Understanding how HUMAN BEHAVIOUR and PUBLIC POLICY can be influenced by BEHAVIOURAL ECONOMICS and SOCIAL MARKETING to benefit the HEALTH of our society, sustain our ENVIRONMENT for future generations and safeguard our ECONOMY in the DIGITAL age.
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OUR VISION

Evidence-based behavioural research that transforms society and the economy
Our goals at the start of 2020 was to increase the amount of funding revenue from two key sources; industry (category 2 and 3) and the ARC (category 1) and to grow our membership. So we started 2020 with a growth strategy of expansion where we were looking to undertake activities that we were not currently doing but would accrue reputation/income. This strategy was to commence with the submission of the ARC Industrial Transformation Training Centre (ITTC) bid and then further activities would follow. However, the goals and strategy quickly needed revisiting when the COVID-19 pandemic occurred in March. Our strategy then changed to a protection strategy where we focussed on current activities to maintain reputation and income rather than expansion.

During the year, Rebekah was Acting Director as Uwe was away in Europe on sabbatical and ended up stranded for several months with his family due to the limited flights back to Australia. During the pandemic, BEST researchers adapted quickly and undertook a range of important research about behavioural responses during COVID-19. The publications and media coverage of these articles has been curated on our website and is featured in this annual report.

We had new partners during 2020 as part of the ITTC bid and new projects. Notable amongst these were the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, Queensland Health, Queensland Transport and Main Roads and the Australian Tax Office. A list of our project partners is available on our website and listed in this annual report. We also expanded our networks within QUT to work with the QUT Design Lab, the Centre for Justice and the Ageing Research Group.

In 2020 we saw some changes in the management group for BEST. Rebekah became Co-Director, we said farewell to Professor Terry Flew (lead for the Trust and Behaviour in the Digital Economy program), who moved from QUT to University of Sydney and Annita Nugent who left her position as BEST Centre Manager for a position at UQ, and we welcomed Angela Fletcher to the role of Centre Manager.

BEST adapted the events delivery to host a number of webinars online. These included our Drivers of Innovation workshop, ‘Using VOSVIEWER: A tool for literature review analysis and bibliometrics’, the Agriculture and Natural resources virtual workshop, the Digital Trust and Well-being virtual workshop, and ‘What is behavioural economics and how do I learn about it?’

Despite the incredible challenges of 2020, BEST had an outstanding year with an increase in publications, revenue, membership and new collaborations. Thus we were able to protect as well as develop so all strategic goals were achieved.
2020 IN A SNAPSHOT

Awarded Research Funding

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Research Publications

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HDR Students

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BEST Members

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BEST Research, Output & Impact
Any solution to the big problems that human kind faces requires scientific and technological solutions as well as knowledge about how and whether people will actually embrace that change. The Centre for Behavioural Economics, Society and Technology (BEST) is a national and international leader in applied behavioural insights and behavioural economics research. The Centre relies on QUT’s expertise in Behavioural Insights as applied in Economics and Marketing, leveraging and amplifying QUT’s expertise in Health, Science, Technology and the Creative Industries.

The Centre aims to further develop an interdisciplinary research program and impact agenda that contributes to the frontiers of knowledge in the respective areas while improving the health, wealth and happiness of Australians and society globally. It develops and trials applications of behavioural economic solutions in areas ranging from education to medical sciences. Its research agenda addresses the diverse and complex issues facing contemporary society and aims to attract significant external engagement, disciplinary and student interest - domestically and internationally.

Our Programs
Motivations for starting a business vary. Financial goals, capabilities and resources affect business activity. Personal traits vary and affect behaviour. Behavioural biases manifest in different ways. Attractiveness of information is determined by motivations and personal traits. Response to ambiguity and an active approach are key behaviours influencing adaptability and vision.

Business failure can be conceptualised in different ways. Approach biases matters when it comes to support.

Public policy is used by governments to bring about change for the benefit of society, the environment and economy. This program applies insights from behavioural economics to influence public policy, co-developing policy interventions and evaluating their effectiveness.

### Understanding small business success and viability

The aim of this project was to understand how the ATO can help to increase the viability of early-stage small businesses, taking into account the post COVID-19 environment, implement interventions that support new small business owners’ success, with a particular focus to their interaction with the tax system, and reduce the economic and social impacts of business failure by assisting those businesses that were never going to be viable to exit early.

### Why is this important?

As with biological systems, the germination and growth of new firms coming to existence proceeds through multiple life-cycle stages (Churchill and Lewis, 1983, Scott and Bruce 1987). A well-known problem with new businesses is their high dissolution rate. For example, only 50% of firms survive the first three years (van Praag, 2003). Thus, government authorities are required to understand not only how to stimulate business start-ups, but also how to minimise the number of business dissolutions (van Praag, 2003). It is crucial to focus on small business, as over 90% of businesses in Australia fall into this category (ATO, 2016).

### What did we do?

We first conducted a desktop review of the relevant literature on entrepreneurship and determinants of success for small business. Following this, a discovery of available data using the Business Longitudinal Analysis Data Environment (BLADE) provided insights into Australian businesses and how they are impacted over time. Finally, facilitation and analysis of eight focus group discussions with small business owners, and business agents and consultants was conducted, to investigate the experiences, activities and behaviours of small business owners. The synthesis of outcomes of these three programs contributed to the development of a map of the Australian small business ecosystem including stakeholders, relationships, drivers, risks, requirements and behaviours of new small businesses, as well as the identification of potential interventions that the ATO could implement to shape business success and reduce the number of unviable businesses.

### What did we find out?

1. Motivations for starting a business vary
2. Financial goals, capabilities and resources affect business activity
3. Personal traits vary and affect behaviour
4. Behavioural biases manifest in different ways
5. Attractiveness of information is determined by motivations and personal traits
6. Response to ambiguity and an active approach are key behaviours influencing adaptability and vision
7. Business failure can be conceptualised in different ways
8. Approach biases matters when it comes to support
Social marketing has the primary goal of achieving social good. This program focuses on the impact of social marketing as a behaviour change approach at micro, meso and macro levels to help policymakers and non-profit organisations to achieve societal outcomes such as healthier individuals, environmental sustainability and cyber-safe citizens.

