Christian justice organisation *Common Grace*, spoke recently on the radio station *Hope 103.2*, saying the following about racism in youth detention:

> We've known about this for years. As Aboriginal Christians, we're continually working with families who have children in juvenile detention as well as in the adult prison system, providing caring and support and love for those families. And [this abuse] is not just in the Northern Territory: every state is affected by this and we carry our own horror stories and personal experiences.[53]

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[51] See https://ama.com.au/.../developmental-health-and-wellbeing-australia's-children-and-young-people-revised, accessed 15 September, 2016. On the link between the health gap and indigenous imprisonment, see AMA 2105 Report Card on Indigenous Health:
https://ama.com.au/.../2015%20Report%20Card%20on%20Indigenous%20Health_0.pdf, accessed September 5, 2016.
[52] For the period 2013-2014, see "Child Protection and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children CFCA Resource Sheet—September 2015":
https://aifs.gov.au/.../child-protection-and-aboriginal-andtorres-strait-islander-children, accessed 15 September, 2016.
[53] See http://www.hope1032.com.au/.../aboriginal-racism-youth-detention-what-can-i-do/, accessed 15 September, 2016. On the well-being of indigenous peoples generally, see "Review of the Social and Emotional Well-being of Indigenous Australian Peoples", *Australian Indigenous Health InfoNet* 2015, Edith Cowan University: http:///www.healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au/other-health.../mental.../our-review, accessed 15 September, 2016.

We should also remember in this regard the impact that incarceration has on adult indigenous family members, frequently leading to the suicide of the indigenous detainee, creating enormous distress for the remaining family members. The frequency of such explained and unexplained deaths during incarceration—whether by suicide,[54] the use of excessive police force during imprisonment, or the dereliction of duty of care during the incarceration—led to the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody in 1987-1991 and its ensuing 339 recommendations. Though its recommendations are still valid today, very few of them have been implemented.

Last, the perpetration of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait women is an endemic problem in our nation. Our indigenous women incur higher rates and more severe forms of violence compared to other groups of females living in Australia. This is even more distressing when one remembers the chilling statistics regarding the relentless violence exacted against women, indigenous and non-indigenous, in our nation. On any week a minimum of one woman per week is killed by her partner or ex-partner; one in three over the age of 15 has experienced physical violence; one in five has suffered sexual violence; one in four has been subjected either to physical and sexual violence or emotional abuse by their partner, past or present.[55] This has provoked national and individual campaigns against domestic violence. For example, from 2010 the Australian Government has implemented two national plans to reduce violence against women and their children.[56] At an individual level, the courageous

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[54] The issue of indigenous youth suicide in the Kimberley region of Western Australia has also reached a flashpoint at the time of finalising this chapter, with rates of suicide being seven times higher than the national avergae and three times higher than the national indigenous average. The issue has been well documented in various studies for several years, with seemingly little progress being made by successive Australian governments in addressing this unfolding tragedy.

[55] See http//www.ourwatch.org.au/Understanding-Violence/Facts-and-figures, accessed 15 October, 2016.

[56] See Janet Phillips and Penny Vandenbroek, "Domestic, Family, and Sexual Violence in Australia: An Overview of the Issues",
http//www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/...Library/.../ViolenceAust, accessed 15 October, 2016. For the two Australian Government plans regarding violence, see Plan 1 at
https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/08_2014/national_plan1.pdf and Plan 2 at
https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/09_2014/dss012_14_book_ta gged_reduced.pdf, both accessed 15 October, 2016.

2015 Australian of the Year, Rosemary Batty, became an anti-violence campaigner when her 11-year-old son Luke was bludgeoned to death with a cricket bat by his mentally disturbed father, Greg Anderson, in the presence of Rosemary on the evening of 12th February 2014 during a cricket training session at an oval in Tyabb, south-east of Melbourne.[57] In sum, we should not deceive ourselves about the overall well-being of family life in Australia. Too many Australians, indigenous and non-indigenous, groan under the terrible weight of inconsolable loss in the face of the suicide of family members and the experience of domestic violence.

Non-Indigenous Experiences

A major 2011 study by the Australian Government found that the parents' employment circumstances made an impact of significance upon parent and child well-being. It was intriguing to see the subtle differences that parental employment made in different family scenarios. Apart from the negative impact on well-being caused by insecure employment, inflexible hours, and poor job control, the report also found that

> Some features of jobs affect mothers but not fathers, or vulnerable parents but not those living with more favourable socioeconomic circumstances, and so on. Some features of jobs show direct links to children, while other pathways are indirect, through their impact on parents.[58]

The more that unreasonable work pressures and negative employment experiences could be minimised, the more likely to flourish were the children of parents disadvantaged by difficult work contexts in particular.

