



**Flinders
University**



Jeff Bleich Centre
for Democracy and
Disruptive Technologies

Annual Report

2024

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Flinders University proudly acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands on which our campuses are located. These are the traditional lands of the Arrernte, Dagoman, First Nations of the South-East, First Peoples of the River Murray and Mallee region, Jawoyn, Kurna, Larrakia, Ngadjuri, Ngarrindjeri, Ramindjeri, Warumungu, Wardaman and Yolngu people. We honour their Elders - past, present and emerging.

Jeff Bleich Centre's 2024 Annual Report was prepared and printed on Kurna Yarta.

About the Jeff Bleich Centre

The Jeff Bleich Centre for Democracy and Disruptive Technologies (JBC) is a research centre in the College of Business, Government and Law, Flinders University.

The JBC recognises that democratic values and institutions need strengthening in order to flourish in democratic societies. It also recognises the disruptive nature of some technological advances, including the positive social impact that some of these technologies can facilitate, as well as the misuses that can undermine public trust and democratic values and processes. The Centre is named after Jeffrey Bleich, former US Ambassador to Australia appointed by President Obama in 2009. Ambassador Bleich serves as Chairman of the JBC Advisory Board.

A Year of Highlights

25 June



JBC Members Planning Retreat

Bringing our members together to set shared priorities and chart the Centre's direction under its new name.

14 August



Parliament Democracy Session with Tony Piccolo MP

Engaging directly with young Australian's on the state of democratic institutions

16 September



Meeting with The Hon Peter Malinauskas MP, Ambassador Jeff Bleich and Vice-Chancellor Professor Colin Stirling

Strengthening ties between the Centre, the University and the State Government.

2024 at a Glance

Consolidating a new identity for the Centre.

In 2023, the Jeff Bleich Centre for the US Alliance in Digital Technology, Security and Governance became the Jeff Bleich Centre for Democracy and Disruptive Technologies. The new name better reflects the breadth of our work: strengthening the core values and institutions of democratic societies in a world where technology constantly disrupts the status quo, while recognising both the positive social impact of emerging technologies and the ways they can be misused to undermine public trust.

With our renewed focus in place, the JBC made external engagement a central priority in 2024. We deepened our relationships with government, community and university leadership, and brought conversations about the health of democracy to broader audiences.

30 September



“Democracy at a Crossroads” Luncheon

Featuring Ambassador Jeff Bleich as keynote speaker, reflecting on the challenges facing democracies worldwide.

7 November



US Election Event: As It Happens 2024

Hosting the community to follow and unpack the US presidential election results in real time, with expert analysis from JBC members.

Research Highlights

\$5,004,122

Total funding awarded to JBC members.

January - December 2024

8

Projects

8

Funders

8

Researchers

\$1,553,476

Australian Research Council grant funding awarded to JBC members

January - December 2024

1

Future Fellowship

1

Linkage

Publications

78

Publications from JBC Members

since January 2024

5

Disciplines

2

Colleges

25

Refereed Journal Articles

since January 2024



20%
Q1



40%
Top 10%

Research funding and publications span across all three of the JBC's research pillars:

- Democracy, Human Rights and Participation
- Defence, Security and Space
- Social Media, Artificial Intelligence and Disruptive Technologies

Policy Perspectives

The JBC delivers insightful, evidence-based pieces to our readers that explores specific policy issues from across the JBC key themes. Our editorial approach blends journalistic clarity with robust analysis, making complex policy issues accessible to a broad audience.

January	<u>Artificial Intelligence: Threat or Theatre?</u> Robert Chalmers
February	<u>Predictive data analytics: a neo-liberal snake in the grass?</u> Tim O'Loughlin
March	<u>What on Earth is a TSA?</u> Dr Joel Lisk
April	<u>Is cultured meat really the future food we need?</u> Tiahann Mathison
May	<u>Disinformation and misinformation: Threats to national security and democracy</u> Dr Stacey Henderson, Professor Melissa de Zwart & Emma Lush
June	<u>Targeted by AI: Why Proliferation of Lethal Autonomous Weapons (LAWs) Warrants Concern</u> Vasil Samardzhiev
August	<u>Awakening a sleeping giant in space? Brazil enacts its Space Activities Act</u> Vinicius Guedes Gonçalves de Oliveira
October	<u>The UN at a Crossroads: The Summit of the Future and the Search for Sustainable Peace</u> Jordan Faulkner & Dr Luis da Vinha
November	<u>"America First 2.0": Implications for the Liberal International Order and Australia's Strategic Outlook</u> Dr Luis da Vinha
December	<u>Solving Political Problems at the Expense of International Student Policies?</u> Dr. Dilnoza Ubaydullaeva

Our Programs

The JBC plays an active role in training a new generation of researchers and building capacity in Australia within areas of vital importance for our democracy. These internships are split across the JBC Innovations Incubator and the Global Internships Program.



