



Faculty of Health  
Research News May 2025

# Faculty of Health

Research Newsletter May 2025





## Faculty of Health

Welcome

[Link](#)

# 1

### Centre and theme updates

National Centre for Naturopathic Medicine

Centre for Children and Young People

Mental Health and Psychosocial Wellbeing

Resilient Ageing in Supportive Environments

Physical Activity, Sport and Exercise Research

[Link](#)

# 2

### Publications

[Link](#)

# 3

### Grant and Award Success

### Research Program Updates

[Link](#)

# 4

### Engagement and Impact

[Link](#)

# 5

### Faculty Researchers in the Media

[Link](#)

# 6

### Researcher in the Spotlight

### PhD Candidate in the Spotlight

[Link](#)

# 7

### Updates from the Library

[Link](#)



# Welcome



Welcome to the May 2025 edition of our newsletter, where we bring you the latest updates and achievements from our vibrant research community. Some highlights in this edition focus on the Mental Health and Psychosocial Wellbeing (MHPWB), Resilient Ageing in Supportive Environments (RAISE) and Physical Activity, Sport and Exercise Research (PASER) themes.

The MHPWB research theme has been actively engaging in various initiatives to enhance mental health and community wellbeing. Recently, the theme held its initial meeting for 2025 and a significant highlight was the symposium held at the Coffs Harbour campus on February 20th, featuring Professor Pat McGorry as the keynote speaker. The event was a resounding success, with 80 registrations, including the local MP, multiple mental health and wellbeing NGOs, and members of the public and SCU staff. The symposium facilitated valuable networking opportunities between faculty researchers and industry partners, paving the way for potential future projects. We extend our heartfelt thanks to all who supported this event. We also bid farewell to Professor Marie Hutchinson, who has been a co-lead of the theme since its inception. Marie has now retired, and we thank her for her invaluable contributions.

RAISE continues to make strides in promoting the wellbeing of older adults and their carers. This month, we spotlight one of our HDR students and newly appointed nursing lecturer, Erin Davis. Erin was recently awarded the Northern NSW Individual Nursing and Midwifery Research Award for her PhD project titled “Nurses’ and Carers’ Perceptions of Nonpharmacological Interventions for Adults with Cognitive Impairment in Hospital.” Congratulations to Erin on her well-deserved award!

The PASER theme is dedicated to advancing physical activity and sports performance while addressing illness and injury prevention, sports and human performance, and chronic illness management. Recently, PASER lead Professor Christian Swann contributed to the publication of new mental health guidelines for community sport in Australia. These guidelines, published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine, were developed through a funded ARC Discovery Project grant and are already attracting international interest. They provide a comprehensive blueprint for enhancing mental health in community sports clubs.

We hope you find this edition of our newsletter informative and inspiring. Stay tuned for more updates and achievements from our research community.

**Professor Marianne Wallis**

Associate Dean (Research)  
Faculty of Health





# 1

## Centre updates





# National Centre for Naturopathic Medicine

The National Centre for Naturopathic Medicine, led by Professor Jon Wardle, is a world-class Centre for education, research and innovation in health. The Centre was founded in 2020 at Southern Cross University Lismore, established through a generous donation from the Blackmore Foundation. The Centre offers innovative courses, pioneering research programs and professional engagement, and is committed to elevating industry standards, finding solutions to Australia's growing healthcare needs, and educating future leaders in this field.

## Centre and theme updates

### Centre Update

The National Centre for Naturopathic Medicine is excited to announce that Dr Alana Gall has secured an NHMRC Investigator Grant to support her world-leading research program on First Peoples' Cultural Medicine. In partnership with NACCHO, CSIRO, and ANSTO, Alana's program will integrate bush medicine into Australian health policies to enhance cultural safety, health, and wellbeing. It will also protect Traditional Health Knowledge through research that informs regulation and intellectual property legislation, helping to realize the self-determination of First Peoples and their communities.

This award acknowledges Alana's contribution and leadership in the field of traditional and Indigenous medicine. She collaborates with organisations like the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) to better recognise and implement Indigenous Health Perspectives in global health.

The National Centre for Naturopathic also successfully concluded its 2025 Research Futures Scholarship Program with a seminar held on SCU Gold Coast Campus on the 26th of February. With this round we have had a total of 33 students participate in the program since its inception. They were supervised by nearly 30 academics from health, education, science and Gnibi, and supported by several PhD students and professional staff. An update was provided by Dr Borkwei Ed Nignpense and Dr Andrea Bugarcic ("SCU Students embrace the lab").

### SCU Students Embrace the Lab and ignite Their Passion for Research

This year, five students from Biomedical Science and Naturopathy chose to join a lab instead of surfing and enjoying the Australian summer. They participated in the Research Futures Scholarship Program at the National Centre for Naturopathic Medicine (NCCNM), which awards scholarships to support emerging student researchers. Under the guidance of HDR students Cathrina Geldard, Ilma Imtiaz, and Elisabete Oliveira, Senior Technical Officer Jacoba Van Crugten, and academics Dr Andrea Bugarcic and Dr Borkwei Ed Nignpense, the students undertook a six-week research project in the PC2 lab at the Gold Coast campus.

They explored critical health topics such as the role of tea in urinary tract infections, the potential of Psilocybe mushrooms as a treatment for Parkinson's Disease, and the characterization and absorption of bioactive compounds across blood-brain and gut barriers. Throughout the six weeks, students played with glowing



cells, tried to kill bacteria, and used high-end research equipment like the confocal microscope and HPLC-MS. We laughed, had late-afternoon breakthroughs, faced frustrations with negative results, and celebrated the good ones. In other words – we had a blast!

The journey culminated in a research showcase where the students presented their findings and shared their experiences, with the help of some well-deserved treats. We are excited to see how these high-calibre, passionate individuals continue to shape the future of health research. We hope to have more students join our little community and are always looking for collaborators and friends.

### Naturopathic approaches to Weight Loss

Studies reporting health care use in relation to weight loss and weight management are generally scarce, for conventional as well as naturopathic medicine. One study found that the vast majority of patients with overweight and obesity refused to discuss weight issues with their GP, and only few received an actual diagnosis or weight loss advice. Unfortunately, no empirical research has yet examined how many patients seek help from naturopathic practitioners, and how these practitioners approach weight loss.