Preventing Homelessness for Mature Women: High Tech vs High Touch Support
This project aims to support mature women (aged 55+) to avoid homelessness before it begins, by equipping non-traditional early responders (that is, a professional source of support who is not directly associated with homeless services) for conversations with these women. We aim to combine high touch approaches (conversations) with high tech flexibility (digital support).

Why is this important?
In Queensland, 282,601 women aged 55-64 are homeless (ABS, 2018). Of these women only 12,000 sought assistance from homelessness services in 2016 – while this represents a 52% increase since 2011 (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2016), this still means that up to 95% of women are not necessarily accessing adequate support before reaching their next tenancy.

Mature women tend to have lower savings for later life, be more likely to not have paid employment and are more likely to have experienced domestic and family violence than men the same age (Mission Australia, 2017). Indeed, the current superannuation and gender pay gap stands at 47% (The Senate Economics References Committee, 2016), creating a potential ‘ticking time bomb’ for some women who may be relying on tenuous employment or a spouse. If crisis occurs, these women are not always able to be placed within safe and appropriate tenancy – often finding themselves in sharehouses or shelters where they may not feel safe, or choosing to seek out their own tenancy via sleeping in their vehicles or on a friend’s couch. With many of these women having been caregivers throughout their lives, they can be unfamiliar with the notion of asking for care for themselves. Indeed, women in the primary prevention phase may not be aware of the risks to look out for.

What we aim to do
This project is about preventing homelessness for mature women before it begins. This aim is to intervene prior to the crisis occurring. According to the health continuum of prevention, three stages of harm prevention exist: primary (prevent the harm occurring), secondary (attempt to stop existing harm early), and tertiary (attempt to reduce the impact of established harm). While there are some excellent resources available, these resources tend to focus on women in the secondary or tertiary points of intervention (at the ‘tipping point’ or already in crisis, respectively). Other resources such as helplines or access to emergency housing are also targeted to women already experiencing a crisis. We aim to help women at the primary stage.

The goal is to utilise a high tech/high touch toolkit that will enable early responders to have conversations with pre-crisis (primary prevention-stage) women to help them access the support needed.
Behavioural Economics & Non-Market Interactions Project Spotlight

Humans do not always behave the way we would expect, making decisions based on emotions, beliefs, biases, feelings or habits. This program applies behavioural economics of social and non-market interactions to understand how humans behave and interact.

Economics is no longer what it used to be. In the past, economics was contained to the sphere of commercial life, revolving around topics such as money, taxes, tariffs, stocks and bonds. In recent years behavioural economics has helped to significantly expand economists’ areas of concern. As a consequence the boundaries of economics as a discipline are rapidly expanding outward, exploring areas that have historically been the exclusive domain of other social sciences. In this research program we will look at extraordinarily important areas of inquiry, covering topics such as academia, sports, crime, sex, war, and politics, the understanding of which will benefit from a behavioural economics perspective.

Scientist career path: An explorative analysis
This project aims to uncover important insights into scientists, their interactions, and their career dynamics, seeking to understand scientific success and scientific innovations by understanding scientists themselves.

Why is this important?
Studying the science of science, understanding how scientific ideas develop and spread, is necessary if we are to hasten the innovation process. We use econometric approaches to follow the career progression of academics, particularly the effect of prizes and awards on their future research outputs, impact and collaborations.

What we aim to do
This project will generate the largest data set on scientists ever collected and analysed, resulting in new knowledge into the mechanisms underlying scientific progress and innovation; scientists’ resilience and adaptation to positive and negative life shocks or environmental changes; their pattern of collaboration and cooperation; and their creative development. The project will provide significant benefits to universities and policy makers in fulfilling their role of creating and disseminating new knowledge.

What we have already done
So far we have looked at the top 100,000 most cited scientists, we examined gender issue in science in terms of underrepresentation, difference in publication and citation performance. We provided a comprehensive mapping of these issues over field of research and countries (link). In addition, we have investigated whether and how ‘beauty-premium’ applies to academia, where we examine the relationship between pay/market value (public speaking fees) and facial attractiveness of 800 scholars. We found that while attractiveness is not correlated with academic achievement (publication/citation), attractiveness influences how much audience is willing to pay to listen in public speaking market. In particular, we find that while social scientists are able to capitalise their attractiveness, drawing higher public speaking fees, attractiveness is negatively correlated with pay for natural scientists (link). Finally, we have focused on the effect of a large array of behavioural and social factors that drive audience attention hence dissemination/diffusion of scientific knowledge (link). We also hope to publish a COVID-19 working paper where we conducted a large survey with more than 10,000 scientists on their opinions and attitudes on immunity certificates (link).
Adoption of new healthcare procedures, and novel medical tools, techniques and treatments has the potential to improve the health of our society. This program provides researchers, clinicians & policymakers with the information and understanding necessary to design targeted behavioural interventions for the introduction of innovative medical technologies and healthcare protocols.

**Behavioural Biases of Patients and Medical Professionals in Regenerative Medical Technology Markets**

The aim of this pilot study was to understand doctors, surgeons and healthcare professional’s knowledge and behaviours in the medical marketplace for women's breast reconstruction technology following cancer treatment.

**Why is this important?**

Healthcare service industries (generally) are characterised by the joint provision of diagnosis and service. Within the interaction, the expert seller provides information that informs and may influence the consumption decision of the buyer. Behavioural economists refer to this information asymmetry between seller (expert/medical professionals) and buyer (consumer/patient) as the transaction of a credence good (Dulleck et al. 2011).

Credence goods are characterised by qualities that cannot be detected by consumers, preventing them from assessing the true value. Market failure (negative outcomes for patients and society) thus occurs through over and/or under treatment. Most importantly, sellers (experts/medical professionals) in such scenarios may not be aware of their biased behaviour, and instead believe they are genuinely acting in the best interest of their patient.

