YOUNG & RESILIENT RESEARCH CENTRE

Y&R 2026 SEMINAR SERIES

11 February: Dr Donna James & Dr Julia Kantek

Lecturers from the School of Social Sciences, Western Sydney University

Between support and risk: International students' use of GenAI to navigate life 'in the shadows'



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International students in Australia are navigating complex challenges, including rising living costs, shifting visa conditions, and an intensifying housing crisis. These pressures unfold within a broader post-welfare context marked by diminished government support for migrants and reduced investment in formal student services. Since 2022, the rapid uptake of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) has added a new dimension to these dynamics, reshaping how migrants navigate risk and wellbeing.

In this seminar, we present findings from a 2024–2025 project exploring GenAI use among international students for wellbeing and resilience. Drawing on focus groups, interviews, and a participatory workshop, we reveal how and why GenAI tools are used across everyday life, and with what implications.

Drawing on Power et al.'s (2022) Shadow Care Infrastructures framework, we conceptualise GenAI as a shadowed form of care, entailing a 'double bind' between support and risk. We discuss the need for coordinated responses that reimagine student support policy and promote critical digital engagement.

Biography

Dr Julia Kantek is an Early Career Academic at Western Sydney University. Her research sits at the intersection of youth sociology, migration, and diaspora studies, examining how mobilities and life transitions shape identity, belonging, and everyday life.

Dr Donna James is an Early Career Academic at Western Sydney University. Her research interrogates precarious labour and its implications for equity and social justice.

11 February, 12:00 to 1:00 PM

Parramatta South EZ.1.51 & online

Lunch will be provided