The John Richards Initiative (JRI) was formally established in 2007 with support from the Regional Director, North East Region, Health Department in Victoria following observations that Regional and Rural older people required and were missing aged care services and the experienced staff to research and develop these services. To this end, the JRI has attracted and provided facilities to qualify personnel and build a research program that has made significant impact locally, nationally and globally.

As part of JRI 10 years anniversary celebration this year, JRI hosted the third International symposium on Ageing and Old-Age with representatives from the Asia-Pacific region. It was very interesting having representatives from China, Korea, Japan, Thailand and some of the Pacific Islands. Many issues raised are common to the different countries, with some being dealt with in different ways. It was very interesting to hear about the drop in the birth rate in Japan and the influence it is having on the ageing population as well as filling employment positions.

I am delighted to offer my ongoing support and wish the best of luck as the initiative grows into the John Richards Centre for Rural Ageing Research in 2018.

JOHN RICHARDS OAM
Founder and benefactor of the John Richards Initiative
The year 2017 is significant for many reasons. We are celebrating the ten year anniversary of the JRI, a unique and successful partnership model that has been sustained over a decade and is thriving. By the end of this year, we will have a team of 13 staff and 7 higher degree research students. I am proud to report that JRI team has produced over 30 publications and attracted close to $2.5M of research income. Dr Heather Downey was awarded her PhD.

Earlier this year, we hosted Professor Mark Skinner of Trent University in Canada to talk about age-friendly rural communities. Jeni Warburton was conferred as an Emeritus Professor in April. In May, we celebrated our anniversary with JRI staff, students, Reference Group and community partners. In September, we had the honour of Federal Minister of Aged Care and Indigenous Health, Hon. Ken Wyatt AO and our local MP, Ms Cathy McGowan AO visiting JRI and hearing about our research and our proposed LIFE Hub to train future aged care workforce. During Seniors Week Wodonga in October, Professor Meg Morris shared her research on Dancing for Parkinson’s Disease followed by a dancing demonstration by older people with Parkinson’s, carers and volunteers from Murray Youth Performing Arts.

In collaboration with La Trobe Asia, we successfully hosted the 3rd international Symposium on Ageing and Old Age in Asia Pacific, on “Advancing knowledge and sharing innovation in research into ageing in Asia Pacific”.

It was attended by delegates from Japan, Thailand, China, South Korea, Indonesia and Australia. We had a breakfast session on liveability sponsored by the Department of Health and Human Services Victoria and facilitated by Gerard Mansour, the Commissioner for Senior Victorians. Events like these are critical for ensuring our research is shared globally as we continue to engage with our local communities, consumers, and policymakers.

I am pleased to present the 2017 Annual Report of the John Richards Initiative (JRI), which outlines the considerable progress we have made since its inception in 2007. JRI was established through generous donation by John Richards OAM with matched funding from Department of Health and Human Services Victoria and La Trobe University.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR IRENE BLACKBERRY  
John Richards Chair of Rural Ageing Research and Director
Our Vision:
To be a global leader in rural ageing and aged care research that makes a difference to the lives of older people living in rural communities.

Our Mission:
To undertake research and knowledge exchange that is responsive, and adaptive to rural older people’s needs and changes of the environment.

Key Research Areas
1. Ageing in Place
2. Health & Aged Care
3. Workforce & Informal Care
4. Technology
The Reference Group

The JRI Reference group was established soon after the launch in 2007, when key local stakeholders were identified. The group meets twice a year and was chaired by John Richards until 2014 when Peter de Koeyer succeeded him. Members of the group are consulted about research projects, and are a very useful conduit into local and regional issues.

The objective is to facilitate links between the John Richards Initiative and key stakeholders to provide advice to the Initiative. The terms of reference include:

- Contributing to the development of the research agenda;
- Informing the initiative about workforce development issues, including those relating to research, education and training;
- Disseminating information about the research undertaken by the Initiative and providing a conduit in the wider community.