**What did we do?**

This pilot’s key aim was to understand the decision process and (and barriers to) information flow provided by healthcare professionals in this life changing setting for women (the marketplace for breast reconstruction ex poste cancer treatment), so as to ensure the most efficient and effective introduction and uptake of new regenerative breast technology currently being researched, designed and produced by the team lead by Dist Prof Dietmar W. Hutmacher, at QUT IHBI.

**What did we find out?**

The results showed significant divergence between patients’, nurses’, and surgeons’ perceptions of breast cancer treatment knowledge, as well as duration of initial consultation. The descriptive analysis conducted relating to perceived onus of choice of breast reconstruction indicated that a large proportion of women feel or believe that their surgeon effectively made a decision on their behalf when it came to their reconstruction. Such a finding raises concerns in relation not only to informed consent before surgery, but more importantly to patient expectations of reconstructive surgery.
Thought process manipulations (such as time-pressure) will isolate the effects of cognitive resource scarcity on insurance demand and retirement savings. Experimental comparison of treatments such as cognitive boosts (simulated experience of compound interest, educational feedback) and expert guidance (personalised peer advice) will identify the most effective interventions against cognitive resource scarcity. Interventions, simulations and research findings will be incorporated in GetReady software via industry links. Field experiment on retirement and insurance account holders will validate impact of GetReady on actual financial decisions, allowing its widespread adaption by financial institutions, educational organisations and government bodies.

**GetReady: an evidence-based simulator for training financial preparedness under resource scarcity**

This project will use experimental methods and build on expertise and partnerships at BEST to deliver GetReady, a tool for training financial preparedness for future needs. Played to maximise welfare points over forty hypothetical years until retirement, GetReady will elicit repeated savings and insurance decisions in a virtual environment of uncertain market outcomes (returns to investment) and nonmarket events (costly sickness or accident) as well as simulated experiences and personally targeted interventions.

**Why is this important?**

Financial shock due to illness and accident can destabilise those who are not financially empowered. However, the safety afforded by savings and insurance is constrained not only by financial resource scarcity but also by consequent cognitive resource scarcity (e.g., lack of time, mental energy, knowledge or experience).

**What we aim to do**

We will develop GetReady in three stages that will produce cutting-edge research output:

1. Thought process manipulations (such as time-pressure) will isolate the effects of cognitive resource scarcity on insurance demand and retirement savings.
2. Experimental comparison of treatments such as cognitive boosts (simulated experience of compound interest, educational feedback) and expert guidance (personalised peer advice) will identify the most effective interventions against cognitive resource scarcity.
3. Interventions, simulations and research findings will be incorporated in GetReady software via industry links. Field experiment on retirement and insurance account holders will validate impact of GetReady on actual financial decisions, allowing its widespread adaption by financial institutions, educational organisations and government bodies.

**What we have done so far**

We received ethics approval from QUT’s Office of Research Ethics for the first four experiments described in our first report. We completed data collection for two of these planned experiments: Experiment 1 (activating cognitive resource scarcity) and Experiment 3 (activating financial resource scarcity). We are currently in the data collection stage for Experiment 2 (effect of cognitive resource scarcity on financial preparedness). The proposal for Experiment 4 is currently under review at Psychological Science.
Behaviours & Decisions in Agriculture & Natural Resources Project Spotlight

Protecting our environment for future generations, and ensuring sustainable use of natural resources is a priority for government. With a diverse range of groups benefiting economically and socially from the use of natural resources, this program investigates the effective use of, and compliance with, policies around such issues as safe use of chemicals and technologies.

Behaviours that threaten Australia's Biosecurity

The intent of this project was to review existing research to better understand the behaviours that lead to increased biosecurity risk, and identify priority behaviours that could be targeted in future research and behavioural design interventions.

Why is this important?

A strong biosecurity approach has played a key role in keeping Australia free from the world’s most severe pests and diseases. However, as international travel and trade continues to increase, it is important that we use all of the tools available to us to reduce the risk of exotic pests and diseases entering the country and damaging our precious environment and important industries. Effectively influencing individuals’ behaviours is key to maintaining our biosecurity as we rely on travellers, online shoppers, importers, inspectors, stevedores and others to do certain things to reduce risk.

What did we do?

This work included a desktop review, consultation with an Advisory Group of 13 Officers from across the Biosecurity Group and related areas, individual consultations with ten government or academic biosecurity experts, and a behavioural prioritisation workshop. Over 26,000 records from academic and grey literature were processed, leading to the identification of 20 relevant articles. In general, there is a lack of behavioural research on barriers to biosecurity, however there is consensus on problematic types of behaviours (e.g., not declaring) revealing opportunities for further research.

What did we find out?

- Key motivators and barriers depend on the behaviour, not the biota. Interestingly, often the same behaviours (e.g., not declaring) can have very different motivations.
- There is a spectrum of intent between intentional and inadvertent behaviours. For instance, someone may knowingly ‘rush’ the job of cleaning cargo, but do this because they lack time, not because they intend to cause harm.
- There is a general lack of behavioural research, with almost no empirical research found that had evaluated the impact of behavioural interventions on biosecurity behaviour. The research found was largely theoretical in nature.
- While there are a wide variety of biosecurity threats, the same behaviours tend to apply across these threats, meaning that there is consensus on problematic types of behaviour. For example, travellers failing to declare items on entry to Australia is problematic as they could be bringing a wide range of pests or organisms with them. This indicates that there is a good opportunity to target key behaviours to significantly reduce risk.
The world has lived with the COVID-19 pandemic for over a year now and it has uprooted every single human-being in one way or another. BEST have been on the forefront of behavioural science research into global impacts of the pandemic, showing how a single-discipline approach, whether its in the hard sciences, economics or behavioural sciences is likely to fail with many of today’s challenging problems.

We are extremely proud of our growing body of research in this space, with our students and members publishing 29 papers (and counting) on topics ranging from the effects of globalisation on pandemic responses, to methods and insights on how to explore human behaviour in a disaster environment, and even contributing to one of the largest global studies on national identity as a predictor of public health support during a global pandemic. In addition to these publications, BEST have been very active in the news and media, appearing several times on and in The Conversation, Nature Research and the ABC - resulting in over 20 media citations on the topic of COVID-19 alone recorded for our members in 2020.

