

# Tackling an 'abhorrent' crime

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Monash University research into filicide – where a parent kills their child – has been highlighted in a special edition of the prestigious UK journal *Child Abuse Review*.

As part of the [Monash Filicide Project](#), researchers have been able to contribute much-needed data that is helping garner a better understanding of filicide for those professionals who deal with the consequences of the crime.

Led by Professor Thea Brown from the Department of Social Work, Dr

Danielle Tyson from the Department of Criminology and Paula Fernandez Arias from the Department of Social Work, the project has been collecting data on filicide victims and their families over a ten year period sourced from cases at the Coroners Court of Victoria.

Professor Brown said while filicide was more common in some [countries](#) than others, a collaborative approach between countries was required, but to date that did not exist.

This can lead to misinformation surrounding the crime, which the project was working towards amending.

"Filicide has been described as an 'abhorrent crime'. It shocks and disturbs us to learn that a parent has killed his or her own child," Professor Brown said.

"To date countries have not joined forces to discuss the issue, compare the national situations or undertake international comparative studies to learn what is in common among countries and what is different."

She said that while filicide was considered less common in Australia, an average of 25 children die at the hands of their parents each year.

"When a parent kills their own [child](#), the tragedy causes deep distress to affected families and is a cost to the community. As authors of the first study in Australia examining a population of filicide victims, we wish to point out the reality of filicide and the directions they suggest for prevention."

Professor Brown said she was hopeful that the research being carried out by the filicide project would provide much needed insight into who is more likely to carry out filicide, why and how it can be prevented and thereby dispelling some of the myths that surround it.

"The recent discussion on filicide following the tragic deaths of the two young children in an outer Melbourne suburb illustrates the power of the myths surrounding filicide in Australia today. Myths do not assist professionals."

Provided by Monash University

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