Associate Professor Romy Lauche is currently seeking naturopathic practitioners for a qualitative interview study to better understand how naturopathic practitioners approach weight loss in clinical practice. Participants need to hold a minimum Bachelor's degree in Naturopathy, have at least 2 years of clinical practice experience, and regularly see clients dealing with overweight and obesity in your practice. Interviews can be conducted face to face or online, and will take no more than 60 minutes.



# Centre for Children and Young People

The Centre for Children and Young People is led by Professor Anne Graham and has a focus on the rights and wellbeing of children and young people (0–25 years) in the key contexts in which they live their lives – family, school and community.

## Centre and theme updates



### Elevating Voices, Generating Knowledge, and Transforming Practices: A Reflection on the First Year as Chair in Out-of-Home Care Research - Professor Lynne McPherson

As the inaugural Chair in Out-of-Home Care Research at Southern Cross University (SCU), co-funded by the Australian Childhood Foundation (ACF), I am privileged to reflect on the first year in this transformative role. The position commenced in February 2024, and was created to drive evidence-informed change, amplify the voices of children and young people, and foster collaboration across the out-of-home care sector.

From day one, I have been acutely aware of the immense responsibility that comes with this role. The out-of-home care system exists to support some of Australia's most vulnerable children, and the need for systemic reform has never been more urgent. Over the past year, I've witnessed the complexities of this system but also its potential for meaningful change when guided by rigorous research and a commitment to genuine collaboration.

### Laying the Foundations for Change-Advancing Ground-breaking Research

Research has been the cornerstone of my first year, focusing on two major projects that address critical issues in out-of-home care:

#### 1. Strengthening Relationships and Connections for Young People in Therapeutic Residential Care

Relationships are at the heart of therapeutic residential care, yet the system often struggles to provide the consistent, meaningful connections young people need to thrive.

This project seeks to bridge that gap.

- o Key Discoveries: Our research highlighted the critical role of trust, authentic care, and consistent emotional investment by staff. Conversely, it exposed harmful practices, such as emotional misrecognition, that undermine young people's well-being.

- o Impact: These findings are now shaping discussions around best practices in therapeutic care. The recently released NSW government publication: System review into out-of-home care, Final report, drew extensively from the voices of young people who participated in our research.

#### 2. Learning from Victims and Survivors about Disclosure of Child Sexual Abuse.

Disclosure of child sexual abuse is a profoundly challenging yet critical process, particularly for children and young people in care, who are disproportionately affected. This project aims to shed light on the barriers to disclosure and identify ways to foster safe, supportive environments.

- Impactful Outputs: A manuscript reporting victim-survivors' voices is currently under review, with the potential to influence policy and practice on a national scale.
- Disseminating Knowledge for Sector-Wide Impact: Translating research into action has been a priority throughout 2024. We've leveraged a range of platforms to share our findings and spark change

#### 3. Peer reviewed publications

This year I contributed to twelve publications, five as lead author. We have successfully targeted high ranking (Q1) and open access international journals to maximise reach and impact.

#### 4. Building Collaborative Networks

Collaboration has been integral to our success. By fostering partnerships across academia, government, and the care sector, we've built a community of practice dedicated to improving outcomes for children and young people.

## Reflecting on the Journey

This first year has been a profound learning experience. The stories of young people, victim-survivors, and care professionals have left an indelible mark, reminding me of the strength within this community. While the challenges are immense, the progress we've made demonstrates the power of research to drive change.

I am learning about the importance of persistence and adaptability. Transforming a complex system like out-of-home care requires patience, collaboration, and a willingness to confront difficult truths. Yet, it also offers the opportunity to make a tangible difference in the





# Centre for Children and Young People

The Centre for Children and Young People is led by Professor Anne Graham and has a focus on the rights and wellbeing of children and young people (0–25 years) in the key contexts in which they live their lives – family, school and community.

## Centre and theme updates

lives of those who need it most. I have the privilege of working with a remarkable team, based at the Centre for Excellence in Therapeutic Care, a division of the Australian Childhood Foundation and the Centre for Children and Young People, Southern Cross University.

## Looking Ahead

The agenda for 2025 is ambitious. We will launch new projects focused on kinship care and the impact of foetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD) in out-of-home care, addressing critical gaps in the evidence base utilising new theories and conceptual frameworks that focus on dignity. By deepening collaboration with national and international stakeholders, we aim to foster innovative solutions to shared challenges. Through targeted advocacy and knowledge dissemination, we will continue to push for actionable reforms that improve outcomes for children and young people. Through centering the voices and lived experiences of Indigenous and racialised communities, through frameworks that advocate for self-determination.

## Concluding Reflections

The establishment of this Chair represents more than a role—it’s a commitment to building a brighter future for children and young people in care. By amplifying their voices, generating new knowledge, and fostering collaboration, we are laying the groundwork for transformational change.

As I look ahead, I’m inspired by the possibilities that lie before us. Together, we can create a care system that prioritizes safety, dignity, and opportunity for every child. This journey has only just begun, and I’m excited to continue driving change in 2025 and beyond. Thank you to Adjunct Professor Janise Mitchell, CEO of the Australian Childhood Foundation for believing that “we will find a way to make it happen”. Thank you to Distinguished Professor Anne Graham, Director CCYP, for your unwavering support and wisdom. Finally, I offer my heartfelt thanks to those children, young people, adult victim-survivors, carers and staff who have joined us this year, to participate in our research and to guide our developing understanding about what needs to change.



# Mental Health and Psychosocial Wellbeing

This research theme incorporates a range of disciplines focused on wellness, management of acute and chronic conditions, community development, public health and community health, and builds on SCU's foundations in mental health nursing, allied health, social work, community welfare, exercise science, public health, environmental health and maternal and child health. Health workforce development and health professional education is also a major aspect of this theme.

## Centre and theme updates

### Update

The MHPWB research theme recently held their initial meeting of 2025. Key discussions focused on changing the membership structures of the theme to include full, associate and affiliated tiers of membership. Inclusivity and active membership participation however will remain to be our priorities. As the theme membership has shifted since the theme's inception it was agreed that all members would review our vision, priority areas and short to medium-term goals. This will then guide where internal funds and the theme's research activity will be directed over the next year.

The theme held a symposium at the Coffs Harbour campus on the 20th February with Professor Pat McGorry as a keynote speaker. With 80 registrations including the local MP, multiple mental health and wellbeing NGOs, as well as members of the public and SCU staff the event was highly successful. Networking between the Faculty researchers and industry partners was evident with multiple potential future projects being discussed. Our thanks to all who supported this event.

