



**Southern Cross
University**

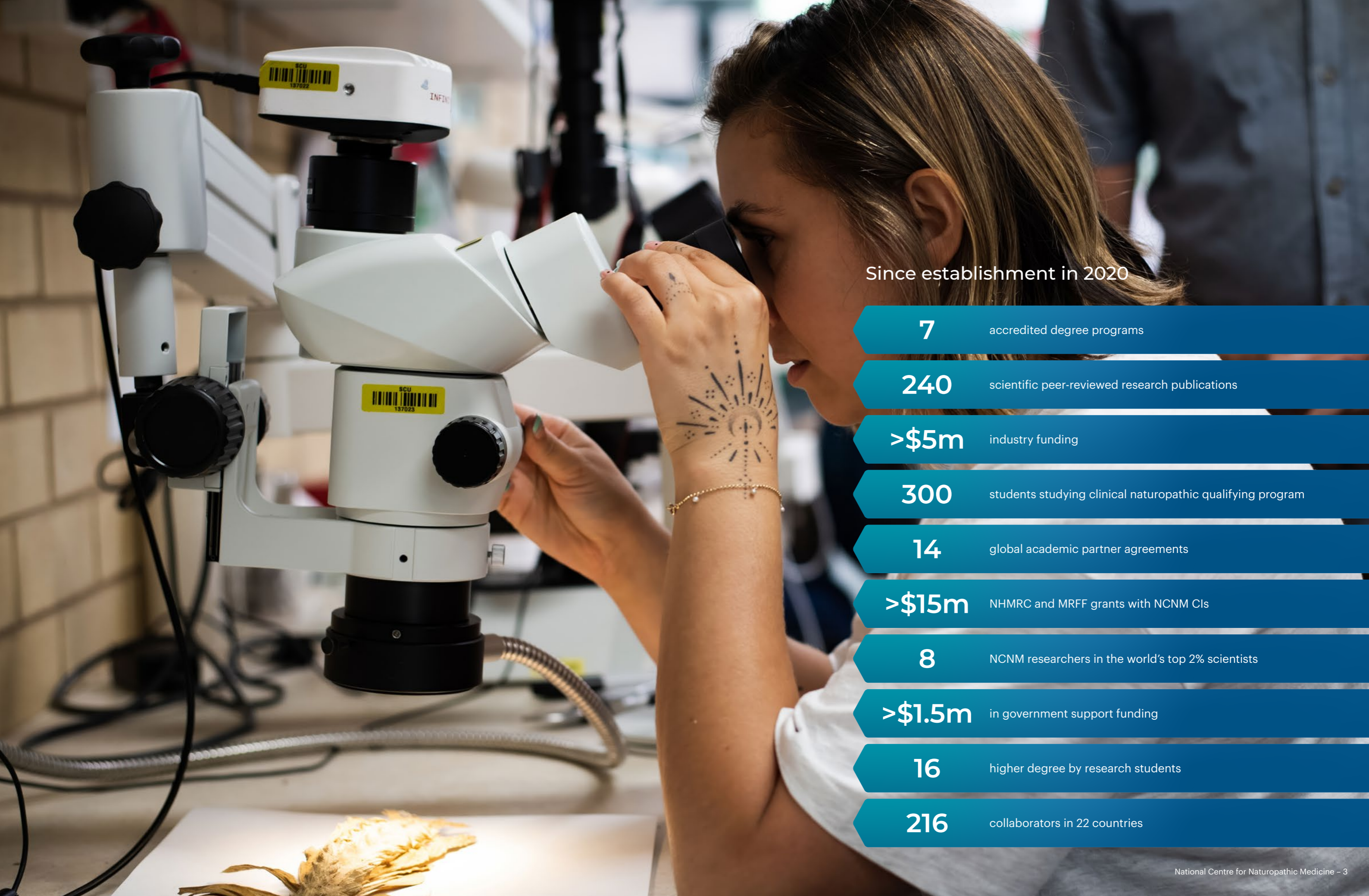
National Centre for
Naturopathic Medicine