2024 Washington Interns

L-R: Phoebe Edwards, Charlotte Kavanagh, Chelsea Carruthers,

Washington Internship

The Washington Internship Program (WIP) runs for 8 weeks, with an alternative 17 week program – combining the Washington Internship Program with a Capital Semester Program (WIPCASP), at George Mason University.

This Flinders program represents the greatest presence in Washington achieved by any university outside the United States. Students work full-time in the office of a member of the U.S. Senate or the U.S. House of Representatives.

This year our Flinders students were concentrated in the House of Representatives. This saw Chelsea Carruthers, Charlotte Kavanagh and Phoebe Edwards interning in Congressman Lloyd Doggett's office (Texas), Congressman Jim Costa's (California), and Congressman Juan Vargas' (California) respectively.



"Hunter Biden (lower left corner) crashing the Oversight Committee's consideration for holding him in contempt of Congress" from Charlotte Kavanagh's blog article



Vienna Space Internship

Students spend up to 8 weeks in the charming city of Vienna where they discover how law and policy can impact human activity in space, with an opportunity to sit in on meetings at the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs. The internship takes place at the European Space Policy Institute (ESPI) headquarters in Vienna, where students explore space law and policy issues.

This year, three Flinders students, Eloise Clarke, Sailor Tyler and Ellen Feeney, represented the JBC in Vienna as the inaugural cohort of the program.



2024 Vienna Interns

L-R: Sailor Tyler, Eloise Clarke, Ellen Feeney



2024 Innovations Incubator Interns

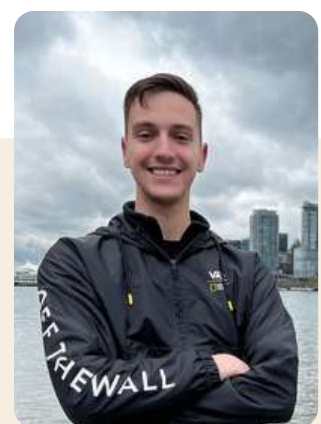
Innovations Incubator

The Innovations Incubator is the JBC's internal internship program, allowing students to gain research training by working alongside JBC researchers on active projects. This program is available to Flinders University undergraduate and postgraduate students throughout the year.

Over a dozen students successfully completed the internship in its inaugural year.

Visiting Research Fellow

Nick Bordeleau completed a visiting fellowship at the Jeff Bleich Centre in March and April of 2024. Originally from the University of Ottawa, Nick holds the Konrad Adenauer Chair in Empirical Democracy Studies. Nick's research fits within the fields of political behaviour and democracy studies, with particular focus on the role of citizens in times of democratic (in)stability. We thank him for his contribution to the Centre.