Our thanks also to Professor Marie Hutchinson who has been co lead of the theme since its inception. Marie has now stood down following her retirement.







# Resilient Ageing in Supportive Environments

RAISE brings together researchers, industry partners and lived experience experts who share an interest in, and commitment to, the wellbeing of older adults and their carers in diverse communities and supportive environments. We recognise the uniqueness, complexity and vulnerability of older adults and carers. Our vision is for all older adults and carers to stay well, have their rights promoted and be connected to their communities and the environment. We are committed to understanding the implications and challenges of climate change and natural disasters, the importance of social connectedness, and the need to provide innovative and sustainable strategies to enhance the wellbeing of older adults and carers.

RAISE aims to positively impact older adults and carers through the implementation of interdisciplinary health, social, environmental and technological initiatives. Impactful partnerships will facilitate a collective approach that enables resilience, adaptation, recovery, hope and ultimately better lives for older people and carers. Older adults and carers will be at the core of everything we do.

## Centre and theme updates

### Spotlight on HDR student Erin Davis

This month we spotlight one of our HDR students (and recently appointed nursing lecturer) Erin Davis. Last week Erin was awarded the Northern NSW (NNSW) Individual Nursing and Midwifery Research Award at the NNSW Nursing and Midwifery Research Awards. This award was based on Erin's HDR project. Erin's PhD is titled "Nurses' and Carers' Perceptions of Nonpharmacological Interventions for Adults with Cognitive Impairment in Hospital." Her PhD is supervised by RAISE researchers Assoc. Prof. Christina Aggar and Assoc. Prof. Michelle Bissett.

Erin worked as a nurse for nearly a decade before commencing her work as a researcher. During this time, Erin came to believe that more could be done to support adults with cognitive impairment during their hospital admission. Erin knew there were recommended strategies to improve quality of life and reduce hospital complications for this patient group but that nurses were not always able to implement these nonpharmacological interventions. This gap between practice guidelines and practice motivated her to explore strategies that would empower nurses to more effectively integrate these interventions into routine care.

Erin hopes that her PhD research will bring about long-term change in the way nurses are supported in caring for adults with cognitive impairment. By improving training, resources, and support systems, she hopes her work will contribute to enhancing not only the quality of care for patients but also the well-being of nurses and carers. Her ultimate goal is to create a positive impact on the lives of both patients and healthcare providers by fostering a more supportive, person-centred environment.

Erin reports that a positive element of her HDR experience at SCU is being part of a small, supportive community, where students receive personalised attention and the opportunity to collaborate with others in meaningful ways. Erin says that "the university emphasises work-life balance, ensuring students are well-supported throughout their journey. Additionally, SCU's strong industry and community links provide valuable opportunities for real-world engagement and practical experience, making it an ideal place for both academic and personal development". During Erin's HDR studies she was able to connect with, and teach within, the nursing program, initially as a sessional staff member and then as a Lecturer since late 2024.

Congratulations to Erin on her research award!



Photo: Erin Davis and her supervisor Assoc. Professor Christina Aggar at the NNSW Nursing and Midwifery Research Awards



# Physical Activity, Sport and Exercise Research

This theme focuses on physical activity and sports performance. It also links with social, psychological, biomedical and biomechanical researchers in the service of illness and injury prevention, sports and human performance, physical fitness promotion and chronic illness management.

## Centre and theme updates

### PASER leads new mental health guidelines for community sport across Australia

PASER lead Professor Christian Swann has recently been involved in the publication of prominent guidelines for mental health in community sport in Australia. These guidelines were published in British Journal of Sports Medicine (ranked 5th of 705 'Health Professions' journals and #1 in sport science – with an impact factor of 11.8). They were developed with leading academics and experts from the sport sector, and were the culmination of a funded ARC Discovery Project grant (led by Prof Stewart Vella at University of Wollongong) which Christian was involved in as a Chief Investigator. These world-first guidelines are already attracting interest internationally, and are expected to provide a blueprint for other countries to follow.

The guidelines include recommendations that community sports clubs: (1) need to demonstrate a commitment to enhancing the well-being of everybody involved in the club; (2) should demonstrate an ongoing commitment to promoting positive attitudes about mental health; (3) need to support their coaches to participate in ongoing coach development in methods that promote safe/supportive coaching; (4) need to demonstrate a commitment to enhancing the mental health literacy of their key stakeholders; (5) need to demonstrate an awareness on what appropriate mental health services are available, and how to access them; (6) should have a plan for how to respond to an identified mental health emergency (eg, risk or suicide or harm to self/others); (7) should have a plan for how to respond to major events or critical incidents that may impact the psychological well-being of their members; (8) need to have a mental health champion who actively oversees and contributes to the implementation of the mental health guidelines; and (9) should have a completed up-to-date mental health action plan outlining how they will prevent, promote and respond to mental health and well-being in sport. The publication outlining the guidelines, and their development process, is available open access at: <https://bjsm.bmj.com/content/early/2025/02/19/bjsports-2024-108749>







# 2

**Publications**



# Publications

## Publications

In January to May 2025 Faculty of Health Researchers have recorded 114 research publications. Of these 82 were published in the last six months.

We are really seeing some uptick in the number of articles published by FoH staff in highly cited journals. It is especially pleasing to see this in staff who are still completing their PhDs. Well done to nursing academics Jodie Deakin for publications in International Journal of Nursing Studies and Intensive and Critical Care Nursing ; Dima Nasrawi for publication in Collegian and Erin Davis for publication in Applied Nursing Research.







# 3

**Grant and Award Success  
Research Project Updates**





# Grant and Award Success

## Grant success

### Successful external funding

We continue to see success in small, medium and large external funding opportunities. There have been agreements for \$475,666 fully executed in the first five months of the year.

However, the biggest news so far is the success of Dr Alana Gall's NHMRC Investigator Grant. See the later news story for all the details about this great funding achievement.

In addition, NCNM researcher Dr Janet Schloss continues to lead the way with contract research funding from industry partners.