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Impact Statement

CRICOS Provider: 01241G

TEQSA Provider Code: PRV12043 Australian University



Since establishment in 2020

7

accredited degree programs

240

scientific peer-reviewed research publications

>\$5m

industry funding

300

students studying clinical naturopathic qualifying program

14

global academic partner agreements

>\$15m

NHMRC and MRFF grants with NCNM CIs

8

NCNM researchers in the world's top 2% scientists

>\$1.5m

in government support funding

16

higher degree by research students

216

collaborators in 22 countries

A story of impact

The National Centre for Naturopathic Medicine at Southern Cross University is a world-class centre for education, research and innovation in healthcare. With a critical, evidence-based scientific approach, we are dedicated to addressing current and emerging challenges through premier academic courses, clinical programs and pioneering research.

Launched at Southern Cross University in 2020 thanks to a generous gift from the Blackmore Foundation, it is our mission to empower patients and improve health by facilitating access to the best of integrative and conventional therapies. As evidence-based natural medicine and multi-disciplined care play an increasingly critical role in healthcare, we will be at the forefront of solutions.

The National Centre for Naturopathic Medicine is a health centre that views the health of patients through a naturopathic prism, with a core focus on advancement of naturopathic research and education, as well as the naturopathic profession itself. Education, Research and Advocacy are the core pillars of the National

Centre for Naturopathic Medicine (NCNM), with all pillars being of equal importance.

NCNM aims to create and advocate a strong culture of incorporating holistic principles and evidence-based science into all aspects of healthcare education and practice. From investigating pain relief for cancer patients to working with government to develop self-care policy, we will empower patients and improve health by facilitating access to the best of integrative and conventional therapies. It is our mission to contribute meaningful solutions to healthcare needs through naturopathic education, research, and advocacy, in communities throughout Australia and worldwide.



Generous donations, including a recent gift from the Blackmore Family Foundation to create Australia's first endowment-funded Naturopathic Professorial Chair, ensure the sustainability and leadership of the naturopathic industry and profession into the future.

The three pillars of the National Centre for Naturopathic Medicine ecosystem



Education



Research



Advocacy

Global leaders in naturopathic education

Courses at the National Centre for Naturopathic Medicine are designed by experienced clinicians and international leaders in their fields to ensure our graduates' qualifications are recognised by the relevant professional associations, with research components embedded in each course.



"Integrative medicine is about combining the best of all healthcare practices for the benefit of patients. It is also about giving patients choice in the way that they approach their healthcare. For doctors to work with naturopaths we're going to be looking at the training and experience of that practitioner, and so we'll be looking at whether they have done a particular degree course. University training gives the doctor confidence to be able to refer and to work in with a naturopathic treatment."

Professor Kerry Phelps AM NCNM Adjunct Professor, past president of Australian Medical Association, past president Australasian Integrative Medicine Association

Based at Southern Cross University, NCNM offers opportunities for naturopathic education that are unparalleled in Australia. With access to the world-class clinical, research, and education facilities of a comprehensive research-intensive university, and the international networks, inter-professional collaboration, and placement opportunities within a multidisciplinary health faculty, students studying naturopathic medicine at Southern Cross University are provided unique opportunities not available in other institutions.

NCNM is housed at Australia's only university with a dedicated medicinal plant garden and herbarium, one of only two TGA-accredited natural products analytical chemistry laboratories, clinical research facilities focused on natural products and state-of-the-art laboratories and teaching facilities.



Since launching its Clinical Trials Centre in 2021, NCNM has secured contracts for 10 industry-funded clinical trials, generating over \$5 million in research funding. Its proven expertise in natural products and herbal medicine research positions NCNM as a preferred partner for companies seeking robust, regulatory-aligned evidence to support product development and market access.



In conjunction with global natural products leaders – including the University of Mississippi and University College London – NCNM plans to launch the world's first executive education, undergraduate and postgraduate programs in natural product drug discovery and development.

Commitment to integration

NCNM is committed to the integration and education of all health professions to improve health outcomes. NCNM achieves this through developing innovative programs, including the following.