Many of our events and projects also examined the pandemic through the lens of behavioural sciences. Our Drivers of Innovation workshop included presentations surrounding “Intellectual Property, Access to Medicines, and the Coronavirus”, evidence into how uncertainty stifles innovation and growth, and the role of 3D printing in enhancing the speed and scope of innovative activities. Furthermore, the Trust and Mistrust in Australian News Media project investigated Australia’s degree of trust in news media and took into consideration the current climate of COVID-19.

All of this research has been summarised on our “Behavioural Approaches to COVID-19” page on the BEST website and can be accessed, by clicking HERE.
In 2020, BEST submitted an application for an ARC Training Centre for Behavioural Insights for Technology Adoption (BITA). The bid was led by Uwe Dulleck (Economics and Finance), Rebekah Russell-Bennett (Advertising, Marketing and Public Relations), Benno Torgler (Economics and Finance), Jolanda Jetten (UQ) and Marit Kragt (UWA), with QUT CIs Byron Keating, Dietmar Hutmacher, Terry Flew, Martin Obschonka, Laura Bray, Brett Heyward, Gavin Nicholson, Geoff Walker, Arthur ter Hofstede, Sagadevan Mundree and Shamsunnahar Yasmin.

The application took 18 months to put together and has attracted $1.98m in cash and $2.189m in-kind from 19 partner organisations (including start-ups, industry and public sector organisations) and three Australian universities (QUT, UQ and UWA). This creates strong leverage for the $4.282m requested from the ARC.

Collectively, the 28 CIs involved with BITA have successfully trained 400 HDR students (259 PhD Students and 141 Masters Students), published 2,233 peer reviewed articles (1,175 of which are in Q1 journals), received 105 ARC grants, attracted total research funding of $142m and developed 24 patents.

Proposal Summary:
Australia needs accelerated adoption of innovation technologies to improve outcomes in health, agriculture and cybersecurity. Despite technically viable solutions, innovations fail to be adopted due to behavioural barriers. Behavioural approaches can promote significant gains by bridging the barriers to technology adoption. The Centre for Behavioural Insights for Technology Adoption will boost national productivity by identifying, designing and evaluating solutions that address these barriers. By uniting industry and government with world-leading interdisciplinary researchers, the Centre will build transformative capability in people, data and solutions and support Australian organisations to achieve higher returns on technology investment.

Programs and partners in BITA:
Developing our Future Behavioural Researchers
Lucas Whittaker

Lucas Whittaker is a PhD Candidate investigating how emergent ‘deepfake’ videos, synthetic media created using artificial intelligence and machine learning technology, can be utilised to create and destroy customer value. His PhD research also aims to investigate how the possession of behavioural biases may influence the evaluation of deepfake video messages, and whether such biases may interact with the customer value creation process. Prior to commencing his PhD in 2020, Lucas completed a Bachelor of Business (Honours) (Marketing) degree which explored the use of mobile gamification to adopt energy-efficient household behaviour. Lucas is undertaking his PhD with supervisors from the School of AMPR (Professor Rebekah Russell-Bennett and Dr Kate Letheren) and external supervisors and BEST Fellows from the University of Victoria in Canada (Professor Jan Kietzmann) and the University of the Sunshine Coast (Dr Rory Mulcahy). Lucas states that aligning this PhD study within the BEST Centre offers the advantage of an interdisciplinary perspective, granting the project a more holistic lens to investigate human behaviour towards deepfakes, a new form of media which can generate inauthentic, yet highly realistic depictions of reality which can diminish our ability to discern truth within the digital realm. Lucas has already published 2 journal articles on the topic and won the Best Paper (Early Track) at the ANZMAC Doctoral Colloquium in 2020.

Imke Lammers

PhD candidate Imke is interested in interdisciplinary approaches to regulatory problems. Instead of pitting discipline specific methods against each other and making them compete until one method claims victory, she aims to tailor methods to the research question, deploying insights and methods from multiple disciplines. Imke’s research investigates human decision-making in personal insolvency law. Personal insolvency law is an inherently interdisciplinary subject. While it has been studied by historians, legal scholars, social scientists and economists alike, research tends to gravitate towards two sub-disciplines that seem difficult to unify: Law & Sociology and Law & Economics. In an attempt to bridge this divide, she proposes three studies that approach personal insolvency from a behavioural perspective enriched by lessons from law, sociology and economics. Prior to beginning her PhD in 2018, Imke received a Bachelor degree in Economics & Law and a Master degree in Politics, Economics & Philosophy. With a truly interdisciplinary background, Imke has commenced her dissertation with the BEST Centre, under the supervision of Uwe Dulleck from the School of Economics & Finance as well as Nicola Howell and Rosalind Mason from QUT’s Law School. Imke is excited about conducting research in an environment where research is not limited by discipline-specific boundaries and where the BEST Centre provides a platform for researchers from all kinds of fields to collaborate and learn from each other. “Within-field gains are evident, but relatively linear – whereas the rate of gain from cross-disciplinary integration has a greater potential to be geometric.” (Owen Jones, 2018, “Why behavioral economics isn’t better, and how it could be”. In Teilbaum & Zeiler (eds.), Research handbook on behavioral law and economics. Edward Elgar Publishing.)
Jacquie McGraw
PhD candidate Jacquie is interested in behaviour change through social marketing, particularly for prevention. Jacquie’s research is investigating men’s preventative health behaviours and their use of health services. With an industry background in advertising, communications, and marketing in the private and public sectors, Jacquie has developed and delivered several prominent state-wide social marketing campaigns including bowel cancer screening, childhood vaccination, and anti-smoking for young women. In 2018, Jacquie completed her Research Masters identifying masculine identities and self-conscious emotions in men’s help-seeking for preventative health. In 2019, Jacquie commenced a PhD with the BEST Centre, with supervisors Professor Rebekah Russell-Bennett from the BEST centre and QUT’s School of Advertising, Marketing, and Public Relations, and Professor Katherine White from QUT’s School of Psychology and Counselling. Her PhD, titled “Destroying value in transformative health services for vulnerable male consumers: The role of masculine identities”, aims to identify influencing masculinity characteristics of males experiencing vulnerability in preventative health services and where service value is destroyed, particularly for younger males. Jacquie has so far presented her research at several international conferences in Paris, Singapore, and San Diego and nationally at the recent BEST Conference 2021. She is excited about working with BEST researchers to find new interdisciplinary approaches to address some salient social problems.