CURRENT MEMBERS

MR PETER DE KOEYER (CHAIR)
Chief Executive Officer, Westmont Aged Care Services Ltd

MR JOHN RICHARDS OAM
Founder

A/PROFESSOR IRENE BLACKBERRY
Director, John Richards Initiative, La Trobe University

EMERITUS PROFESSOR JENI WARBURTON
John Richards Initiative, La Trobe University

MR CHRIS PUCKEY
Manager, Aged Care Policy & Analysis, Department of Health & Human Services

MS RUTH HARRIS
Manager, Support Options, Upper Murray Family Care  (up to May 2017)

MR TREVOR MARSHALL
Primary Care Manager, Alpine Health

MS MARGARET BENNETT
Chief Executive Officer, Northeast Health Wangaratta

MR STEPHEN CARROLL
Senior Program Advisor, East Division, Department of Health & Human Services

MR RICHARD McCLELLAND
North East Regional Manager, Murray Primary Health Network (up to Oct 2017)

MS MAYSSA POWELL
Deputy Chair, Albury Wodonga Ethnic Communities Council

MS JOAN SIMMS
Community Member, Beechworth
Our team

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
IRENE BLACKBERRY
John Richards Chair of Rural Ageing Research and Director
BMed, PhD

DR SUZANNE HODGKIN
Deputy Director, Senior Research Fellow
BSW, MSW, PhD

EMERITUS PROFESSOR
JENI WARBURTON
BA Hons, PhD

DR RACHEL WINTERTON
Research Fellow
BAppSc Hons, PhD

DR CLARE WILDING
Research Fellow
BAppSc (OT), MAppSc, PhD

DR PAULINE SAVY
Research Officer
RN, RPN, BAdmin, Grad Dip
Gerontology, PhD Sociology

TURI BERG
Research Officer
BSc/BA, PGrad Dip
International Health, MPH

SHAUN HANCOCK
Research Officer
BPsySc (Hons)

MONICA JONES
Research Officer
BPsySc (Hons)

LINDA GORDES
Administrative Officer

DR RACHEL WINTERTON
Research Fellow
BAppSc Hons, PhD

Dr Clare Wilding
Research Fellow
BAppSc (OT), MAppSc, PhD

Dr Suzanne Hodgkin
Research Officer
RN, RPN, BAdmin, Grad Dip
Gerontology, PhD Sociology

Turi Berg
Research Officer
BSc/BA, PGrad Dip
International Health, MPH

Shaun Hancock
Research Officer
BPsySc (Hons)

Monica Jones
Research Officer
BPsySc (Hons)

Linda Gordes
Administrative Officer

Our team

Postgraduate students

MD BABAK DANYAL – MASTERS STUDENT – AWARDED IN JANUARY 2017
Development of SENDER app for dementia.
The project is developing and beta testing the SENDER navigation and networking app for dementia in rural communities.
Supervised by Dr Torab Torabi and A/Professor Irene Blackberry.

BELINDA CASH – PHD STUDENT
In sickness and in health: The experience of choice for older spousal caregivers in rural communities.
The project involves a study investigating the impact of social policy and rural healthcare practices on the availability and experience of meaningful choice for older spousal caregivers.
Supervised by Dr Suzanne Hodgkin and Professor Jeni Warburton.

DIANA NABBUMBA – PHD STUDENT
Diana will be exploring innovative and sustainable social care models for rural older people in developing countries.
Supervised by Dr Rachel Winterton and Dr Suzanne Hodgkin.

EMMA GHYS – PHD STUDENT
Food insecurity among rural older people.
This research aims to determine the key issues for community dwelling, rural older people have when accessing food.
Supervised by Dr Rachel Winterton and A/Professor Irene Blackberry.

HEATHER DOWNEY – PHD STUDENT – AWARDED IN JUNE 2017
What are the factors impacting on ageing farming couples’ retirement decision making in the contemporary context?
The project involves a qualitative study interviewing couples regarding their decisions about retirement.
Supervised by Dr Guinever Threlkeld and Professor Jeni Warburton.

JENNIFER BOAK – MASTERS STUDENT
Can client complexity be measured in a community nursing service?
This is a mixed methods study using concept mapping and current task orientation data.
Supervised by A/Professor Irene Blackberry.
JOZETTE DELLEMAIN – PHD STUDENT  
Rural case management: Developing a practice identity.  
A study investigating the practice of rural case management with implications for formal theory development.  
Supervised by Dr Suzanne Hodgkin and Professor Jeni Warburton.