- NCNM has developed the **world's first** graduate entry naturopathic program launched in 2023, allowing medical practitioners, pharmacists, nurses and allied health practitioners to graduate and qualify as accredited naturopathic practitioners. NCNM is the first naturopathic education provider to have all naturopathic programs accredited by the Australian Register of Naturopaths and Herbalists. NCNM is also committed to integrating naturopathic education in unique settings, including Australia's first naturopathic clinic in an Indigenous health service, as well as unique rural and remote placements and under served community clinics.
- NCNM has developed **Australia's first** accredited lifestyle medicine qualification launched in 2022 (the Master of Lifestyle Medicine). Developed in collaboration with the Australasian Society for Lifestyle Medicine, this multidisciplinary program allows practitioners direct entry to internationally recognised fellowships in Lifestyle Medicine, and meets eligibility requirements for the International Board of Lifestyle Medicine. NCNM short course offerings, such as shared medical appointment training, help practitioners build practical skills to integrate lifestyle medicine into their practice.
- NCNM has developed **Australia's first** accredited integrative medicine qualification launched in 2023 (the Master of Integrative Medicine). In collaboration with the international integrative health community, this program provides accredited health and medical practitioners the educational requirements for Australian and global fellowships such as the Academy of Integrative Health and Medicine (US) fellowship program, as well as offering degree pathways for integrative health and medical practitioners completing fellowships through organisations such as the Australasian College of Nutritional and Environmental Medicine.



"At the National Centre for Naturopathic Medicine, we're changing the conversation on health. We're opening doors for allied healthcare professionals to expand their clinical skills, and teaching conventional healthcare practitioners the benefits of integrating complementary approaches to provide the best of both worlds."

Professor Jon Wardle Foundation Director
National Centre for Naturopathic Medicine



"My study experience totally changed me, and my clients will benefit. Southern Cross University is very supportive of big wonderful ideas, and your lecturers just want you to succeed."

Carla O'Brien
Master of Advanced Naturopathic Medicine graduate

An internationally recognised integrative medicine leader



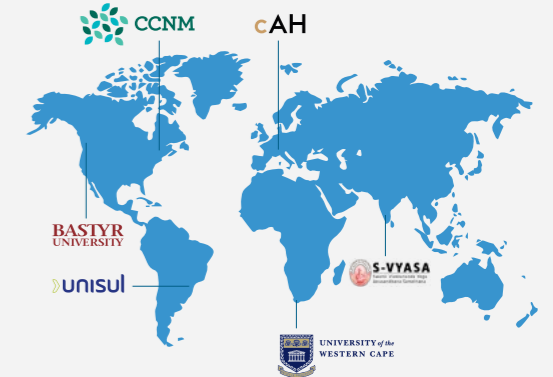
NCNM course content is being utilised to grow the naturopathic profession globally. NCNM has worked with naturopathic programs in Canada, New Zealand and Switzerland to develop degree recognition pathways for their naturopathic program offering up opportunities for naturopaths globally. NCNM plans to develop licensing agreements in Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Poland, Slovenia, South Korea and the United Kingdom to help grow the global naturopathic profession.



