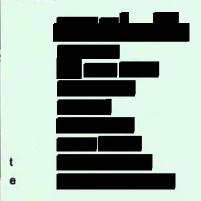## Professor Susan Long PhD

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Here she is involved in teaching, research and organisational consultancy. Her current research is in Health and Legal organisations. She is Past President of Group Relations Australia and has directed and been on staff of many working conferences in the Group Relations tradition. She is also a past President of the International Society for the Psychoanalytic Study of Organizations, a past board member of the Australian and New Zealand Academy of Management and of the Australian Institute of Socio-Analysis. She is editor of the journal *Socio-Analysis* and has written several books and journal articles.

The Perverse Organisation: Sloth and Neglect

This paper looks at the characteristics of perverse organisation. In the first instance, a case is established for the idea that organizations have a collective state-of-mind that may be evidenced in its individual members but is nonetheless a property of the whole. The idea of the perverse state-of-mind is then advanced. It is argued that organisations can be considered as perverse systems when displaying the characteristics found in perversity. These include: (i) narcissistic orientation; (ii) the dynamic of denial (iii) the involvement of accomplices (iv) instrumental functioning and (v) ongoing generation of perversity.

The paper in particular develops the nature of the involvement of accomplices in corporate perversity and looks at the ideas of sloth and neglect. A kind of laziness - the accomplice's version of denial or 'turning a blind eye' is sometimes found in company boards. A company Board is the group that makes the most important strategic decisions for the company, or at least is responsible for such decisions. It is a body required to be most vigilant about corporate behaviour - a veritable Argus. But what happens when multiple eyes are closed, lulled into a false sense of security? This is explored in detail through some company case studies.

The paper is drawn from one chapter in *The Perverse Organisation and Its Deadly Sins* written by the speaker, to be published in December by Karnac.