**Transcript**

***Associate Professor Helen Lee – Overseas born Tongans and their ties to their homeland***

My research is with Tongan migrants, migrants from the South Pacific and their, particularly their children and young adults who’ve been born overseas. And, I’m interested in their connections, the young people’s connections back to their parents’ homeland. I’m just launching into a new project which looks at the overseas born youth whose parents actually send them to Tonga to attend high school for one or more terms because of concerns about their behaviour. And that can be anything from you know, poor school grades right through to hard core criminal gang involvement. And. I’m really interested to get the young people’s own perspective of their experiences being sent to a country some of them have never been to before, to live in boarding schools which are pretty harsh conditions and, or to stay with relatives who are explicitly asked to be disciplining them to straighten them out and, I’m interested in what that does in terms of their sense of identity and belonging. So, I guess the two aims I really have is to have the young people have a voice because in their community they don’t have much of a voice. I want to get their perspectives. But, I also want to look more broadly at how migrant communities deal with problems, that they consider problems with youth.

Well I think the main impacts I think are understanding migrant communities better and how they deal with issues that they see as problems, and maybe dealing with the community in Tonga as well who are struggling to cope with an influx of young people coming into schools because they also have other problems with young people coming in as deportees who’ve had criminal problems and it’s, there are problems emerging in Tonga around youth and crime issues. So, it’s community in Tonga but also migrant communities in countries like Australia, New Zealand and America which are the main countries Tongans have migrated to.