In terms of relationships and the emotional welfare of Australian families, recent research from the Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre and Western Sydney University has demonstrated that increased online activity between older generations, parents and children can actually help to improve social and family relationships. As Associate

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[57] See Rosie Batty (with Bryce Corbett), *A Mother's Story* (Sydney South: HarperCollins, 2015).
[58] See *Parent and Child Well-being and the Influence of Work and Family Arrangements: A Three Cohort Study. Social Policy Research Paper No. 44* (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, Department of Familes, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, 2011), 99:
https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/05.../sprp_44.pdf, accessed 15 September, 2016.

Professor Amanda Third summed up the research findings, "People are using the internet to improve their families' wellbeing, for information on parenting, for social and political knowledge and activism, and to follow cultural and artistic interests".[59] The positive role of the social media, of course, is not without its drawbacks. One only has to think of the resilience now required by our young people to overcome the deleterious impact of internet trolls upon their emotional well-being. The ministry of the church, however, with its unique message of personal empowerment through divine grace, can help family life in this regard.[60]

Finally, Australian regional families are facing enormous pressures, with farmers committing suicide due to the despair caused by years of sustained drought, the intractable results of climate change, as well as the decline of traditional export markets, changes in government policy regarding the farming sector, increasing production costs and the ever mounting debt owed to the banks by property owners in the farming community.[61]

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[59] See "Australian Families Embace Technology to Improve Well-Being and Relationships":
http//www.uws.edu.au/.../australian_families_embrace_technology_to_improve_wellbeing_and_relationships, accessed 15 September 2016. The 2012 study of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare on the social and emotional welfare of children is a methodological study on how to detect appropriate research indicators of social and emotional well-being and will not be pursued here. See http//www.aihw.gov.au/publication-detail/?id=10737421524, acessed 15 September, 2016.
[60] See J. R. Harrison, "Developing Personal Resilience in a Dangerous Virtual World: Historical, Social Biblical and Theological Perspectives", in *Teaching Theology in a Technological Age*, ed. Y. Debergue and J. R. Harrison (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2015), 86-112.
[61] See "Position Statement: Responding to Suicide in Rural Australia", Suicide Prevention Australia, September 2008, reviewed April 2010:
https://www.suicidepreventionaust.org/.../SPA-Suicide-in-Rural-Australia%5B1%5D.pdf, accessed 15 September, 2016. Additionally, see Kairi Kõlves, Allison Milner, Kathy McKay, and Diego De Leo, "Suicide in Rural and Remote Areas of Australia", Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention, Brisbane, 2012: https://www.griffith.edu.au/__.../Suicide-in-Rural-and-Remote-Areas-of-Australia.pdf, accessed 15 September, 2016.

Well-being: From School to Work Place

A student "well-being policy" is *de rigeur* at state government level
throughout Australia,[62] as well as at the local school level state by state.
Considerable thought has been given to promoting the health and well-
being of indigenous students in Australian primary and secondary schools,
though sustained success has been patchy nationally.[63] State governments
have also formulated policies for the well-being of students with
disabilities,[64] aided by the commencement of the National Disability
Scheme in Australia. The implementation of policies for the well-being of
people with disabilities has profound theological warrant, given the
detailed attention accorded to people with disabilities in the gospel
traditions of the early Christians.[65]

Another important issue of educational well-being that continues to
gather considerable momentum is the safety of LGBT students and staff.
When the "marriage equality" legislation is eventually passed in
Australia—whether by plebiscite or parliamentary vote, as case may be,
with all the polls indicating the legislation's success—attention to the
well-being of LGBT students in schools and universities will continue to

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[62] For example, "Student Well-being", Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation,
NSW Government, May 2015:
wellbeingaustralia.com.au/.../2015/.../student_wellbeing_litreview_v6.pdf,
accessed 15 September, 2016. See also Catherine A. Simmons, Anne Graham, and
Nigel Thomas, "Imagining an Ideal School for Wellbeing: Locating Student
Voice", Southern Cross University, 2015:
http//www.epubs.scu.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2133&context=educ,
accessed 15 September, 2016.
[63] For example, Brenda Dobbia and Virginia O'Rourke, "Promoting the Mental
Health and Well-being of Indigenous Children in Australian Primary Schools",
Kids Matter Australian Primary Schools Mental Health Initiative, University of
Western Sydney, 2011: https://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/.../promoting-mental-health-
wellbeing-indigenous-children.pdf, accessed 15 September, 2016.
[64] For example, see "Well-being for Schools: Supporting Students with Disability",
NSW Department of Education: see
https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/wellbeing/.../supporting-students-with-disability,
accessed 15 September, 2016.
[65] See L. Gosbel, *"The Poor, the Crippled, the Blind, and the Lame": Physical and
Sensory Disability in the Gospels of the New Testament* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck,
forthcoming). In an Australian context, see also A. Pickard and M. Habets, eds.,
*Theology and the Experience of Disability: Interdisciplinary Perspectives from
Voices Down Under* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016).

