This Symposium was developed jointly by Monash University and the University of Melbourne to recognise the outstanding contribution made to Industrial Relations by Joe Isaac, Emeritus Professor at Monash University and Professorial Fellow at the University of Melbourne. Professor Isaac is one of Australia’s most distinguished scholars and practitioners in the field.

Keynote Lecture
Can Employee Voice and Participation Unlock Employee Engagement?
Professor John Purcell

Employee engagement is a powerful ‘fad’ spreading across the industrialised world. It promises much in terms of engaging employees in fruitful endeavour while improving the quality of work. Many studies have demonstrated that the outcome of employee engagement is higher productivity, improved sales, and increased levels of customer satisfaction. But studies also show that at least a third of employees are never engaged. So what brings about employee engagement?

This Symposium examines the antecedents of engagement and emphasises the need for employees to believe they have a voice, are listened to and can contribute to firm success through participation in management decisions. We find from the evidence that employee perceptions of fairness, justice, and trust in management are important determinants of engagement. Managers find these results problematic as they challenge the wisdom of unilateral decision-making.

Commentators
The Hon. Justice Alan Boulton AO, Senior Deputy President, Fair Work Commission, formerly of the International Labour Organisation, the ACTU and ANU.
Professor Emerita Di Yerbury AO, Company Director, formerly of Macquarie University, University of NSW and Monash University.

Closing remarks
Professor Colm Kearney, PhD, Dean, Faculty of Business and Economics, Monash University.

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About the Speaker
John Purcell of the well-known Industrial Relations Research Unit, Warwick University, UK, has formerly been a Professor of Human Resource Management (HRM) at Bath University, Oxford University and Manchester University. He was also the Strategic Academic Adviser, Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service, UK (ACAS).

He is an ACAS arbitrator and Deputy Chairman of the Central Arbitration Committee, which handles claims for union recognition and the application of the law on consultative committees. He is a prominent researcher. His books include: Strategy and Human Resource Management with Peter Boxall, Oxford Handbook of Human Resource Management with Peter Boxall and Pat Wright, and Consultation at Work: Regulation and Practice with Mark Hall. This later book was based on five years of research into the operation of workplace consultation under the European Union Information and Consultation of Employees Regulations. He has researched and written extensively on employee engagement, employee voice and the link between HRM and firm performance, the so-called ‘black box’.