Steve Bickley
PhD candidate Steve is interested in the connections between people and things (e.g., machines, methods, concepts) and how, as a whole, the behaviours, decisions, and actions of individuals contribute to the formation of stable patterns in large and varied networks of actors (i.e., systems). Steve’s thesis, “On Modelling Human(s)”, aims to improve the foundational understanding required to effectively model and analyse complex, dynamic, and adaptive human systems (e.g., transportation systems, energy networks, governments, societies, sociotechnical systems). In particular, during and in response to disaster/crisis events such as stock bubbles, natural disasters, plant failures, and disease outbreak. With a background in electrical engineering, project management, and behavioural economics, Steve has commenced a PhD with the BEST Centre, with Professor Benno Torgler, Dr Ho Fai (Ben) Chan, and Dr Stephen Whyte. His decision to come back to QUT and continue his research journey was spurred by the on-going interaction and engagement with BEST centre associates during his undergraduate studies and an increasingly strong desire to freely follow his intellectual curiosities wherever they might lead him. Within the first year of his PhD, Steve has already had the opportunity to collaborate with a large and diverse group of early-, mid-, and late stage researchers and is excited by the prospect of taking this further in visiting his collaborators in-person (once the COVID-19 environment allows for it) and engaging with other research professionals at national and international conferences. The diversity in thought and approach enabled by interdisciplinary research and collaboration is what excites Steve most.
Dr Kate Letheren

What is your research area?
At the broadest level I would say my research area is ‘human behaviour’ – in my case, looking at the psychology behind how people think and feel. On a more specific level, I am interested in human interactions with, and reactions to, humanised technologies like social robots or AI agents. I examine how individual differences – such as the propensity to anthropomorphise – influence our perceptions of these technologies.

What was the topic of your PhD thesis?
My PhD thesis was on anthropomorphic tendency (the tendency to see human characteristics in non-humans), but instead of looking at humanised robots, I examined humanised cartoon characters that we see all the time – characters like the M&M’s or the Michelin Man. I wanted to know how levels of anthropomorphic tendency influenced our liking for these characters, and found that tending to see a cartoon character as more human-like can in turn result in us liking that character more. I’ve since had similar findings in the areas of robotics and AI, illustrating that as humans our anthropomorphic tendency influences our responses to many different kinds of ‘non-humans’ populating our world.

What are you currently investigating?
I’m currently working on projects which look at enhancing wellbeing for mature women using a web portal; understanding the different ways customers see value in transport; and how consumers use energy and trust in the energy sector. In addition, I’m working on a few projects examining how we might interact with robots in public vs private spaces.

How long have you been with BEST and what is your role in the Centre?
I’ve been with BEST for about two years now, and am a postdoctoral research fellow and the deputy program lead for the Behavioural Change & Social Marketing Program (Program 2).

How would you describe the research methodologies and aims/goals of your program?
In Program 2 we’re very much focussed on using social marketing as a behaviour change approach to help support people to make more positive choices for themselves and for society, and also in aiding policymakers and non-profits to provide the structure and support necessary to achieve this positive change. We are consumer-centric, so our methods most frequently emphasise working from the stakeholders themselves – for example, we often apply co-design methodologies to design change with the people involved, rather than following a more traditional expert-led approach. We use many different methods to best understand and work with stakeholders, ranging from interactive workshops to experiments, surveys or data-modelling.

What is your favourite part about working with BEST?
“My favourite part of working with BEST has to be the people I get to work with every day. The environment is really collaborative; everyone is so collegial and always willing to chat about ideas. It’s also great working with people from such diverse research interests and approaches; I really enjoy learning about new ways of researching and hearing about all the fascinating research projects others are conducting.”
I am a behavioural and experimental economist. I work on numerous projects, but most of these are about social and moral dilemmas, including issues such as the cognitive and behavioural drivers of cooperation and honesty. I study these topics from a dual-process perspective, in particular, comparing spontaneous and intuitive decisions to deliberated decisions involving analytical thought processes. A general trend in many of my studies is the finding that decision-making improves with analytical thinking or reliance on reflection. This finding seems to emerge from many of the contexts that I work on and a good example is our recent publication in *Nature Human Behaviour* which compares religious believers and non-believers in terms of their cooperation decisions and shows that reflection increases cooperation in general—that is, independent of group divisions. I also work on more methodological topics, such as devising ways to motivate people to rely on either intuition or reflection during decision-making, which develop into tools that can be used in experimental work. There is a lot of research on dual-process approaches to decision-making (such as cognitive biases) in the literature, but the tools that are supposed to manipulate cognitive process are often not very robust and there is a lot more room for improvement. In a recent publication in *Judgment and Decision Making*, we show that simply asking people to justify their decision or providing a brief online debiasing training can significantly increase cognitive performance.

My speciality is to design, run, and analyse experiments and that’s a flexible method that can be used to investigate almost any kind of behavioural research question, including questions related to Trust and Behaviour in the Digital Economy—the BEST program that I am currently affiliated with. This is an applied program. For example, in the context of individual financial decision-making, to the extent one lacks financial literacy, one would need to rely on expert opinion for guidance. In such cases, knowing whose advice to trust and follow becomes pivotal. We also know there is decreasing trust in experts, especially in the digital context, so there is a lot of room for improvement in that space as well.
Dr Nancy Kong is a research fellow at the Centre for Behavioural Economics, Society and Technology, QUT. She completed her PhD in economics in 2017 at Dalhousie University, Canada, and her fields of research are health economics, labour economics, and applied econometrics.