KAYE ERVIN – PHD STUDENT  
Shared decision making in residential aged care.  
Kaye’s research aims to determine current models of shared decision making in aged care settings and to explore ways of embedding shared decision making in dementia care.  
Supervised by A/Professor Irene Blackberry and Dr Helen Haines.

NATASHA LONG– PHD STUDENT  
The experience of professional identity development for social work graduates in the 21st century.  
This research considers how new graduates develop their social work identity given changes to the human services sector over the past two decades.  
Supervised by Dr Suzanne Hodgkin and A/Professor Fiona Gardiner.

SAMANTHA CLUNE – PHD STUDENT  
Health is a lot: The contribution of large health organisations to community health practices in risky places.  
The project is looking at the influence of large health organisations on the construction of health practices for community members in places where there may be a perception of risks and hazards.  
Supervised by Dr Rachel Winterton, Professor Tim Marjoribanks and Professor Jane Farmer.

TSHEPO RASEKABA – PHD STUDENT  
Telehealth for gestational diabetes mellitus.  
This is a mixed method study trialling the use of telehealth to improve diabetes care delivery in an outpatient setting.  
Supervised by A/Professor John Furler, A/Professor Kwang Lim, and A/Professor Irene Blackberry.
Current research

HEALTH SERVICES AND AGED CARE


ASPIRE - Ageing Services and Supports in Rural Environments is a research project funded by the Australian Research Council (ARC) and partnering with the Department of Health and Human Services Victoria, Uniting Care Queensland, and South West Hospital and Health Service Queensland. The project is being undertaken across two Australian states, Victoria and Queensland, and involves La Trobe University, Queensland University, and University of Alberta, Canada.

This project seeks to identify the systems and services that best support the wellness of older people living in rural communities and to better understand this relationship.

The study consists of four stages – demographic analysis, quantitative surveys, qualitative interviews and finally the integration of data. The demographic profiling of rural communities across the two states identified six diverse study sites. This was followed by the quantitative survey which was administered to 266 participants aged 65 years or older across all six sites. Data was collected about access to community services, social networks, participation in community groups, health and wellbeing, plus some basic demographic questions. The qualitative interview stage has recently begun and will explore these themes in greater detail with 60 of the survey participants. The final analysis will include the integration of data across the six study sites and a comparative analysis with our Canadian colleagues. The study findings will provide a robust evidence base to inform existing policy frameworks about how best to meet the diverse needs of older people living in Australia’s rural communities. To date, one paper (systematic review) and one chapter (demographic findings) have been published. Several conference papers have been presented, including at the British Society of Gerontology, June 2015, and a symposium at the International Federation on Aging Conference in June 2016.
HEALTH SERVICES AND AGED CARE

**Blackberry, I.,** Farmer, J., and Morley, C.

**SMART (Small Rural Health Research Team) Partnership**

Partners and funded by: Heathcote Health, Cobaw Community Health Service (Macedon Ranges), Rural Northwest Health, Robinvale District Health Services, Edenhope and District Memorial Hospital, Kooweerup Regional Health Service, Kilmore-Hume Health, and Alexandra District Health.

The SMART partnership brings together a group of Victorian remote, rural, and community health services, with academic partners, to improve health outcomes for rural Victorian communities. The partnership will see remote, rural, and community health services coming together to lead on the health policy agenda through development of evidence based research, and application of that research to innovative practice.


**Enhanced care pathway for older people in rural area.**

Partner: University of Melbourne Department of General Practice, National Ageing Research Institute, Melbourne Health, and Nijmegen University

Funding body: Building Healthy Communities Research Focus Area

The ageing population and epidemic of chronic diseases present significant challenges to the Australian healthcare system. The research gap lies into innovative ways to a systematic, consistent and standardised approach to implementing 75+HA in busy general practices. We plan to improve the utility and impact of the 75+HA comprehensive geriatric assessment.

The incorporation of risk stratification, an action plan and referral pathway options will allow older Australians at high risk of hospitalisation and frailty to access the appropriate services and resources in a timely and efficient manner. This issue is even more critical in rural areas where workforce and health services are limited.

The project will utilise a realist synthesis review method to elucidate primary care based comprehensive geriatric assessment.

**Warburton, J., Blackberry, I., and Winterton, R.**

**TRACS: Transition Rural Aged Care Service.**

Partner: Victorian Department of Health and Human Services

Funded by College of Science, Health, and Engineering, La Trobe University and Victorian Department of Health and Human Services.