Nick Bordeleau

Funding

\$1.7 million

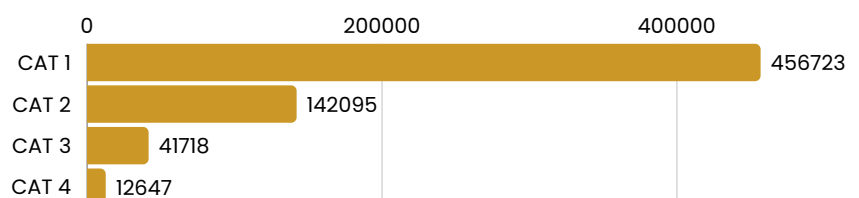
in philanthropic donations

\$3.2 million

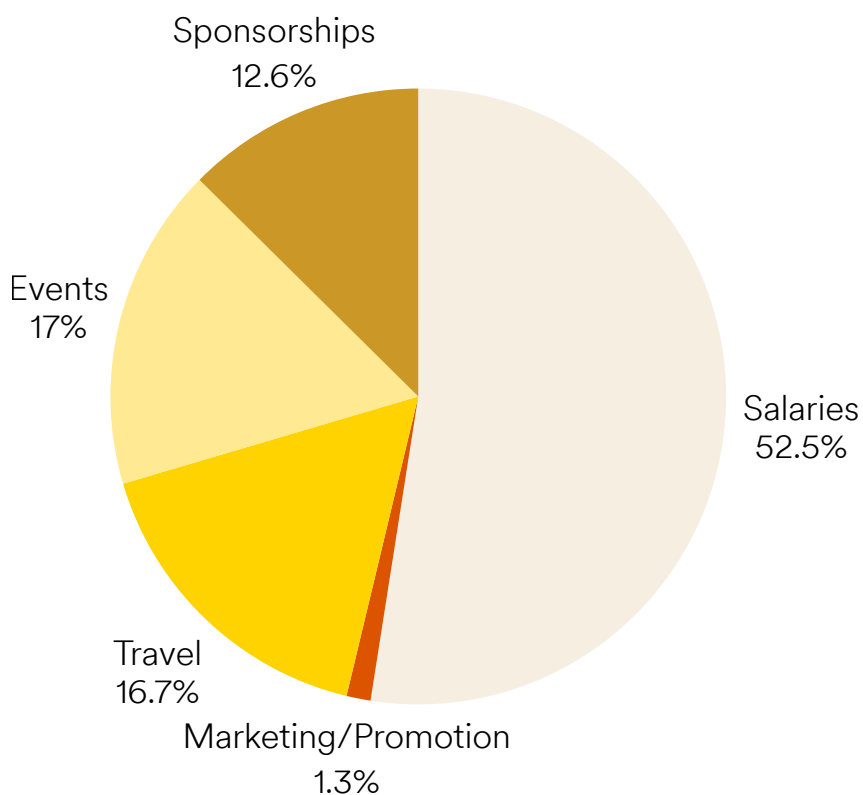
in external grant funding

\$653,183

in HERD-C funding



Operational Expenditure



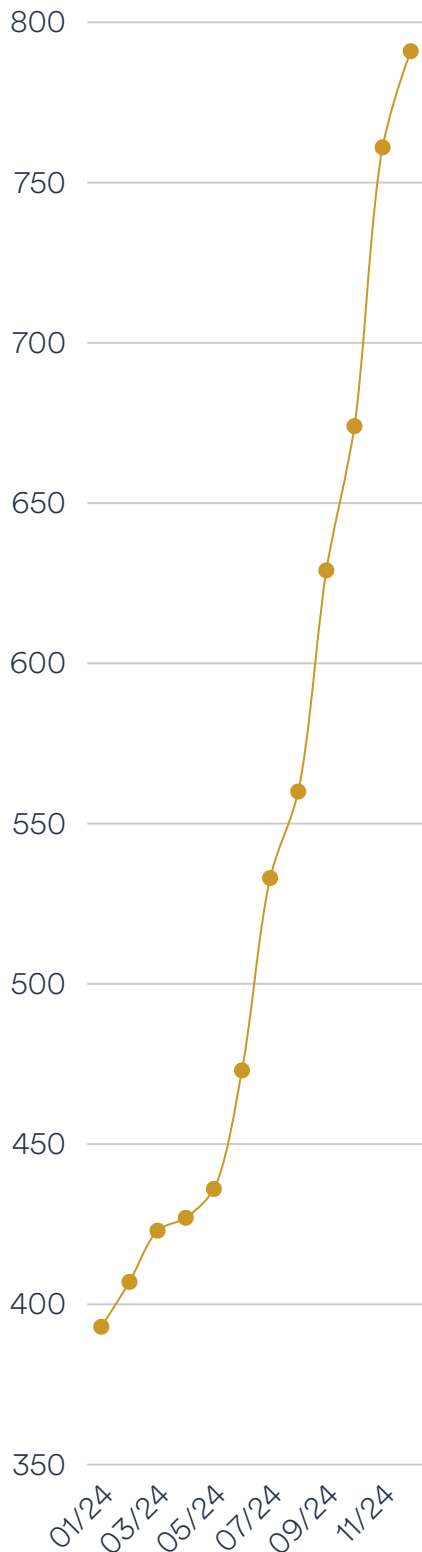
\$202,552

in total expenditure

\$27,000

supporting student scholarships

101%

**Increase in
LinkedIn Followers***January 2024 - December 2024***Media & Engagement****External Engagement Platforms****Policy Perspectives**

