Opposite people on opposite sides? The social psychology of deep divisions about climate change, marriage equality, and accepting refugees.

Tuesday 15 March 2016,
9.30 - 10.30 am Bankstown Campus
BA05.LG.15

Abstract:
It is easy to accept that people who support different positions on a social issue seem different to each other, but do those different positions attract different types of people or does supporting different positions create different types of people? One possibility is that divisions on issues such as climate change, marriage equality, and accepting refugees is that division into opposed social groups can solidify what Lauren Duncan refers to as group consciousness based on a sense of social identity, group-based emotion, and beliefs about the efficacy of action, all of which are understood to drive a commitment to action to achieve socio-political aims. Drawing on a series of collaborative studies conducted in Australia and other countries, across three issues, I illustrate how, in a sense, supporters of different positions can be united, but primarily in the degree to which they are opposed to each other.

Biography:
Craig is a social and political psychologist whose main work is on intergroup relations especially social identity, collective action, group-based emotions, and stereotype formation. He is currently the Head of the Psychology Discipline in the School of Social Sciences and Psychology. His undergraduate degree was at the University of Adelaide before moving in 1985 to the Macquarie University to do his PhD. His first lecturing job was at the University of Western Sydney, Nepean in the School of Humanities and Applied Social Sciences in 1990. From 1991 he worked at ANU where he was Head of the School of Psychology (2004-2006) before moving to Murdoch University in 2007 to become Director of the Centre for Social and Community Research and then to become Director of the Social Research Institute. He moved back to Canberra in 2012 (still working for Murdoch University until 2014). Craig returned to Western Sydney University as a Professor of Psychology at the end of March 2014 and became Head of Psychology in October, 2015. He is an Associate Editor of Group Processes and Intergroup Relations, a guest editor of a Special Section of the Journal of Social and Political Psychology on the “20 Years after Genocide: The role of psychology in recovery in Rwanda” and of the European Journal of Social Psychology’s Special Issue on “Globalization and the Emergence of Global Concern”, and of a forthcoming special issue of the Journal of Social Issues on “Understanding Activism”. He is a member of the Governing Council of the International Society of Political Psychology. He was a member of the Australian Research Council’s College of Experts (2013-2015).

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