be developed by policymaking in the same way that it has been overseas.[66] Already in the public media, there is considerable debate regarding homophobia and the well-being of LGBT students and staff in schools, with diverse viewpoints and approaches being aired. In terms of policy, Graham Gallasch has posted on the web a discussion paper on how Lutheran schools should be thinking theologically and pastorally about homophobia in Australian Lutheran schools.[67] By contrast, the Australian Christian Lobby has recently campaigned against the national anti-bullying programme sponsored by the Safe Schools Coalition, which is designed to prevent homophobia and discrimination in schools. In contrast once again, the Principal of the private Anglican girls' school Kambala (Sydney) has spoken out against parental complaints about the hiring of some gay teachers, vigorously asserting that it is an inclusive school. These examples demonstrate how public, private and denominational educators in Australia are addressing the issue of the well-being of LGBT students, staff, and their families in different ways. Given the dramatic changes that have occurred in Australian views regarding marriage equality over the last 20 years, it is likely that the Safe Schools programme will continue to shape Australian educational policy and attitudes to the LGBT community. Whatever theological differences may continue to exist among Australian religious groups over the issue of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and intersex status, all educators, religious and secular, must nonetheless continue to owe the debt of love to all the students and staff under their care (Rom 13:8-10).

Last, we will briefly touch on the issue of work stress and well-being, having noted above how this impacts on family life. Well-being in Australian work-life has been looked at from the perspective of health,[68]

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[66] See "Responding to Harassment of LGBT Youth in Schools: Snapshots from Three Trend-Setting Countries", Advocates for Youth, Washington DC, 2010: http//www.advocatesforyouth.org/storage/advfy/.../snapshots_v2.pdf, accessed 15 September, 2016.

[67] See Graham Gallasch, "A Discussion Paper: Lutheran Schools and Homophobia": www.lutheran.edu.au/.../Conference%20Papers/.../Gallasch%20G.pdf, accessed 16 September, 2016.

[68] See *Guide to Promoting Health and Well-Being in the Workplace*, ACT Government:
http//www.healthierwork.act.gov.au/.../Guide_to_Promoting_Health_and_Wellbeing_in_the_Workplace_3.pdf, accessed 15 September, 2016.

mental health,[69] caring,[70] depression, harassment and bullying,[71] to name but a few approaches. Christian organisations are not immune from the same authoritarian and vindictive behaviour in their operations and, because of the prevalent "indispensability" syndrome in ministry, an unrealistically heavy work-overload can easily lead to significant health problems and psychological issues.

The Church and the Well-being of Refugees: Welcoming the Outsider

In a report published in 2008 by the Australian Psychological Society on the well-being of refugees resettling in Australia,[72] the stated aim was "to provide a broad overview of the concerns related to refugee mental health and well-being within the Australian context".[73] The pre-migration trauma and post-migration mental health of refugees is explored. In the report, time is proposed to be a great healer of the psychological dislocation and trauma incurred by refugees. Notwithstanding, where there have been experiences of trauma ("human rights violations, threats to life, traumatic loss, dispossession and eviction") prior to resettlement, these have a significant impact upon mental health.[74]

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[69] See *As One Working Together: Promoting Mental Health and Well-being at Work*, Australian Government, Australian Public Service Commission: www.comcare.gov.au/__.../working-together-mental-health-wellbeing-accessible.pdf, accessed 16 September 2016.

[70] Natalie Skinner and Barbara Pocock, *The Persitent Challenge: Living, Working and Caring in Australia in 2014*, Centre for Work and Life, Univeristy of South Australia, 2014: http://www.unisa.edu.au/Documents/EASS/CWL/Publications/AWALI_2014_national_report_final.pdf, accessed 16 September 2016.

[71] See Peter Butterworth, Liana S. Leach, and Kim M. Kiely, *The Relationship between Work Characteristics, Well-being, Depression and Workplace Bullying: Summary Report,* Centre for Research on Ageing, Health and Wellbeing, The Australian National University under commission from Safe Work Australia June 2013: www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/.../Wellbeing-depression-bullying-summary-report.pdf, accessed 16 September 2016.

[72] K. E. Murray, G. R. Davidson, and Robert D. Schweitzer, *Psychological Well-being of Refugees Resettling in Australia: A Literature Review Prepared for the Australian Psychology Society* (August 2008): 1-28. See https://www.psychology.org.au/assets/files/refugee-lit-review.pdf, accessed 12 September, 2016.

[73] Murray, Davidson, and Schweitzer, *Psychological Well-being of Refugees*, 3.

[74] Murray, Davidson, and Schweitzer, *Psychological Well-being of Refugees*, 7.