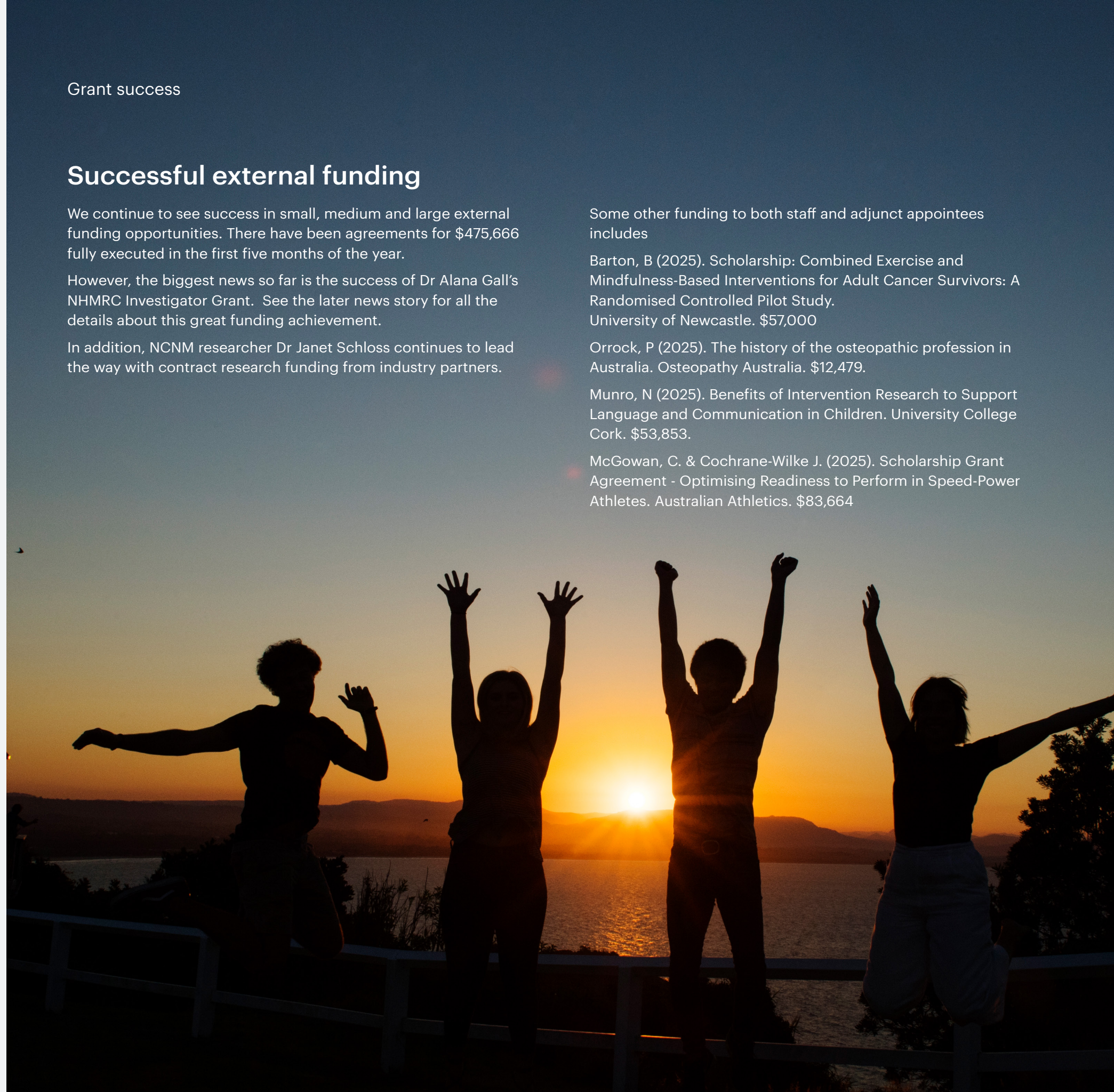
Some other funding to both staff and adjunct appointees includes

Barton, B (2025). Scholarship: Combined Exercise and Mindfulness-Based Interventions for Adult Cancer Survivors: A Randomised Controlled Pilot Study. University of Newcastle. \$57,000

Orrock, P (2025). The history of the osteopathic profession in Australia. Osteopathy Australia. \$12,479.

Munro, N (2025). Benefits of Intervention Research to Support Language and Communication in Children. University College Cork. \$53,853.

McGowan, C. & Cochrane-Wilke J. (2025). Scholarship Grant Agreement - Optimising Readiness to Perform in Speed-Power Athletes. Australian Athletics. \$83,664





# Grant and Award Success

## Grant success

In October 2024 the Faculty called for applications for the 2025 Faculty of Health Research Support Grants. There were two types of grants:

- Grant A: Pilot investigations - up to \$10,000 to support early career researchers (ECR) and mid-career researchers (MCR) to build their track records and facilitate research with collaborators, leading to external grant submissions.
- Grant B: Visiting Researcher Fund – up to \$10,000 to support researchers to develop partnerships which will build their research track records by facilitating research with external/industry/university collaborators, leading to external grant submissions.

Most applicants aplied for the Pilot Investigations funding. The applications were assessed by a selection panel that includede the Associate Dean Research, two Associate Professors, a mid-career researcher and two early career researchers from the Faculty of Health.

Congratulations to the following grant recipients!

Staff member and PI:	Project Title:
Irene Ayallo	Intersections of immigration-status and family violence: A study exploring how migrant victim-survivors are utilizing the Family Violence Provisions in Australia
Joanne Hilder	Discussing intimacy in a rehabilitation ward: A needs assessment and roadmap
Mary-Anne Kate	Validating and Refining the Multidimensional Inventory of Dissociation (MID-60) and Adolescent Version in a Clinical Population
Jessica Bayes	The effect of a food as medicine intervention to support mental health and wellbeing in autistic adults – A Pilot Randomised Controlled Trial
Melanie Clarke	From SMART goals to heart goals: Scoping the physiological responses of goal setting in physical activity
Borkwei Ed Nignpense	Bioavailability of antioxidants from herbal teas and their role in intestinal health and allergy relief – pre-clinical study
Jodie Cochrane Wilkie	Reducing Deconditioning in Older Hospitalised Adults: A Pilot Study of a Nursing and Clinical Exercise Physiology Student-Supported Exercise Program
Andy Smidt	Embedding multimodal communication in inclusive early childhood settings



# Grant and Award Success

## Dr Alana Gall awarded NHMRC Investigator Grant to explore bush medicine in contemporary healthcare

The prevailing form of healthcare in Australia is biomedicine which has seen medical breakthroughs, and improvements in health. However, an unintended consequence of adopting biomedicine is the shift away from First Peoples' Cultural Medicines (also known as bush medicine) that embody a distinct medical approach that aligns with First Peoples' worldviews. This encompasses plant medicines, native foods, healing ceremonies, spiritual medicine, Traditional Healers, and both the tangible and intangible healing aspects of Country. In addition to enhancing wellbeing, Cultural Medicine improves cultural safety of mainstream care and holds potential to provide unprecedented economic self-determination for First Peoples. Indeed, Cultural Medicine knowledge is currently being misappropriated (misused) and bio-pirated (stolen) to benefit others, with minimal or no benefits returned to community.

