The Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia, in conjunction with the Fay Gale Centre for Research on Gender at the University of Adelaide, is pleased to present the Academy’s 2014 Fay Gale Lecture:

“WINNING THE WAR ON WAR BUT LOSING THE BATTLE: A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE ON GLOBAL VIOLENCE”

by Professor Jacqui True, Monash University

International relations scholars as well as psychologists have recently claimed that violence – defined largely as homicide and casualties from war – is in steep decline. On these accounts, human beings are becoming more civilized. However, research dedicated to making the case for decline with reference to historical and quantitative data has almost completely neglected evidence of gendered violence. Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) has been largely invisible, silent and unreported yet prevalence surveys reveal that the majority of women and girls in every country, that is, a large proportion of the total world population, have experienced this form of violence. According to the cross-national International Violence against Women survey (IVAWS) the number of women who have experienced at least one incident of physical or sexual violence since age sixteen is between 20 and 60 per cent with an average victimization rate of over 35 per cent. Moreover, declinist perspectives on violence and war seem to go against contemporary reporting of widespread and systematic SGBV especially targeting civilians in genocide, conflict and mass atrocity situations. Violence against women and girls (VAWG) has been the subject of nearly four decades of feminist scholarship, activism and policy interventions. Analysing global violence from a feminist perspective on VAWG radically challenges declinist views and our understanding of the causes, justifications, and consequences of violence.

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Professor Jacqui True

Jacqui True is Professor of Politics and International Relations at Monash University with her PhD in Political Science from York University, Canada. Previously she has taught and researched at Michigan State University, the University of Southern California and the University of Auckland. Professor True has published extensively in the field of gender and international relations. Her current research is focused on the UN Women, Peace and Security agenda, and with Dr Sara Davies on the prevention of sexual violence in conflict in Asia Pacific. Her book, The Political Economy of Violence against Women (Oxford University Press, 2012) won the American Political Science Association’s 2012 biennial prize for the best book on human rights and the British International Studies Association’s 2013 International Political Economy book prize.

The Fay Gale Lecture honours the late Professor Gwendoline Fay Gale AO (1932-2008), the first female President of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia and an eminent social scientist. Professor Gale was notable for her far-reaching impact on the promotion of gender equity within the university sector.