

ANTHONY KIMPTON

Covering Letter and Statement

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Professor Michael Townsley

School Head of Criminology and Criminal Justice,

Griffith University,

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Dear Professor Townsley,

I was excited by the discovery that Griffith's School of Criminology and Criminal Justice has three lecturer positions on Seek with "big data, data science technology, and crime" listed as a highly desired research background for which I would make a strong candidate.

In brief, I am sociologist and geographer with a highly cited spatial criminology publication in *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* and have presented on spatial criminology at American Society of Criminology Conferences on three separate occasions. In addition, I was awarded a University of Queensland (UQ) *Dean's Award for Outstanding HDR Thesis* for a sociology and geography thesis employing social surveys, crime incidence, remote imagery, administrative, and population census data to determine how greenspace and backyards impact community social sustainability. Spatial data analytics Professor Lex Comber and criminology Professor Rachel Armitage were my thesis examiners and neither required changes to the thesis with Professor Armitage writing "this PhD is one of the strongest that I have read...flawless thesis which contributes to the field in terms of theory, methodology and policy/practical application".

My continual employment as a research assistant and now postdoctoral fellow has provided the opportunity to develop exceptional and relatively unique data science skills for working with spatial big data, smart city data feeds, and data visualisation to the point that I am currently a data science postdoctoral research fellow within the UQ School of Civil Engineering where I develop data catalogues, application programming interfaces, and transport data visualisations for the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS). I was also recently awarded a \$89,342 Australian Urban Research Infrastructure Network (AURIN) High Impact Projects Grant to develop a national service that links state vehicle registrations and the federal Green Vehicle Guide APIs for examining transport disadvantage and the emergence of electric vehicles at the postcode level. This service can reveal the extent of household burdens such as auto dependency and the "drive till you qualify problem", aid fairer recalibration of fuel excise taxes, and accelerate the national transition towards electric vehicles for greener mobility and energy security for Australia. My intent target similar grants as these are becoming more commonplace such as developing services that gather, harmonise, and expose important social data (e.g., ABS data products, crime incidence, cadastre, policy zoning, and public assets and infrastructure) to researchers via APIs to minimise the "cold starts" at the start of new projects.

I am familiar with Griffith's already outstanding international reputation for criminological research, and so can state in complete confidence that my theoretical and methodological expertise would be a strong complement to the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice's teaching and research programs. My expertise can also enhance both your collaborations with the Queensland Police Service and research impacts on communities. I will now provide a *Covering Statement* to outline my expertise and experience and for brevity, I have attached a summary of my *Academic Curriculum Vitae* that contains a hyperlink at the end for the full version. Please also feel free to request further information on any points from myself or any of my referees.

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Covering Statement

Teaching

I will start by outlining my overarching teaching approach. My sociology lecturers during my undergraduate degree left a strong impression as they valued student input. While I have taught criminology, sociology, and quantitative methods courses within the UQ School of Social Sciences, most of my lecturing experience has been developing and delivering urban-focused coursework within the UQ School of Earth and Environmental Sciences (SEES) and so I have had the opportunity to share this participatory teaching approach with students enrolled within the Science Faculty. Notably, these students often arrive to classes with the expectation that they only need to listen for the answers to potential multiple-choice questions only to discover that they enjoy discussing course content while I can enjoy hearing my diverse cohorts of students interpret my course content through their own lived experiences. I also find this is an effective way of improving student engagement since it motivates students to stay on top of my assigned readings and videos—I am very fond of TED talks—as they wish to appear well-informed in front of their classmates, and I have immediate feedback as to whether they thoroughly understand the concepts before I progress any further and potentially overwhelm them with course content. Students have consistently indicated that they appreciate my student-centred approach to teaching through their teaching evaluations e.g.,

“...engaging and encouraged student input often...strongly encouraged participation and gave clear answers.....enjoyed the quirky references Anthony used to explain some of the concepts...The memes/pop culture references were really engaging and relevant...provided engaged responses to queries and concerns when raised He answers our questions expands on course content in a logical manner so it becomes more understandable... excitement for the topic he was talking about made it more engaging...I really enjoyed learning about the social side of cities...talking speed was very good...slow and ensured that students comprehended concepts before moving on...”

I regard their feedback as invaluable for continual refinement of my teaching approach that started from 4.2 overall on 5-point scale—already high within my school—and has since risen to 4.5 for both online and face-to-face delivery of classes with close to 200 students. As such, my lecturer evaluations with large classes rapidly approaching my earlier tutor evaluations of 4.7 overall which indicates that my rapport with students scales to larger class sizes and is unimpacted by Zoom delivery. You may have already guessed from my chosen research speciality, but my overarching teaching aim is to foster a curiosity about the big data and smart cities revolution so that we can all be more effective researchers and citizens. As such, teaching into your Bachelor of Criminology and Criminal Justice program is a perfect opportunity to encourage and support students already committed to making a positive social impact.