Accessible, expert-written op-ed pieces on current events

[Click here to read more](#)
**Expert Voices**

Short explainer-style videos, bringing you the information you need to understand complex political developments

[Click here to watch our videos](#)
**JBC Dialogues**

Expert discussions exploring security, democracy and technology, with Joel Lisk

[Click here to listen](#)
**JBC Newsletter**

Quarterly information pack of the Centre's achievements and exciting initiatives

[Click here to subscribe](#)


Acknowledgement of Partnerships

The JBC has both national and international ongoing collaborations with multiple partners across industry, government and academia. In the past 12 months we have reinforced our ties to the University of Virginia through a reciprocal visiting fellowship program and with the European Space Policy Institute with the launch of the Vienna Space Internship program.

The JBC is finalised a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the University of Ottawa Konrad Adenauer Chair in Empirical Democracy Studies that will establish a visiting fellowship scheme thanks to which the JBC will host a visiting scholar from the University of Ottawa annually.



SCHOOL of DATA SCIENCE



Konrad Adenauer Research Chair
in Empirical Democracy Studies
Chaire de recherche Konrad-Adenauer
en études empiriques de la démocratie



uOttawa

Core Team

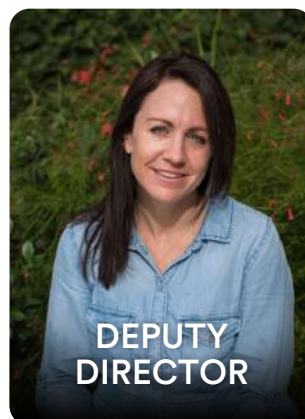
Centre operations are managed by the Centre Manager.

The JBC Teams meets monthly with the Centre Director and decides collectively on activities, initiatives and other matters.



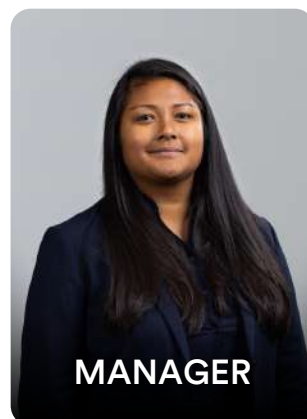
DIRECTOR

**Professor
Rodrigo Praino**



**DEPUTY
DIRECTOR**

**Professor
Emma Thomas**



MANAGER

**Katrina
Lee**

Board of Directors

The JBC board members play a critical role in providing the Centre with a vision, mission, and strategic direction.



CHAIRMAN

**Ambassador (ret)
Jeff Bleich**



**DEPUTY
CHAIRMAN**

**Professor
Colin Stirling**



**Rear Admiral the Hon
Kevin Scarce AC CSC
RAN (Rtd)**



Shaun Bonnet



Mark Arbib



Laura Anderson

15

Full Members

Academics within the Business,
Government & Law College

11

Associate Members

Academics within the
University from other Colleges

9

Affiliate Members

Domestic and international
affiliations, external to Flinders

Members

Marinella Marmo

Sanzhuan (Sandra) Guo

Joel Lisk

Rowan Nicholson

Tania Leiman

Rodrigo Praino

Sahana Sarkar

Jessica Genauer

Intifar Chowdhury

Josh Holloway

Stacey Henderson

Philip Johnson

Robert Chalmers

Tahlia Hart

Leoni Connah

Nick Bordeleau

Associates

Adela McMurray

Rajesh Johnsam

David Hobbs

Nada Ibrahim

James Scheibner

Andreas Cebulla

Gerry Redmond

Naser Pourazad

Emma Thomas

Bruno Pereira

Hossein Esmaeili

Angie Abdel Shafei

Affiliates

Dr Luis da Vinha
De Monfort University

Clemence Poirier
ETH Zurich

**Associate Professor
Hudson Golino**
University of Virginia

Sara Dalledonne
European Space Policy
Institute

Dr Luigi Martino
Khalifa University

Professor Daniel Stockemer
University of Ottawa

**Associate Professor Mariana
Golino**
University of Virginia

Melissa Hermes
European Association of
Remote Sensing Companies

Dr Reza Azizian
Ferveret

**An expert voice
on how to strengthen the core
values and institutions of
democratic societies in a world
where technology constantly
disrupts the status quo**



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jbc@flinders.edu.au

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