The challenges associated with moving into care settings holds particular salience in rural locations, where over one third of all older Australians live, and where there are important financial and logistic barriers to the delivery of health and aged care services. In Victoria, the majority of these in rural Victorian locations are small facilities run by local health services and are threatened with financial viability. Overall, this scenario presents significant challenges for frail older people transitioning to residential care in rural settings. In this project we will undertake an international scoping review of transitions to residential care in rural areas, with particular attention to international models of rural care provision. It will enable us to identify gaps in practice and make recommendations for future provision. We will also undertake a series of focus group consultations to be held with key stakeholders (local service providers, allied health practitioners, older people and their families) using a place-based approach. This will enable us to understand the specific underpinnings of transitions to rural residential aged care from different perspectives.

**Winterton, R., and Blackberry, I.**

**Rural to urban migration among Chinese older people in Beijing and its impact on aged care.**

Partner: Beijing Normal University

Funded by China Studies Research Centre, La Trobe University

This project contributes to the geographical gerontology literature by exploring the motivations for and experiences of, rural to urban migration among Chinese seniors. The number of rural older adults relocating to urban areas to access care from families or to care for grandchildren is increasing in China due to higher rural-urban service inequity and family migration to cities for employment. This research explores how the changing nature of family care provision in increasingly modernised Chinese cities will impact on the health and wellbeing of older rural-urban migrants.

**Blackberry, I., Farmer, J., Snow, P., and Winterton, R.**

**Webster Regional Dementia Care: Co-designing dementia health services in Bendigo.**

Funding body: Sandhurst Trustees.

The Webster Rural and Regional Dementia Care project is a three-year research initiative, funded through the bequest of Gordon Webster through Sandhurst Trustees and administered by La Trobe University. Through conducting evidence-based research, this project aims to improve dementia care pathways within rural and regional Victoria, with a specific emphasis on developing innovative and sustainable care for residents of Bendigo and surrounding regions.
Moran, A., Chapman, J., Chapman, G., Squire, S., Blackberry, I., Threlkeld, G.
Partner: Albury Wodonga Health
Funding body: Murray Primary Health Network

Understanding the determinants of potentially avoidable Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) hospital presentations and admissions: exploration of consumer experiences

This research aims to identify the determinants of potentially avoidable Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) hospitalisations and re-admissions to Albury Wodonga health service (AWH) with the overarching goals of exploring how well AWH is performing against best practice guidelines and using this information to explore how our COPD clients may be better managed in collaboration with surrounding health and primary care services.

Partner: Chronic Illness Alliance and University of Melbourne


The aims of the proposed research are to examine the out of pocket expenses of a self-selecting sample of people with epilepsy and to determine the sociodemographic, health, seizure and comorbidity profile of different out of pocket expense groups. In addition the study aims to interrogate the Medicare and PBS data to identify recorded epilepsy consultations, comorbid conditions and the mix of epilepsy and other medicines used by this sample of people with epilepsy.


Improving Detection and management of deMentia in older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians attending Primary Care (IDEA-PC).

Partner: University of Melbourne, University of Western Australia
Funding body: NHMRC Boosting Dementia Research Grants

This project will co-design, implement and evaluate a nationwide culturally responsive model of care that includes training for primary care professionals (including Indigenous Health Workers [IHWs]) to optimise the detection and management of dementia and Cognitive Impairment not Dementia (CIND) in older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians (hereafter respectfully referred to as Indigenous). This project will be undertaken within current primary care health service pathways to support better care for people with dementia and CIND and their families and communities. We will collaborate with organisations that are directly involved with training and service provision including consumers, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHSs), Primary Health Networks (PHNs), Dementia Training Australia (DTA), and aged care providers at state, national and international levels, to ensure translation and capacity building with the aim to optimise wellbeing for Indigenous older people with dementia, their families and communities.

Knight, K., Melgren, N., and Blackberry, I.