Dr Shoufeng Cao is a post-doctoral research fellow attached to the BeefLedger Export Smart Contracts team at QUT. Shoufeng’s main responsibility is to design trusted cross-border digital beef supply chains to instil confidence in consumers, and investigate economic incentive mechanisms on the changes of the behaviour within and between supply chain actors for a trustworthy supply chain.

Dr Ho Fai (Ben) Chan is a Postdoctoral Research fellow in the School of Economics and Finance at QUT. His research lies in the areas of Science of Science (SciSci) and Scientometrics which aim to provide better understanding of the relations and interactions between scientific agents using quantitative methods.

Dr Valeri Natanelov is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow within the BeefLedger research team in the QUT Design Lab, School of Design in the Creative Industries Faculty at QUT. He has consulted and collaborated on several blockchain projects and his current research focuses on blockchain based food provenance.

Dr Laura Bray is the Deputy Director of the ARC Training Centre for Cell and Tissue Engineering Technologies. Through the use of state of the art matrix engineering techniques, her work has led to a number of significant advances in knowledge in the area of 3D tissue engineering and culture techniques.

Dr Shamsunnahar Yasmin is a Research Fellow (Road Safety Engineer) at the Centre for Accident Research and Road Safety – Queensland (CARRS-Q), Australia. She is a Civil Engineer with ten years of research and project management experience with specialisation in Transportation Engineering.

Dr Stephen Whyte is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Behavioural Economics at QUT. His research focus explores large scale decision making in mate choice settings. His work takes a multi-disciplinary approach in studying key sex differences in human behaviour, with work that bridges the fields of applied micro-economics, personality & social psychology, and evolutionary biology.

Dr Gerry Wunsch is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow with the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) supported by the Cotton Research & Development Corporation (CRDC). She applies her background in cotton growing to inform decision-making in the field of cotton/agricultural technology adoption.
Engaging BEST Partners and Friends
One of the areas that BEST felt the impact of COVID most was our events - with many planned workshops, conferences and seminars needing to move online. However, despite this challenge, BEST was still able to host 8 events and help in the organisation of an additional 2 affiliated events. The focus of many of our events this year was to engage industry colleagues and partners in our ARC ITTC bid for BITA, which required the Centre to promote its expertise in 3 key areas: Agriculture and Natural Resources, Cyberspace and the Digital Economy, and Health and Medical Technologies. In addition, we hosted workshops to specifically engage government partners and promote our researchers and expertise in behavioural science and innovation.

Our 2020 events were a resounding success with over 400 attendees in total attending our events, hailing from government departments, industry organisations and academic institutions. The move to virtual also helped us develop our skillset in hosting hybrid events and allowed the Centre to produce much more video content of our work than in previous years. We expect these challenges to follow us into 2021 and beyond, but we look forward to hosting events in this new environment that still engage our audiences, partners and colleagues in an impactful and meaningful way.
BEST Conference 2020 | Feb 2020
In 2020, the BEST Centre held our 2nd annual “BEST Conference on Human Behaviour and Decision Making” on Thursday 13th & Friday 14th February at the Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane Australia. The Conference brought together academic, private sector and policy researchers to share, learn and collaborate on scientific research focused on understanding human behaviour, and how that impacts decision making and thus society more broadly. With over 100 attendees, the event included the presentation of 54 papers (and 6 plenaries) from academics and industry professionals. Speakers hailed from 21 interstate (QLD, NSW, ACT & VIC) and international (Australia, USA, UK, Poland, Japan, Singapore and Indonesia) institutions and organisations, and we introduced the Caleb Lo Memorial Award for BEST student presentation.

Broadening Culture | Feb 2020
BEST welcomed Prof Adam Cohen from the Department of Psychology at Arizona State University, USA on February 11th, 2020 for an interactive workshop to broaden our understanding of culture via a rigorous, multi-method set of studies. This included focus groups, quantitative surveys, and a longitudinal study using ecological momentary assessment techniques, with which were used to predict successful adaptation. Adam's main research interests fuse cultural, social, and personality psychology and the workshop was regarded as highly insightful by the 25 people who attended.

Australian Gender Economics Workshop 2020 | Feb 2020
The third edition of the Australian Gender Economics Workshop (AGEW), took place in Brisbane at the Queensland University of Technology on the 5th-7th of February, 2020. The aim of AGEW was to foster a community of economic researchers who can collectively contribute to the evidence base needed to guide the pursuit of more gender equitable outcomes in society. AGEW 2020 included a program of research presentations and posters and a policy symposium session. We welcomed Professor Shoshana Grossbard and Professor Victor Lavy as our two international keynote speakers, with Professor Gigi Foster invited as our Australia-based keynote speaker. Professor Grossbard also taught a Course on Household Economics, Domestic Violence, and the Law on 3-4 February 2020.
BEST Presents: Digital trust and well-being workshop | Jun 2020
On the 2nd of June, 2020, BEST hosted the Digital trust and well-being virtual workshop, which brought together a focus group of industry experts at the forefront of incorporating digital technology into their respective industries, and behavioural scientists to discuss challenges and opportunities related to trust and behaviour in the digital environment. The purpose of the workshop was to share the latest research being conducted by BEST and its partners and collaborators, continue the discussion around the challenges facing industry and the role behavioural insights can play in resolving these issues, and receive industry feedback to help shape a proposal for an ARC Training Centre.

What is behavioural economics and how do I learn about it? | Jun 2020
In June, BEST hosted an information session about the QUT Graduate Certificate in Business (Behavioural Economics). In this virtual session, Behavioural Economics Professor Benno Torgler provided an overview of what BE is and provided information about the Graduate Certificate and what is covered. In addition, past student Vicki Vanderent, who now works with the Insurance Commission in planning and strategy, discussed her experience of the course and how she applies her learning in practice. The event was attended by 25 people and was recorded, so that new students considering the Grad Cert could gain a better understanding of the course.