To harness the benefits of Cultural Medicines and knowledges, Dr Alana Gall identified the need for a multi-sector approach. Her program aims to 1) embed respect for Cultural Medicines into Australian health policies, partnered with community-controlled health organisations, and 2) protect Cultural Medicine knowledge through research that informs the regulation of Cultural Medicines (TGA) and foods (FSANZ) and intellectual property legislation. Working collaboratively with the community and with her key partners, Alana will employ a both-ways co-design approach, with Indigenous methods, to build foundational research that will improve health, wellbeing and economic outcomes for First Peoples, through respecting and protecting Cultural Medicine knowledges.



Photo: Dr Alana Gall





# Grant and Award Success

## Researcher grant success between SCU, Karolinska Institutet and Uppsala University to enhance inter-professional collaboration and support for language-friendly secondary classrooms.

SCU Professor Natalie Munro (Faculty of Health) is a co-researcher in a four-year project funded by The Swedish Research Council starting in July 2025. The project is called INCLUDE: Interprofessional Coaching to Enhance Language, Learning and Participation in Secondary Classrooms Using Digital Education for Teachers, and lead researcher is **Dr. Anna Eva Hallin**, a speech language pathologist and assistant professor at Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm, Sweden. Other collaborators include Nils Kirsten, senior lecturer in pedagogy at Uppsala University, Sweden, and Christina Samuelsson, professor of speech and language pathology at Karolinska Institutet. In the project, secondary teachers learn about language and literacy challenges in secondary school and techniques to modify their oral and written instructional language. Techniques for direct vocabulary instruction are also included. The intervention builds on an Australian manualised intervention with **documented positive effects** on student language/literacy scores, teacher practice and satisfaction.

INCLUDE will be a digital intervention that incorporates coaching by a speech language pathologist making professional learning accessible and at a time that suits the teacher. The researchers will evaluate effects on teacher practice as well as students' language, learning and participation. An English version of the program will be developed and piloted at SCU during 2025-2026, followed by development of a Swedish version which will be evaluated in a randomized controlled trial in Sweden 2027-2028. Dr. Hallin will spend 18 months in Australia for the first part of the project, and will be delighted to get to know the research community at SCU!

A blogpost about the project can be found at Dr. Hallin's research blog: <https://www.sprakforskning.se/forskningsbloggen2/2024/11/28/includeenglish>



Photo: Professor Natalie Munro



Photo: Dr. Anna Eva Hallin



# Research Project Spotlight

## Research Project Update

### Co-creating Rainbow-Inclusive Aged Care

The Rainbow Inclusive Aged Care project (funded by the MRFF) has kicked off 2025 by establishing its Dawn research engagement activities by establishing:

- an Older LGBTQ+ lived experience advisory group (LEAG)
- a National Reference Group including leading researchers, aged care sector peaks and LGBTQ+ community groups, and
- two Communities of Practice in Western Australia and Queensland.

The groups will inform this year's research activities, including a national survey of residential care workers and fieldwork research with people living in, working and visiting 12 residential aged care homes in WA and QLD. Six LGBTQ+ Co-researchers are also working alongside Research Fellow Dr Meaghan Vosz to co-design and conduct fieldwork, interpret findings and shape the rainbow-inclusive model of care within the communities of practice.

Lead Chief Investigator, Professor Hughes described the inclusion of diverse lived and professional expertise as critical to the project's participatory approach: "We've recruited six outstanding co-researchers as SCU Research Associates, and our advisors have experience of aged care, caring, frailty, living with HIV, mental health and disability. Understanding the nuances of lived experience and aged care service provision in a changing policy landscape will help us to shape a model that's implementable across the wider aged care sector".

Data collection in the rainbow-inclusive aged care project commences in June 2025 with observations in residential aged care homes and a national survey led by Professor Adam Bourne and Dr Ruby Grant at La Trobe University's Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society (ARCSHS).



Copyright: <https://www.agewithoutlimits.org/image-library>





# Research Project Spotlight

## Research Project Update

### **Pain Unmasked: New Insights and Directions for Managing Pain in Cystic Fibrosis**

The Faculty of Health's PhD Candidate Anastasia Ward, with principal supervisor Dr Nedeljka Rosic, co-supervisors Dr Ramil Mauleon (SCU) and Dr Keith Chee Ooi (University of New South Wales), are excited to share their recently published paper "Pain in adults with cystic fibrosis – are we painfully unaware" <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1569199325000098>, available in the Journal of Cystic Fibrosis (Jan 2025), leading journal in cystic fibrosis (CF) research. Our research demonstrated (1) the higher prevalence of pain affecting people living with CF compared to the general population, (2) common pain areas, and (3) the lack of proper pain management, impacting quality of life and mental health. A follow-up editorial article addressing pain and providing specific comments and suggestions to the official pain management guidelines by the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation in America ([https://www.cysticfibrosisjournal.com/article/S1569-1993\(25\)00050-5/abstract](https://www.cysticfibrosisjournal.com/article/S1569-1993(25)00050-5/abstract)) has been published in Journal of Cystic Fibrosis in February 2025.

The results of this study were presented in national and international meetings (The European Cystic Fibrosis Society Conference, CF Together's Interclinic meetings and the Australasian Cystic Fibrosis Conference) and were recently discussed at CF Together's Journal Club. The team have also been invited to join the CF Strong Advisory Committee and will present again at the upcoming Interclinic in May.

Further, the study is being extended, and the team are also running an international pain study across the United States, Ireland, Canada and England to worldwide explore the effects of pain in people living with cystic fibrosis and identify the perceived effectiveness of currently used pain medications. The outcome of this research is impacting the CF community, and the team also got the invitation to talk about pain in a podcast hosted by CF Strong, which will be released in April (<https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/the-cf-together-podcast/id179471573>). The study will also be featured on the European Cystic Fibrosis Society's CF Research News website (<https://www.ecfs.eu/publications/cf-research-news>) and will be presented at an inter-clinic meeting in England in March.