Chronic Conditions Model of Care in Western Victoria

Partner: Rural Northwest Health
Funded by Western Victoria Primary Health Network

This research project will evaluate whether implementation of the Chronic Conditions Model of Care in Western Victoria will generate an improvement in health and wellbeing of people in rural communities living with one or more chronic conditions and reduce potentially preventable hospitalisations. A mixed method approach will be employed to assess client and partner satisfaction. Patients of Rural Northwest Health receiving the model of care will be asked to provide feedback via patient satisfaction surveys and consent to evaluation of de-identified data from health service records. La Trobe University (LTU) will lead the evaluation of the Chronic Conditions Model of Care provided by Rural Northwest Health (RNH). LTU researchers’ role is to evaluate outcomes of implementation of the new model of care as part of current best practice and usual care at RNH.
AGEING IN PLACE, VOLUNTEERING AND AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

Winterton, R., and Blackberry, I.

WAVE (Well Ageing Vision and Engagement Wangaratta)

Partner: North East Health, Wangaratta, Victorian Department of Health and Human Services, Rural City of Wangaratta, Central Hume Primary Care Partnership, Gateway Health

Funded by North East Health, Wangaratta, Transforming Human Societies Research Focus Area and Department of Health and Human Services Victoria, East Division.

This research seeks to identify what rural older adults expect from rural health and social care providers in relation to ageing in place, and how well this aligns with the views and perceived responsibilities of providers. This project is timely as a consequence of changing trends both in relation to rural population ageing, societal expectations of older age and shifting priorities associated with health and aged care delivery.
AGEING IN PLACE, VOLUNTEERING AND AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

**Winterton, R.**  
*Local government discourses on active citizenship and ageing in rural communities.*  
Funded by La Trobe University  
Transforming Human Societies Research Focus Area Grant  
This project will identify how older people’s rights and responsibilities within rural spaces are conceptualised within local government strategic plans for ageing. A critical discourse analysis (CDA) of Victorian rural councils’ positive ageing plans will be undertaken, to identify what local governments expect older adults to contribute to their rural communities. Significantly, this analysis will also explore what policy dictates that older adults can expect in return, from the perspective of access to local government services and support.

**Blackberry, I., and Savy, P.**  
*Healthy And Resilient Together (HART)*  
Partner: Beechworth Health Service  
Funded by Foundation of Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR)  
This project seeks to evaluate Beechworth Health Service-led community education and participation in the development of strategies that foster resilience and preparedness for adverse circumstances and disasters. The project is undertaken in Yackandandah and Beechworth.

**Pettigrew, S., Newton, R., Warburton, J., and Jackson, B.**  
*Investigating the health benefits of volunteering by seniors.*  
ARC Discovery 2014-16 through UWA and Curtin University.  
This project aims to explore the physical health benefits associated with volunteering in later life, by looking at biological markers. Quantitative data has been collected across the volunteer and non-volunteer samples, and early comparison begun. Further, a series of in-depth interviews has also been conducted. There is a range of peer reviewed papers being published and conference presentations being made utilising these two data sets.
Hodgkin, S., Savy, P. and Mahoney, A. 

*Scoping the skills and training needs of community care workers in rural localities*

Industry Partners: Westmont Aged Care Services, Alpine Health Services, Beechworth Health Service, Tallangatta Health Service and Corryong Health Service.

The demand for an appropriately skilled and committed aged care workforce in rural areas has escalated over several decades. Workforce estimates indicate a worsening of the current situation due to the ageing and imminent retirement of a large number of community aged care workers. Given that the current workforce will need to triple by 2050, there is an economic imperative to recruit and retain a sufficient local workforce going into the future. This problem is compounded by difficulties associated in recruiting and retaining younger workers. Community based care provision is reportedly more complex given the prevalence of chronic health conditions among this population. Industry and policy demands for high quality and cost effective care into the future correspond with current and projected workforce and skill shortfalls as well as reported dissatisfaction with current training courses. This project seeks to profile how this problem is experienced within the rural context of the Goulburn region, and to develop training models that provide community care workers with fundamental skills appropriate to address client complexity.
WORKFORCE AND INFORMAL CARE

Bauer, M., Fetherstonhaugh, D., Blackberry, I., Farmer, J., and Morley, C.

*Improving care for older people with dementia in rural area.*

Partner: Rural NorthWest Health
Funded by La Trobe University RFA BHC and NorthWest Rural Health Service.