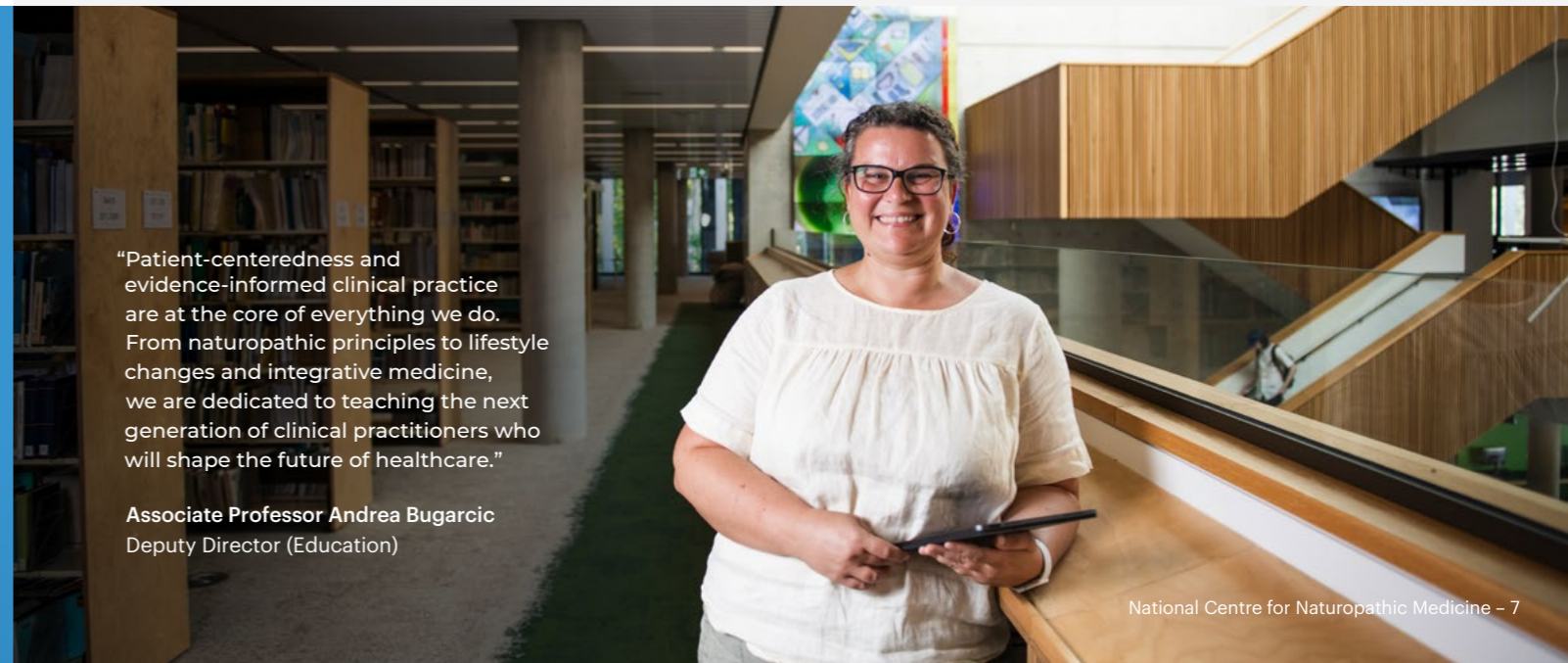
Through NCNM, Southern Cross University is one of only two Australian universities – and the only naturopathic program globally – to have been accepted into the Academic Consortium of Integrative Medicine and Health, joining prestigious members including Harvard Medical School, the University of Arizona and University of Washington. Through this partnership, NCNM has developed a partnership with the Cleveland Clinic – consistently ranked the World's number 1 hospital – with clinician-researchers able to complete an NCNM PhD while completing their clinical training at the Cleveland Clinic.



NCNM secured \$165,000 in funding from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade which allowed eleven Southern Cross University students to travel to India in 2024 and conduct part of their studies in government naturopathy and yoga hospitals – a global first.



NCNM is the only Australian naturopathic program with formal exchange and articulation agreements with global naturopathic schools.



"Patient-centeredness and evidence-informed clinical practice are at the core of everything we do. From naturopathic principles to lifestyle changes and integrative medicine, we are dedicated to teaching the next generation of clinical practitioners who will shape the future of healthcare."

Associate Professor Andrea Bugarcic
Deputy Director (Education)

Global leaders in integrative medicine research

Backed by Southern Cross University's high level of research excellence, NCM is dedicated to optimising the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities in Australia and around the globe by conducting robust, innovative, and internationally significant research.

NCNM's team of internationally-recognised scholars are leaders in their fields and take a multi-disciplinary approach to delivering research with impact. Southern Cross University has state-of-the-art facilities and collaborators that provide wide-ranging opportunities for health research projects.

With access to university-owned clinical facilities and relationships with hospitals and health networks across

Australia, we offer unique opportunities for integrative clinical research and practice.