# Research Project Spotlight

## Research Project Update

### International Collaboration Strives to Improve Consistency in Language Disorder Interventions

The Intervention Consensus for Language Disorders (TICLD) Group is leading the charge to enhance the consistency of reporting on child language disorder interventions on a global scale. This project was born out of the need to address the diverse and often inconsistent methods employed in intervention studies for Developmental Language Disorder (DLD)—a condition that significantly impacts the daily lives of children and young people, affecting approximately 7% of Australian children. The variations in reporting methods have posed challenges for accurately translating effective interventions into practical, real-world applications.

TICLD aims to establish international consensus on reporting guidelines for individuals with or at risk of DLD. This consensus is expected to accelerate advancements in DLD research and streamline its integration into clinical practice. Professor Natalie Munro from Southern Cross University is among the world experts contributing to this effort.

#### Key Objectives:

- Extending existing Enhancing the Quality and Transparency Of Health Research (EQUATOR) guidelines to include speech-language pathology for children with DLD.
- Providing specific guidance on participants, interventions, and outcomes in alignment with the Consolidated Standards of Reporting Trials (CONSORT) checklist and the Template for Intervention Description and Replication (TIDieR).
- Enhancing the quality of life for children with or at risk of DLD.

Specific Aims: The project outlines four specific aims:

1. Develop reporting guidelines for participant characteristics to accurately describe study participants.
2. Define intervention characteristics applicable to a range of speech-language pathology interventions for children with or at risk of DLD.
3. Establish a core set of outcome measures.
4. Create an overarching document with a checklist, explanations, and definitions.



The research grant is led by Professor Cristina McKean (The University of Oxford) and Professor Pauline Frizelle (University College Cork) and involves a core team comprising representatives from key stakeholder groups, including individuals with DLD and their families, speech and language pathologists, researchers, academics and educators. This diverse team represents seven countries: Ireland, the UK, Finland, the USA, Australia, Austria, and Croatia.

The TICLD team will engage in comprehensive literature reviews, focus groups, and systematic consensus study methods to achieve its goals. By fostering international cooperation, TICLD is poised to make significant strides in the field of child language disorder interventions, paving the way for more consistent and effective research and clinical practices worldwide.





# 4

**Engagement  
and Impact**



# Engagement and Impact

## The Australian Association of Gerontology Distinguished Member Awards

The Australian Association of Gerontology Distinguished Member Awards were introduced in 1999. They recognise members who have given outstanding service to AAG over many years. The nomination is based on recognition by and recommendation of the AAG Divisions and is reviewed and approved by the Board.

Dr Louise Horstmanshof has been recognised for her substantive contributions to the AAG, demonstrated through her service on the NSW Division Committee and her contributions to a range of activities over the past 5 years. She is commended for her work with the Dementia Education and Community Inclusion Project. Congratulations Louise!



**Photo:** Dr Louise Horstmanshof

## Northern NSW Nursing and Midwifery Research Awards

Congratulations to Faculty of Health staff and PhD candidates Erin Davis and Allison Eastman who were award recipients at the Northern NSW Nursing and Midwifery Research Awards!

Erin Davis won the Individual Nursing and Midwifery Research Award. This award was based on Erin's HDR project. Erin's PhD is titled "Nurses' and Carers' Perceptions of Nonpharmacological Interventions for Adults with Cognitive Impairment in Hospital.

Allison Eastman won the Best Research Paper Award - titled- Evaluating Biomarkers for Predicting Clinical Outcomes in COVID-19 Patients: A Systematic Review.



**Photo (L to R):** Erin Davis, Professor Marianne Wallis, Allison Eastman





# Engagement and Impact

## The Australian Association of Gerontology Distinguished Member Awards

The Australian Association of Gerontology Distinguished Member Awards were introduced in 1999. They recognise members who have given outstanding service to AAG over many years. The nomination is based on recognition by and recommendation of the AAG Divisions and is reviewed and approved by the Board.

Dr Louise Horstmanshof has been recognised for her substantive contributions to the AAG, demonstrated through her service on the NSW Division Committee and her contributions to a range of activities over the past 5 years. She is commended for her work with the Dementia Education and Community Inclusion Project. Congratulations Louise!



**Photo:** Dr Louise Horstmanshof

## Northern NSW Nursing and Midwifery Research Awards

Congratulations to Faculty of Health staff and PhD candidates Erin Davis and Allison Eastman who were award recipients at the Northern NSW Nursing and Midwifery Research Awards!

Erin Davis won the Individual Nursing and Midwifery Research Award. This award was based on Erin's HDR project. Erin's PhD is titled "Nurses' and Carers' Perceptions of Nonpharmacological Interventions for Adults with Cognitive Impairment in Hospital.

Allison Eastman won the Best Research Paper Award - titled- Evaluating Biomarkers for Predicting Clinical Outcomes in COVID-19 Patients: A Systematic Review.



**Photo (L to R):** Erin Davis, Professor Marianne Wallis, Allison Eastman





# Engagement and Impact

## Exploring the Australian landscape of current and aspiring strength and conditioning coaches

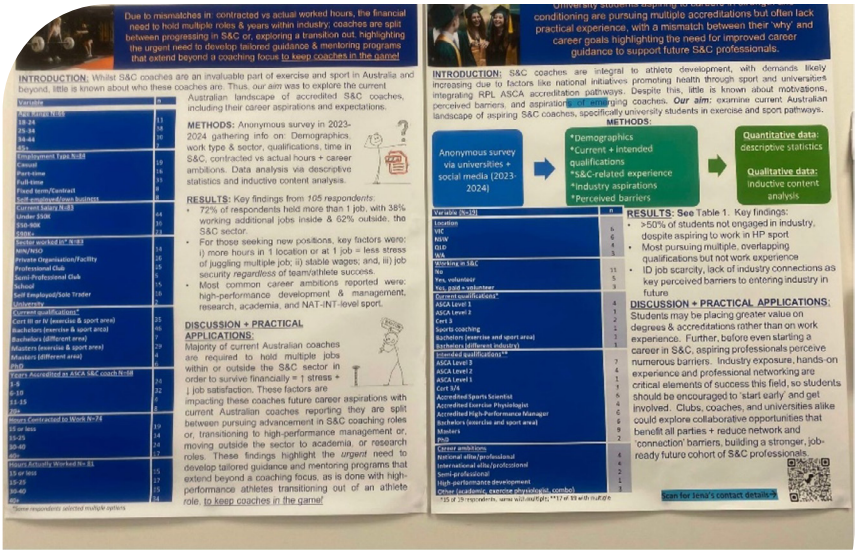
Dr Courtney McGowan and Dr Jena Buchan who are both part of the PASER research theme, presented research posters based on findings from 2 surveys they developed and conducted alongside industry professionals from the Australian Institute of Sport and fellow academics from UWA + UNewcastle at the recent (8-9th Nov) International Conference on Applied S&C presented by the Australian Strength and Conditioning Association (ASCA). This is the premier Strength and Conditioning conference in Australia and it is widely regarded as one of the best worldwide with presenters flying in from Germany, the US, the UK, Qatar etc. The details of their presentations are below:

“Over-qualified but under-experienced? University students’ journey towards S&C”

Jena Buchan, Courtney McGowan, Kristie Sheridan, Jan Legg, and Nat Benjanuvatra

“We’ve improved our athlete transition pathways, But what about our coaches? Exploring the current landscape and aspirations of Australian S&C coaches”

Courtney McGowan, Jena Buchan, Kristie Sheridan, Jan Legg, and Nat Benjanuvatra





# Engagement and Impact

## Conquering Cancer Campaign

Our team from SCU Aquatic Based Research (Dr Nedeljka Rosic, A/Prof Michael Stapelberg, PhD candidate Ian Miller, and A/Prof Mike Climstein) had been approached to organise the Q&A panel and promote the Movie “Conquering Skin Cancer” in December 2024 Event held at the PACIFIC FAIR Gold Coast (Pacific Fair Shopping Centre). Dr Rosic promoted the session and organised and hosted the Q&A panel at Gold Coast, while HDR student Ian hosted the Brisbane session.

### About the film

Immerse yourself in a story that explores our complex relationship with the sun- the good, the bad and the ugly. This movie follows the remarkable stories of famous Aussies and changemakers as they seek to conquer skin cancer, a preventable disease that impacts two in every three Australians. The movie features Hugh Jackman, Cate Campbell (Olympic swimmer), Deborah Hutton, Costa Giordiadis, Wayne ‘Rabbit’ Bartholomew (surfing champion), and Australians of the Year Professors Georgina Long & Richard Scolyer.

These sessions were used to educate the local community.

Watch the teaser here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kqw3\\_NqqLcE&t=1s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kqw3_NqqLcE&t=1s)

More info at <https://conqueringcancercampaign.com/conquering-skin-cancer/>

We had a great session on the Gold Coast and a very productive discussion that called on more actions. For example, take home a message from our panel:

1. Increase education about skin cancer among the general population
2. Increase demand for skin protection in schools (shades, time of outdoor school activities to be out of UV-peak hours);
3. More social media to be involved in raising awareness regarding skin cancer and prevention.

News article was also used for promoting our research and raising awareness: [After ‘Conquering Skin Cancer’, we need to talk about sunscreen | Scout magazine](#)



Photo (L to R): Dr Chris Robinson, Carly Waide (cancer survivor), Dr Nela Rosic (SCU), Andrew McKinnon (Surfer World Champion), Ian Miller (SCU HDR Student).





# 5

**Faculty Researchers  
in the Media**



# Faculty Researchers in the Media

## Faculty Researchers in the Media

### NHMRC Investigator Grant Announcement

Dr Alana Gall. NHMRC. 24 February 2025

<https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/news-centre/422-million-research-future-australias-healthcare-system>

Dr Alana Gall. ANSTO. 27 February 2025

<https://www.ansto.gov.au/news/ansto-collaborator-awarded-investigator-grant-to-explore-bush-medicine-contemporary-healthcare>

### Ramadan: Five tips to boost your well-being and energy levels if your fasting

Associate Professor Romy Lauche & Dr Jessica Bayes. The  
Conversation. 24 February 2025

<https://theconversation.com/ramadan-is-almost-here-5-tips-to-boost-your-wellbeing-and-energy-levels-if-youre-fasting-248223>

Associate Professor Romy Lauche & Dr Jessica Bayes. Medical  
Express. 24 February 2025

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2025-02-ramadan-boost-energy-youre-fasting.html>

Associate Professor Romy Lauche & Dr Jessica Bayes. Mirage  
News. 24 February 2025

<https://www.miragenews.com/5-ramadan-tips-to-boost-wellbeing-energy-while-1413646/>

Associate Professor Romy Lauche & Dr Jessica Bayes. Evening  
Report NZ. 24 February 2025

<https://eveningreport.nz/2025/02/24/ramadan-is-almost-here-5-tips-to-boost-your-wellbeing-and-energy-levels-if-youre-fasting-248223/>





# 6

**Researcher in the Spotlight**

**PhD Candidate in the Spotlight**



# Researcher in the Spotlight

## Researcher in the Spotlight



Associate Professor Menka  
Tsantefski

### Associate Professor Menka Tsantefski

Menka Tsantefski is Associate Professor, Social Work and Community Welfare, Southern Cross University. Her research is focused on the intersection of DFV, mental health, problematic parental substance use and child protection concerns. She contributed to the development of child-aware practice in adult services and increased collaboration between adult and child-focused sectors. This was achieved through research, direct service delivery, and program management at Odyssey Victoria, a leading alcohol and other drug (AOD) treatment service. Menka is currently working with Odyssey Victoria to improve the AOD sector's ability to recognise and respond to child sexual abuse (CSA). A systematic scoping review currently being undertaken has identified this will be the first study to consider the role of the AOD sector as a site for prevention of CSA. Menka is first author of *Working with Substance-Affected Parents and their Children* and co-editor of the third edition of *Working with Families Experiencing Vulnerability: A partnership approach*. She serves on the Editorial Board of *Child Care in Practice*, an international journal focused on provision of children's services.