BEST Presents: Agriculture and natural resources virtual workshop | Jul 2020
Agriculture and natural resources are two of the most highly innovative industry sectors, yet there is often a lag in the uptake of new technologies with actors in the respective industries resistant to change. This workshop brought together a focus group of industry experts and behavioural scientists to discuss challenges and opportunities related to behaviours and decision-making in agriculture and natural resources. The purpose of the workshop was to share latest research being conducted by BEST and its partners and collaborators, continue the discussion around the challenges facing agriculture and natural resources, and the role behavioural insights can play in resolving these issues, and receive industry feedback to help shape a proposal for an ARC Industrial Transformation Training Centre. The event included presentation from BEST, UWA, Fisheries Research NSW, Centre for Tropical Crops and Bio-commodities, Smartpaddock, QLD Department of Environment and Science, MLA and the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation.
Using VOSVIEWER: A tool for literature review analysis and bibliometrics | Sep 2020

Vosviewer is a new software tool that can be used to generate, visualise and analyse bibliometric networks. These networks include research authors, journals, institutions and individual publications. Through Vosviewer, these networks can be visualised at speeds and scales that are infeasible using manual methods or legacy software tools. Vosviewer also has text mining capabilities that can construct network maps of co-occurring keywords sourced from abstracts and bodies of research articles. In this workshop, BEST walked through how to conduct a complete bibliometric analysis using Vosviewer. We then provided an example of how to use this analysis to write a bibliometric research article for journal submission. PhD student, Andrew Park from SFU Beedie led this session and the event was attended by over 30 people.

BEST Presents: Drivers of Innovation Workshop | Dec 2020

Our final event for the year was the Drivers of Innovation Workshop, which was held both in person and streamed virtually. In this event we brought together researchers from across QUT with a common interest in supporting innovation, overcoming policy problems inhibiting innovation and paving a way forward for delivering innovation post-coronavirus. The event included presentations from Prof Uwe Dulleck, Annita Nugent, Dr Sean Wu, Dr Ruchith Dissanayake, Prof Matthew Rimmer and Dr Muhammad Zaheer Abbas, who span the QUT Business and Law Faculties.
Governance
The Centre is structurally embedded within the QUT Business School. The Centre Co-Directors are responsible and report to the Faculty through the Business School Assistant Dean Research and are supported in the management and day-to-day operations of the Centre by the Centre Coordinator and Communications Coordinator. The Centre Co-Directors and Chief Investigators share responsibility for leadership of the research programs and acquittal of the Centre’s strategic objectives, collectively they constitute the Executive Committee. An international advisory board comprising the Heads of Schools, key international academic and end user collaborators and chaired by the Business School Assistant Dean Research, will be established in 2021 to provide oversight and strategic advice to the Executive Committee.
BEST Operations Staff: BEST personnel who provide administrative and communications support for the Centre.

BEST Friends: A BEST Friend is anyone who wishes to keep up to date with the activities of the Centre. A BEST Friend has no obligations to the Centre’s upkeep and research output, but are always welcome to attend open events and receive external newsletters and correspondence.

BEST Partners: BEST Partners are our valued industry and government research affiliates. Partners are organisations or individuals who have previously supported (or are currently supporting) BEST projects.

BEST Collaborators: BEST Collaborators are QUT researchers who collaborate with BEST Members on research projects, grants and publications, but are not BEST Members. With these colleagues we engage in directed exchange of information and co-creation of new knowledge, facilitating the learning of research students and academics alike.

BEST Fellows: BEST Fellows are researchers who have previously worked (or are currently working) on BEST projects from external universities. BEST Fellows are essentially our non-QUT members and are equally valued in their contribution to the Centre.

BEST Students: BEST Students are honour, masters or PhD students enrolled at QUT who are supervised by at least one BEST Member and with a second supervisor from a different BEST program, or another School or Faculty. BEST students are instrumental in sewing the rich tapestry of collaboration across programs and disciplines and are the lifeblood of the Centre.

BEST Members: A BEST member is a chief investigator or associate investigator within the Centre. Active contributors to the research programs, BEST Members are key to the Centre’s success and provide a diverse range of research talent and experience. New BEST members can be nominated by existing members to join the Centre, with the approval of the relevant Head of School.

BEST Program Leads: The BEST Core Group consists of Program and Deputy Program Leads for each of the Centre’s six programs. Working closely with the Executive Committee, this group drives the research and impact agenda for each of the programs, and contributes to the training and development of students, early-career and mid-career researchers.

BEST Executive Committee: The BEST Executive Committee is the Centre’s leadership team. This group includes the Co-Directors, Coordinator - Industry and Government Engagement and Coordinator – Interfaculty Collaboration. The Committee is responsible for guiding research direction and industry engagement, interdisciplinary collaboration and the development of the Centre’s students and early career researchers.
BEST PARTNERS

Adultmatchmaker.com  
AGL  
AMPC  
AMSA  
ARTIE  
ATO  
Attorney General's Office  
Australian Communication and Media Authority  
Australian Mungbean Association  
Australian Sex Party  
BCM  
BeefLedger  
Behaviour Change Collaborative  
Bigfish (Digital Comms)  
Brain and Mind Centre (USYD)  
Breast Cancer Network Australia  
Centre for Tropical Crops and Biocommodities  
CitySmart  
Clear Grain Exchange  
CSIRO  
Dairy Australia  
DECIDA Digital  
Deloitte Access Economics  
Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment  
Department of Education and Training  
Department of Housing and Public Works  
Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources  
Department of Justice  
Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy  
Department of Transport and Main Roads  
Disability Employment Australia  
Duke University Sanford School for Public Policy  
E3 Advisory  
Enerex  
Energy Consumers Australia  
Ergon Energy Retail  
Eros Association  
Essential Energy  
EVIDN  
Evoke Communications (PR)  
Fisheries Research and Development Corporation  
Fisheries Research, NSW Department of Primary Industries  
Food Agility  
GEER Australia  
Giga Pty Ltd  
Griffith University  
Grower Group Alliance  
IP Australia  
KIAH Consulting  
Livestock Pricing  
Ludwig Maximillian University of Munich  
Maastricht University  
Max Black  
Mission Australia  
Meat and Livestock Australia  
Moreton Bay Council  
PA Hospital  
PwC  
QCOSS  
QLD Department of Environment and Science  
Qshelter  
Siemens's Healthineers  
Smartpaddock  
Stryker  
Sunsuper  
Tenants QLD  
TECTEC  
The Behavioural Insights Team  
The Good Guys  
The Mind Room  
TTPI  
University of Salzburg  
UQ  
UQ School of Psychology  
USC  
UWA  
Way We Do  
WealthMonsta  
WorkCover QLD  
YWCA
BEST Operations Staff
*as of 31 Dec 2020