NCNM is the only provider of naturopathic medicine globally that is also recognised as a research leader in its disciplinary field.

Since establishment of its contract research arm in mid-2021, NCM has received more than \$5 million in industry research.

NCNM's research focuses on four key areas

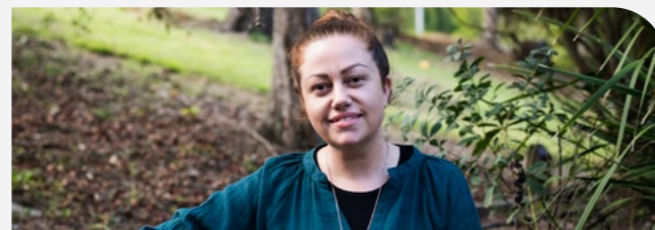
-  Natural drug discovery and development
-  Non-pharmacological therapies
-  Integrative models of care
-  Traditional knowledge

Bridging science and tradition



"Pre-clinical research in herbal medicine needs to align with the practice of naturopathy – from more complex models to assays that can answer synergistic questions."

Associate Professor Andrea Bugarcic is developing a practice-tradition-science nexus for pre-clinical research, which is informing US National Institutes of Health recommendations for natural products research.



"Advocating for the respectful inclusion of traditional and complementary medicines in the Australian health sector is an important part of meeting First Nations holistic health and wellbeing needs."

Dr Alana Gall – a Pakana woman – is Australia's first Indigenous scholar focusing on First Nations medicines. Dr Gall is working with the Lowitja Institute and Indigenous organisations to develop Australia's first framework for appropriate development and integration of First Nations medicines.

Building integrative medicine research capacity

Research is embedded into every element of NCM's work. Undergraduate and postgraduate students develop integrative medicine research skills and help build the integrative medicine evidence base.



"I had the pleasure of working with some incredible people who are doing amazing things in the field of research, and I feel very privileged and honoured to have been included in this project. The organisers of this scholarship created such an amazing and enlightening experience."

Gabrielle Grant 2024 Research Futures Scholarship Program recipient

The Research Futures Scholarship Program provides undergraduate students from across the university the opportunity to conduct a research project in integrative medicine. Projects have included mapping integrative medicine in Australian hospitals, exploring the potential of native medicinal plants, and integrative options for mental health and childhood disorders.

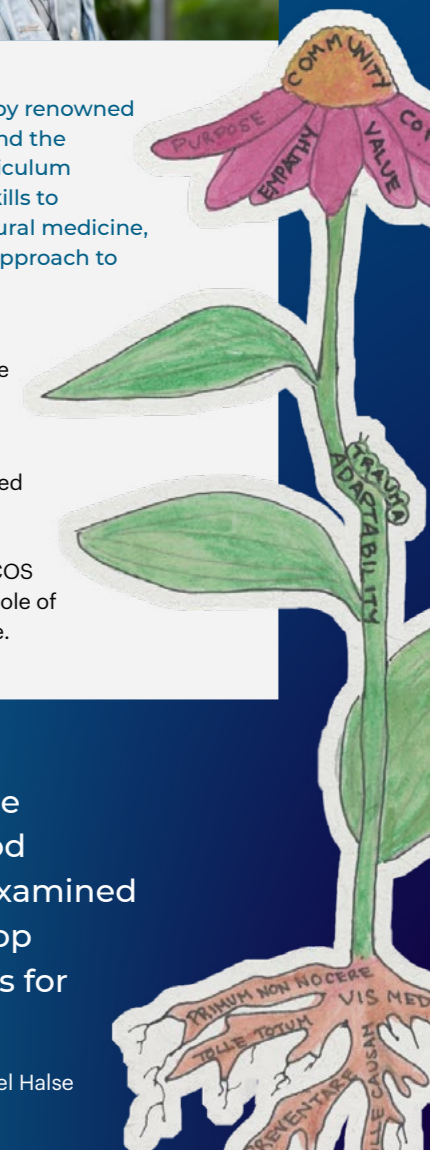


"I feel fortunate to be taught by renowned naturopathic practitioners, and the course's comprehensive curriculum has equipped me with the skills to bridge conventional and natural medicine, fostering a truly integrative approach to patient care."