Awarded in 2010, Menka's PhD examined formal and informal support to women with problematic substance use in the first year of their infant's life. Her subsequent research showed it is possible to increase support to women; however, this does not necessarily increase safety for women and children. Since then, Menka has turned her attention to men who use violence. She led the Queensland component on four Category 1 projects funded by Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) and the Department of Social Services. This work was conducted in partnership with The University of Melbourne and the Safe and Together Institute. More recently, through an ARC Linkage Grant, Menka has examined family-inclusive practice where there is AOD use and DFV. This work includes the first study of an AOD informed variant of Caring Dads, an international men's behaviour change program for fathers who use violence. In 2023, Menka was awarded a SCU Visiting Researcher Grant to meet with stakeholders from research and practice in Edinburgh, with the aim of establishing a program of research examining the informal networks of men who use violence. "Every man who uses DFV is embedded in a social network that either condones violence or that potentially supports behaviour change. We therefore need to consider the social and cultural context in which DFV occurs".





# PhD Candidate in the Spotlight

## Researcher in the Spotlight



### Tarek Michael Chouja

Tarek Michael Chouja is an accomplished educator, researcher, and thought leader in functional training and health sciences. Currently a PhD candidate at Southern Cross University's Faculty of Health, Tarek's research focuses on the intersection of Nature-Based Physical Activity (NBPA), Mindfulness, and Psychological Wellbeing. His work aims to uncover the mechanisms through which engaging in physical activity in natural environments fosters mindfulness and enhances overall mental health.

With a background spanning over two decades in the health and fitness industry, Tarek has established himself as a global leader in functional training education. As the co-founder of the Functional Training Institute, he has developed and delivered internationally accredited training programs, shaping the careers of thousands of trainers worldwide. His expertise extends beyond fitness into positive psychology and strength & conditioning, complementing his academic research.

Tarek's PhD thesis explores how the Ecological Dynamics framework can explain the relationship between nature, mindfulness, and wellbeing. His study systematically reviews literature and gathers qualitative insights to demonstrate how NBPA can facilitate present-moment awareness, emotional resilience, and stress reduction. His research holds significant implications for mental health interventions, promoting nature-based strategies as viable tools for enhancing psychological wellbeing.

In addition to his research, Tarek is an internationally recognized speaker and educator, having presented at major conventions across Australia, Asia, the Middle East, and the United States. He is also the best-selling author of *Purpose Driven Movement*, a book that integrates functional training principles with personal development.

Passionate about bridging the gap between academia and practice, Tarek aims to apply his findings to develop accessible, nature-based wellbeing programs for individuals and communities. His work continues to contribute to both the scientific community and the broader health and fitness industry, reinforcing the importance of movement, mindfulness, and nature in achieving optimal health.



# 7

**Updates from the Library**



# Updates from the Library

## Updates from the Library

### The Right Review

Reviews are an important type of evidence synthesis undertaken by health disciplines and systematic reviews are also being utilized in other disciplines. As reviews are often time consuming and labour intensive, it is important to understand the various types of reviews and determine which is most suited to your research topic or question, and how to best synthesize and report the evidence found.

48 different review types have been identified in published literature and grouped into 7 families, though many lack explicit methodological requirements for identifying evidence (Sutton et al., 2019). It is not always clear what type of review should be conducted but as a general rule, if your research question is precise, well formulated, and fits into the P (population), I (intervention), C (comparison), O (outcome) framework, then a systematic review may be the right option for you. Other frameworks can assist in structuring your question and clarifying the main concepts in your search for evidence. However, for broader questions, or questions of policy that are often multi-faceted and aiming to understand the extent and nature of the available evidence, systematic reviews may not be suitable.

The scoping or mapping review is another review type frequently undertaken at SCU, and like a systematic review (and arguably as all reviews should be), is conducted with a systematic methodology. Scoping reviews identify the nature and extent of research evidence on a topic and can identify whether a systematic review is needed or possible (Grant & Booth, 2009). For scoping reviews, the P (population), C (concept), C (context) framework is recommended by the Joanna Briggs Institute (Aromataris et al., 2024). Although a critical evaluation of evidence may be undertaken, a scoping review does not attempt to synthesize results in the same way as a systematic review (Grant & Booth, 2009). A scoping may also take longer than a systematic review to complete! You can read more about scoping and systematic reviews in this recently published open textbook.

SCU Library has several resources available to help you frame your question and determine which type of review is right for you. They can be found in the Systematic and Systematic-style Reviews Guide.

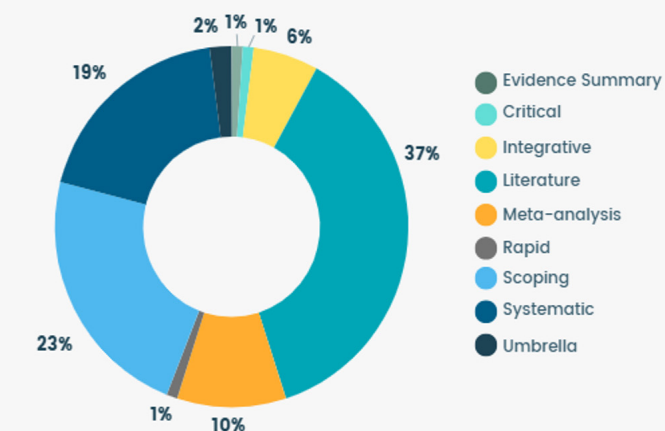
#### References

Aromataris E, Lockwood C, Porritt K, Pilla B, & Jordan Z. (2024). Scoping reviews. In JBI manual for evidence synthesis. Joanna Briggs Institute. <https://jbi-global-wiki.refined.site/space/MANUAL/355862497/10.+Scoping+reviews>

Grant, M. J., & Booth, A. (2009). A typology of reviews: An analysis of 14 review types and associated methodologies. *Health Information & Libraries Journal*, 26(2), 91-108. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-1842.2009.00848.x>

Sutton, A., Clowes, M., Preston, L., & Booth, A. (2019). Meeting the review family: Exploring review types and associated information retrieval requirements. *Health Information and Libraries Journal*, 36(3), 202-222. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hir.12276>

**Review type by SCU affiliated authors  
2023-2025 (n=128, Source=Scopus)**







## Share your research success with us

Do you have a news item to share with the Faculty of Health and the wider community? If so, we would love to hear and promote your research achievements within the Faculty.

Please email your research achievements to  
[healthresearch@scu.edu.au](mailto:healthresearch@scu.edu.au)

## Disclaimer

The information in this publication was correct at the time of publishing May 2025. To the extent permitted by law, SCU excludes all liability arising from the use or, or reliance on the information contained in this publication. SCU claims copyright ownership of all information in the brochure, unless expressly stated otherwise.