Research

My educational background is in sociology and I later expanded into human geography following my honours degree. My intent remains to combine the strong theoretical foundations and research design of sociology with the pattern recognition and capitalisation of novel, emerging and formerly disparate data sources of geography. My research colleagues are often bewildered by how I can hop across sociology, criminology, geography and demography, epidemiology, urban planning and now civil engineering while at the same time continuing to publish in Q1 journals for each of these fields however the truth of the matter is that I have been selective in my research training and maintain a sharp focus on my subject matter which is the social impacts of urban land use and transport planning and policy. I currently have 188 cites, a h-index of 6, 2 sole-authored, 3 lead-authored, and 5 co-authored Q1 publications, and a lead-authored Q1 monograph published last month. I have also been a founding member of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary urban research networks (e.g., UQ's Housing And Urban Society (UQ-HAUS) and City Science Transdisciplinary Impact Research Network (TIRN) which has been an asset in developing my broad research interdisciplinary research networks.

Returning to my PhD thesis for which I was awarded a UQ *Dean's Award for Outstanding Thesis* in 2020, this project provides the clearest sense of my capabilities in research design. It is entitled “The sociability of urban greenspace: an exploration of how public parks and private backyards influence the social sustainability of urban communities” and provides a comprehensive framework of the nebulous field of “social sustainability” that can be defined as the overarching humanitarian objective to ensure that development can meet the social needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It represents the first quantitative operationalisation of the concept by using a higher order factor model to identify the key empirical dimensions which were (1) sense of place, (2) sense of community, (3) effective social norm and sanctions, and (4) obligations, expectations, and trustworthiness. This index can be explained in part by nearby public greenspace types, backyard size and perhaps

unsurprisingly, crime within the neighbourhood thus illustrating how land use planning impacts the social needs of communities.

Since PhD conferral, I have broadened my land use focus to include parking space given that even unrequired parking space typically represents 20% of the development costs in an already prohibitively expensive residential market and is embedded in the cost of goods and services. Although parking would typically cover 10% of the urban form if it was laid flat, this land use type is too often overlooked in transport research even though driving typically begins and ends in a parking space thus parking can be a key determinant of modal choice and sustainable transport. I have since extended my focus further to public transport and currently work as a data science postdoctoral fellow within the School of Civil Engineering designing data catalogues, Application Programming Interfaces, and interactive web-applications and visualisations. For example, one of my services enables the research community and interested public to examine historical public transport routes, schedules, individual trips, and on occasions ridership, and this service sits behind services being developed by our partnered universities (i.e., the University of Sydney, the University of New South Wales, the University of Melbourne, and Curtin University) that measure accessibility, generate synthetic populations from household travel surveys, and traffic simulations. As previously noted, I was also recently awarded a \$89,342 AURIN High Impact Projects Grant to develop the Green Australian Vehicle Ownership (GreenAVO) service that I am designing to support the identification of household burdens such as auto-dependency and to accelerate the national transition towards electric vehicles through strategic planning. As such, I am making considerable research impacts already both in terms of knowledge and application.

Service

My research outputs and activities have also meant that I am beginning to develop a public profile. For instance, I have organised a public forum and round table discussion event in West End that was attended by over 100 residents, traders, and civil servants to discuss whether Boundary St on-street parking should be replaced with protected bike lanes. As a result, I was later invited to Councillor Jonathan Sri's office to discuss my greenspace research. Likewise, I have co-authored three articles for *the Conversation* that are attracting considerable public attention (i.e., 269 comments and 56,284 reads) and resulted in being invited to the offices and events of professional organisations (e.g., Urban Land Institute), engineering and architectural firms (e.g., WSP and BlightRayner), and to discuss my research with national campaigners and broadcasters (e.g., 2020 Vision, Channel Nine News, and recently The Drum on the ABC ran a segment on my research). Even prior to this point in my career, I was selected among my PhD candidature peers to be the School of Earth and Environmental Sciences representative where I was paid to develop and deliver presentations at high schools and teacher's conferences with the aim of persuading high school students to consider careers in geographical science, urban planning, environmental management, and geology. As such, I can confidently assure that I am committed to community and industry engagement, and my public profile is already on a positive trajectory.

Last, I would like to highlight that I have developed a reputation for my commitment to fairness, equity, and outcomes for higher degree research students and early career researchers. For example, I was the human geography and planning representative on the School of Earth and Environmental Sciences' RhD Committee and UQ representative on The Australian Sociological Association (TASA) RhD committee during my undergrad. These service roles could potentially explain why I was invited and accepted the roles of EMCR representative on the Faculty of Science Research Committee and the human geography and planning representative on the School of Earth and Environmental Sciences' ECR Committee.

In Closing

While my publications, funding, teaching, and service roles demonstrate that I am on an upwards trajectory, a lecturer position within Griffith's School of Criminology and Criminal Justice will set the foundations for an academic career. Further, I have a relatively unique combination of urban sociology, human geography, and data science expertise that can complement and amplify the school's teaching and research programs, and I have lead- and co-authored multiple Q1 criminological publications which has the potential to make me a strong candidate for having a "big data, data science technology, and crime" research background.

Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Kind regards,



Anthony Kimpton