Dementia is a National Health Priority Area. Nearly 1.5 million Australians are currently affected by dementia, including families and carers. The number of Australians with dementia is projected to 900,000 by 2050 with around 70% living in the community. There is little evidence in rural community service provision and it is unclear what the primary support needs of people with dementia and their carer’s are in a rural setting. This 12-month project will: (1) build a systematic consensus about the key support needs for people with dementia and their carer’s in a rural setting; and (2) identify existing evidence-based service responses to those needs. Collaborating partners supporting our proposal include Rural Northwest Health (in-kind part-time project manager), and Alzheimer’s Australia (to assist with recruitment of people with dementia and carers). An expert reference group (ERG) comprised of consumers; CEO Rural Northwest Health; Department of Health and Human Services; Director of the Victorian/Tasmanian Dementia Training Study Centres, international experts in the provision of dementia friendly communities and systems will guide the project.

Hodgkin, S., and Stonehouse, D.

*Housing affordability and homelessness in the Hume Region.*

In partnership with the Hume Region Homelessness Network, this project draws on ABS CENSUS data and agency data to provide a comprehensive analysis of issues relating to housing affordability and homelessness within the Hume region of Victoria.

Hodgkin, S., Modderman, C., and Vogels, W.

*Out of Home Care Project, Murray Primary Health Network (PHN).*

This project evaluates a model of care (pathway) for Aboriginal children entering OOHC. The aim of the pathway is to improve the number of Aboriginal children entering OOHC accessing culturally appropriate and timely preliminary health checks, comprehensive health and developmental assessments by a multidisciplinary team, and subsequent development of health management plans.

Bennett, P., Howell, T., Hodgkin, S., & Modderman, C.

*Investigating the role of Dogs in assisting sexual and family violence survivors.*

In partnership with the Centre Against Violence (CAV) Hume region this study has been collecting preliminary evidence to justify the use of trained support dogs in counselling sessions and courtrooms. In the United States and in parts of Europe, trained dogs have been used to support sexual assault and family violence survivors. In an Australian first program the Centre Against Violence (CAV) Hume region, is trialling the use of trained dogs for this purpose. In partnership with CAV, the present study aims to develop evidence demonstrating the effectiveness of this initiative.
TECHNOLOGY


**VERILY project: Virtual Dementia Friendly Rural Communities**

Partner: Swinburne University, Newcastle University, Flinders University, Saskatchewan University Canada

Funded by Commonwealth Dementia and Aged Care Services Fund

The VERILY project is a stepped wedge cluster clinical trial of innovative online technologies to support carers of people with dementia in 12 rural communities across Victoria, New South Wales, and South Australia. In each community, we will implement three key initiatives: 1) volunteer-led support and mentoring hubs to assist older people to use online technologies; 2) an integrated website and mobile app that assists carers of people with dementia to identify and engage local services and to connect to other carers; and, 3) online video-conferenced carer peer support groups. We aim to recruit a total of 216 participants including carers of people with dementia, volunteers, and service providers. VERILY initiatives will be implemented and evaluated across 2018 and the project will culminate in June 2019.
**TECHNOLOGY**

**Blackberry, I., Morley, C., Douglass, D., Torabi, T., Morgan, D., Mahoney, A., Farmer, J., Danyal, B., and Wilding, C.**

*Service Navigation for Dementia in Rural Communities (SENDER) app: A pilot*

**Partners:** Rural Northwest Health Service, Heathcote Health Service, Department of Computer Science and Information Technology La Trobe University, Swinburne University, Telstra Digital Solution Program, Saskatchewan University Canada.

**Funded by Building Healthy Communities Research Focus Area.**

SENDER is a prototype app for smartphones and tablets that helps rural people who are caring for someone with dementia to find the services they need and to connect to other carers and service providers. It can be challenging for carers to locate services within a fragmented health system and rural carers may be isolated by geography. The development of novel online technologies provides new solutions to these pressing problems. Using aspects of whole-of-community-based action research and mixed methods for data gathering, this project was beta-tested and developed the SENDER app. During a 2-month testing phase, app users (carers and service providers) trialled the app in real-life contexts and provide feedback about the app’s usefulness, effectiveness, and user friendliness. Feedback was used to further refine and develop the app. A paper is underway.