Freesia Muhamad Master of Naturopathic Medicine graduate

All NCM Masters programs have a clinical research component. Projects have ranged from embracing telehealth opportunities for naturopathic practice, new treatments for PCOS and anxiety, and exploring the role of psychedelics in clinical practice.

After the Lismore Floods, it was clear that there was a greater role for naturopaths and integrative health practitioners to assist flood recovery efforts. A number of NCM student-led projects have examined the role of naturopaths in flood recovery, and have helped develop protocols to better prepare and integrate naturopathic responses for communities experiencing natural disasters in the future.



Unique natural resources and research capabilities

Housed at Australia's only university with a dedicated medicinal plant garden and herbarium, NCNM offers unparalleled resources for natural product research.

Where industry meets innovation

NCNM and Southern Cross University boast world-leading facilities for natural medicine research. With extensive genomic databank collections, plant science, marine bioproduct and biomedical laboratories, a dedicated pharmacokinetic research facility and Australia's largest natural products focused clinical trials unit equipped for human and animal health NCNM is uniquely poised to work on projects from seed to shelf. Southern Cross University is also home to a range of unique industry-focused facilities, including:

Analytical Research Laboratory (ARL)

One of only two TGA-accredited natural products analytical chemistry laboratories in the country. Specialises in phytochemical analysis and quality testing of pharmaceutical raw materials.

Environmental Analysis Laboratory (EAL)

NATA-accredited, it excels in testing a wide range of environmental samples, ensuring sustainable agricultural and environmental practices.



Tackling tomorrow's challenges today

Our University's research impact clusters bring together researchers from diverse disciplinary backgrounds to conduct excellent, engaged, and impactful research. These clusters address significant challenges in areas such as the future of farming, natural resources, and health and wellbeing. With a strong emphasis on natural products research, they work closely with community, industry, and government partners to drive innovation and deliver real-world outcomes.



ZeroWaste



Harvest to Health



Catchments, Coasts and Communities



Reefs and Oceans

The Marcus and Caroline Blackmore National Medicinal Plant Garden

Officially renamed in October 2024, the garden serves as a vital living laboratory, supporting education, research and community engagement.



Medicinal plant herbarium



Essential oil garden



Australian native food and medicine garden



Ethnobotany garden



Circular garden



The herbarium

Home to a vast collection of medicinal plants, the herbarium focuses on herbal authentication and research support.

Herbal authentication

Utilising pharmacognostic techniques such as botanical identification and microscopy.

Research support

Hosting voucher specimens registered with the Index Herbarium, offering a global standard for medicinal plant research.

Research with impact

DEPRESSION DIET

“There are lots of reasons why scientifically we think food affects mood, for example, around 90 percent of serotonin, a chemical that helps us feel happy, is made in our gut by our gut microbes. Diet should always be considered as a treatment for mental health”

Dr Jessica Bayes, Maurice Blackmore Research Fellow, has pioneered research into the effects of nutrition on mental health outcomes in young men, including the impact of diet on reducing depression during Melbourne’s COVID lockdowns. Her work has been adopted in national guidelines.



“Research is about the people themselves and how we can help make a difference to the individual. Everyone is different, so even if it works for a percentage of people, I’ve made a difference and that’s the best feeling.”

Associate Professor Janet Schloss is recognised as one of the world’s leaders in integrative oncology and medicinal cannabis research. Her world-first clinical trial of medicinal cannabis in brain glioblastoma has progressed access to medicinal cannabis for oncology patients.



“Conventional medicine is the main healthcare option in Sierra Leone, though for many people it is expensive and can be hard to access. Traditional medicine is popular not only because it is accessible, but also because it can be effective in complex conditions where conventional treatments often fail”

Dr Peter James completed the world’s first empirical study of the role of traditional medicine in post-viral treatment of Ebola survivors, the first global review of the role of integrative approaches in post-viral sequelae, as well as the first review of the role of traditional medicine in sub-Saharan Africa. This work became increasingly relevant during the COVID pandemic and has been integrated into national policies to ensure traditional medicines are included in long COVID and African migrant health.