Centre Coordinator
A Fletcher

Communication and Marketing Officer
S Ong

Graphic Designer
N Sketcher

Research Assistant
Y Wan

BEST STRUCTURE

ANNUAL REPORT 2020
### KPIs

#### Scholarly research outputs

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<tr>
<th>KPI</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2021 targets</th>
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<tr>
<td>Number of books</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of book chapters</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of journal articles</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>109</td>
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<tr>
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<td>81.81% (81)</td>
<td>85.32% (93)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>39</td>
<td>43</td>
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#### Research training and HDR student engagement

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<td>Number of commencing HDR students</td>
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<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of ongoing HDR students</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of PhD completions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of MPhil completions</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of HDR workshops or training events hosted by Centre</td>
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#### International and national links and networks

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of papers/reports published with international co-authors</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>64</td>
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<td>Number of international visitors hosted by Centre</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>Number of international fellowships and/or international visiting positions</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of memberships of national or international academic or professional committees or organisations</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>36</td>
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#### End-user engagement

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<td>Number of media citations, appearances and authored pieces</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>63</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of industry keynotes, public lectures or invited seminars</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of professional education workshops or training events hosted</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of symposium/conference/public events hosted by Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of published reports for industry, gov, non-profit organisations or submissions to inquiries</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23</td>
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# RESEARCH OUTPUT

## Publication Details

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<tr>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>Volume</th>
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<th>Authors</th>
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<tr>
<td>Exploring the resources associated with consumer vulnerability: Designing nuanced retail hardship programs.</td>
<td>Glavas, C., Letheren, K., Russell-Bennett, R., McAndrew, R., &amp; Bedggood, R.</td>
<td>Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 57, [102212].</td>
<td><a href="https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2020.102212">https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2020.102212</a></td>
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<td>Antiviral and antibacterial nanostructured surfaces with excellent mechanical properties for hospital applications.</td>
<td>Hasan, J., Xu, Y., Yarlagadda, T., Schuetz, M., Spann, K., &amp; Yarlagadda, P. K. D. V.</td>
<td>ACS Biomaterials Science and Engineering, 6(6), 3608-3618.</td>
<td><a href="https://doi.org/10.1021/acsbiomaterials.0c00348">https://doi.org/10.1021/acsbiomaterials.0c00348</a></td>
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Publication Details


Publication Details


Publication Details


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RESEARCH OUTPUT

Publication Details


Foth, M., Mann, M., Bedford, L., Fieuw, W., & Walters, R. (2020). A capitalocentric review of technology for sustainable development: The Case for more-than-human design. (Global Information Society Watch (GISWatch)). Association for Progressive Communications (APC).


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<th>Publication Details</th>
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<td>Bi, W., Chan, H. F., &amp; Torgler, B. (2020). ‘Beauty’ premium for social scientists but ‘unattractiveness’ premium for natural scientists in the public speaking market. Humanities and Social Sciences Communications, 7(1), [118]. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-020-00608-6">https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-020-00608-6</a></td>
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<td>Flew, T., &amp; Kirkwood, K. (2020, Dec 8). Australia’s creative and cultural industries and institutions: Submission 344. House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communication and the Arts.</td>
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<td><a href="https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Aboriginal_Flag/AboriginalFlag/Submissions">https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Aboriginal_Flag/AboriginalFlag/Submissions</a></td>
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<td>Rimmer, M. (2020). What is the 'Free the Flag' movement all about? The Canberra Times.</td>
<td>Other</td>
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<td><a href="https://doi.org/10.1007/s00402-020-03539-8">https://doi.org/10.1007/s00402-020-03539-8</a></td>
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<td>Vermeir, J. F., White, M. J., Johnson, D., Crombez, G., &amp; Van Ryckeghem, D. M. L. (2020). The effects of gamification on computerized cognitive training: Systematic review and meta-analysis. JMIR Serious Games, 8(3), [e18644]. <a href="https://doi.org/10.2196/18644">https://doi.org/10.2196/18644</a></td>
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<td>Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation</td>
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<td>Creative Industries</td>
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<td>School of Economics and Finance *</td>
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<td>School of Advertising, Marketing and Public Relations *</td>
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<td>Competitive grants</td>
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<td>Miscellaneous</td>
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### Expenditure

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### Profit / Loss

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<td>$535,067</td>
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**BEST 180540 accounts combined**

*Includes $253K provided by E&F and AMPR for BEST salary support, paid direct to staff not via BEST accounts.

*253K consists of $87K from E&F support for postdoctoral staff and annual support, and $166K from AMPR for postdoctoral staff and annual support.
BEST would like to thank the following units for their support:
- School of Economics and Finance Professional Staff
- QUT School of Business Research Office
- QUT Research Office

We are extremely grateful for the funding provided by:
- QUT School of Business
- School of Economics and Finance
- School of Advertising, Marketing and Public Relations
- Institute for Health and Biomedical Innovation
- Industry and Government Partners

We thank Sam Ong, Maya Brown and Natalie Sketcher for the preparation and creative design of the report.
BEST CENTRE
Behavioural Economics · Society · Technology

“Evidence-based behavioural research that transforms society and the economy”

1. Behavioural Economics & Public Policy
2. Behavioural Change & Social Marketing
5. Trust and Behaviour in the Digital Economy
6. Behaviours & Decisions in Agriculture & Natural Resources

BEST CENTRE
Centre for Behavioural Economics, Society and Technology