“We already know the benefits of integrative medicine in managing chronic pain. NATO, the US Department of Defence and US Veteran Administration recommend integrative health options in military care on this basis. Now we are building the evidence base to help inform future policy around military and veteran care here in Australia”

In conjunction with Defence Health, Professor Jon Wardle conducted Australia’s first clinical trial on integrative options – including naturopathic medicine – for military and veteran populations. This program has now been adopted by Australia’s largest veteran clinic, is being considered by the DVA, and has led to a broader research program on integrative medicine for Australia’s uniformed services.

Developing global integrative medicine leaders



Drawing on his experience working for medicines regulatory authorities in Botswana and Zimbabwe, Roy Chihaka is working with the World Health Organization on his doctoral project to develop a responsive and appropriate model of traditional medicine practitioner and product regulation for sub-Saharan Africa. Roy is passionate about ensuring traditional knowledge continues to guide integrative medicine use, and that regulations don’t compromise the integrity of traditional medicine in its quest to make healthcare safer and more accessible.



With a background in senior government policy roles, Kerrie Oakes understood the power and potential of transforming local communities through herbal medicine. After training as a herbalist, Kerrie developed grassroots, co-operative models of herbal medicine care through establishing Herbalists Without Borders, ensuring access these invaluable herbal medicine resources to those who need them most. Her doctoral work is focused on developing models of policy integration of community herbalism, to support communities to develop, lead and sustain their own preferred models of integrative healthcare.



Daen Medina worked at the National Prescribing Service developing national medicines evidence and policy guidelines before training as a naturopath. Seeing first-hand the potential of guidelines to inform integration of new and existing therapies into health care – evidence alone was often not enough. Daen is working with the Pan American Health Organization Evidence Mapping team to develop guidelines and frameworks to ensure integration of evidence-based natural medicines into national health systems and policies in Latin America.



Sophia Gerontakos completed her naturopathic training and became concerned that naturopathic care was inaccessible to many. After working with Integrative Medicine for the Underserved in the US, Sophia discovered the group visit and shared medical appointment model of integrative health care. Seeing opportunities for the naturopathic profession to reach new populations, as part of her doctorate Sophia conducted a world-first clinical trial of naturopathic group visits for women with endometriosis. Her endometriosis program is already being implemented by naturopaths in Australia, Canada and the US, and group visits have become part of the naturopathic clinical curriculum in those countries.

“It is a priority of mine to nurture the next generation of researchers to support and enable the opportunities to progress their career and succeed in research, and to give patients the best access to integrative health options.”

Professor Romy Lauche Deputy Director (Research)



“The best thing about being a naturopath is helping people and seeing people get better. There is a global burden of chronic disease that is on the rise, and healthcare is looking for the answer of how to fill that gap and I really feel that naturopaths meet that demand. It is all about educating and empowering the patient.”

Isabel Halse Master of Advanced
Naturopathic Medicine graduate



Advocacy for a larger role for integrative health

NCNM actively promotes and advocates for a greater role for the naturopathic profession and integrative health.

In 2022, NCNM surveyed 1,509 Australians to better understand public views on naturopathic medicine, identifying strong support for its integration into mainstream care. This informed the development of a 750-page evidence guide, launched at Parliament House and distributed to all federal parliamentarians and senior officials.

NCNM has played a key role in recent policy changes reinstating private health insurance rebates for naturopathy and six other therapies, following the 2024 Natural Therapies Review. Professor Jon Wardle, NCNM's Foundation Director, served on the expert advisory panel, contributing decades of research and leadership.

2025 marks 30 years since Southern Cross University launched the world's first public university naturopathic program—now producing graduates who are making a global impact in preventive and integrative healthcare. NCNM remains active both in Australia and internationally, championing a bigger future for naturopathic medicine and integrative health.



NCNM partners with a number of groups including the ADC Forum, World Health Organisation (WHO), and the World Federation of Public Health (WFPHA), on initiatives that bring together the nation's foremost decision-makers and thought leaders across all sectors to focus on the issues that are critical to future prosperity. This will include sessions focusing on the role of integrative health and health innovation to address future health challenges.

Launched in 2022, the Natural Products Futures Forum is NCNM's flagship annual event. Held every October, it brings together leaders from government, industry, research, and academia to shape the future of Australia's natural products sector.

Attracting more than 200 delegates, the Forum features high-profile national and international speakers and is recognised as a leading platform for collaboration, innovation, and sector-wide impact.



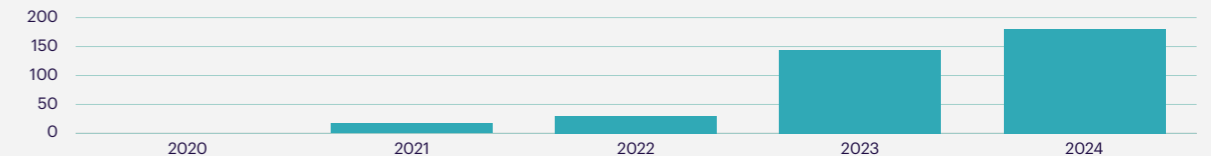
NCNM has received \$1.2m from the NSW government to design a natural products hub based on NCNM and the Southern Cross University Lismore campus.

A solid foundation to build on

Strong and sustained growth in enrolments

Since launching its first courses in 2021, NCNM has experienced rapid and consistent growth in student enrolments. From just 17 students in its inaugural year to 180 in 2024, this trajectory highlights the increasing demand for advanced education in naturopathic and lifestyle medicine. The expansion of course offerings has played a key role in meeting sector needs and attracting a growing number of health professionals.

Total enrolments by year



Rising student success rates

NCNM's academic programs have consistently delivered strong student outcomes across all qualification levels. Undergraduate student success rates have shown a steady year-on-year increase, rising from 86% in 2022 to 94% in 2024. Graduate Certificate programs have demonstrated consistently high performance, maintaining success rates above 95% across all reported years. Meanwhile, Master's program outcomes have significantly improved, increasing from 76% in 2021 to 96% in 2024. These figures underscore NCNM's commitment to delivering high-quality, student-centred education.



Growth in student satisfaction

Student and graduate satisfaction levels in NCNM courses reflect the Centre's growing impact on learner experience and outcomes. Postgraduate students have consistently reported high satisfaction with NCNM courses, maintaining near-perfect levels across four years. Undergraduate satisfaction, while reported more recently, has shown strong improvement—rising from 58% in 2023 to 80% in 2024, indicating a positive trajectory as the undergraduate programs continue to mature. This trend points to NCNM's drive for excellence and a strong student-first approach.

Creating a legacy: future-proofing naturopathic medicine

Why give? Your donation fuels meaningful progress in integrative healthcare.

Together, we can:

- Advance cutting-edge research that bridges traditional wisdom and modern science.
- Educate and support the next generation of healthcare leaders through scholarships and training.
- Drive community-led projects focused on chronic illness, mental health, First Nations medicine, and more.

Ways to support



Build

Make a one-off donation to strengthen infrastructure and enable long-term impact.



Amplify

Provide a transformational gift to elevate research and education.



Solidify

Establish a named endowment to ensure lasting support for naturopathic medicine.

Your impact

Your support empowers NCCNM to push the boundaries of integrative medicine. Since 2024, our generous community of donors has helped raise:

- \$100k in student scholarship funding
- \$20,000 to support our student-led naturopathy clinics
- \$1m donation for integrative cancer research

100% of your gift goes to the cause

Southern Cross University absorbs all administration costs, so every dollar you give goes directly to support our work.

Be part of the change

Whether you're an alumnus, industry partner, or passionate supporter of holistic health, your contribution helps us redefine the future of healthcare.



Donate today



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To find out more about
the National Centre for
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