**Blackberry, I., Rasekaba, T., Triay, J., Lim, K., and Furler, J.**

*Telehealth in gestational diabetes.*

**Partner:** Bendigo Health, Melbourne Health, University of Melbourne

**Funded by Research Focus Area Understanding Disease**

Gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM) affects 1 in 7 pregnant women. Optimum blood glucose levels (BGL) produces better maternal and foetal outcomes. Our trial in the urban setting showed telehealth significantly reduced time to achieve glycemic target without compromising the quality and safety of care. We propose to examine telehealth in rural areas where access to diabetes care is limited. We will undertake preliminary work to establish (1) feasibility and acceptability of telehealth for GDM by exploring patient and health providers’ perspective on telehealth, and (2) how telehealth can be embedded as part of routine care in rural setting.

**Morley, C., Douglass, D., Farmer, J., Blackberry, I., Race, S., and Mills, K.**

*Flying Doctor Telehealth Specialist Service*

**Partner:** Flying Doctor Telehealth Specialist Service and SMART partnership

**Funded by Victorian Department of Health and Human Services Victoria**

The research project will evaluate whether the Flying Doctor Telehealth Specialist Service (FDTSS) improves access to specialist services for small rural communities in Victoria using a mixed methods approach. The evaluation will include data on access to services, including analysis of de-identified Medicare data that will reflect use of health services such as GPs, allied health, specialists and hospitalisations prior to and during involvement with the service. Additionally, qualitative measures will be used to assess the patient and health services’ experience with the telehealth platform and specialist services.

**Vetere, F., Waycott, J., Warburton, J., Hoang, T., Ozanne, E. and Dow, B.**

*Ageing Bodies, Embodied Interactions and Social Inclusion.*

**Partner:** University of Melbourne, National Ageing Research Institute

**Funded by ARC Discovery project**

This ARC Discovery project aims to look at technology as a potential response to social isolation in later life. In particular, we aim to look at the appropriateness of the use of avatars and virtual reality for housebound and isolated older people. The project commenced in 2016, with Dr Steven Baker, a JRI graduate, being successful in obtaining the postdoctoral research fellow position on the project.
EXTERNALLY LED PROJECTS

*Primary health care Research In Multimorbidity and mental health in a multi-Ethnic population (PRIME).*
Partner: National Healthcare Group Polyclinics Singapore, Western University Canada
Funded by Singapore Ministry of Health

*The use of interpreter online in dementia care.*
Partner: National Ageing Research Institute
Funded by Alzheimer’s Australia grant.

Mills, K., Farmer, J., Blackberry, I., and SMART partnership.
*HelpDem: Skilled Volunteers for Dementia.*
Partner: Swinburne University, SMART partnership
Funded by Foundation for Rural, Regional and Remote CARA grant

Farmer, J., Davis, H., Blackberry, I., and De Cotta, T.
*Best practice project*
Partner: Swinburne University, SMART partnership
Funded by SMART partnership

Furler, J., Best, J., O’Neal, D., Speight, J., Blackberry, I., and Khunti, K.
*GP Osmotic.*
Partner: University of Melbourne, Deakin University, Nanyang Polytechnic Singapore, and Imperial College London, Leicester University UK
Funded by NHMRC project grant

*CHERISH: better, cheaper hospital care.*
Partner: Queensland Health, QUT, University of Queensland, University of Sydney, Adelaide University, Melbourne Health, and Harvard University
Funding body: Queensland Government Accelerate partnerships grant

Manski-Nankervis, J., Bell, S., Blackberry, I., Lau, P., and Furler, J.
*Chronic kidney disease prevalence and management in type 2 diabetes in primary care.*
Partner: University of Melbourne, Monash University
Funded by Shepherd Foundation
JRI Seminars, Workshops and Forums

DEVELOPING AGE-FRIENDLY RURAL COMMUNITIES: SHARING INTERNATIONAL AND LOCAL LEARNINGS
14 February 2017, La Trobe University.
An open forum featuring presentations from Professor Mark Skinner, Dr Rachel Winterton, Dr Rachel Whitsed, and David Kidd.

LA TROBE UNIVERSITY RESEARCH WEEK
30 & 31 August 2017, La Trobe University.
La Trobe celebrated Research Week with a range of half hour live talks across the week. Presentations included A/Professor Irene Blackberry with ‘Co-designing future rural dementia: What is the role of technology to support carers?’, Dr Suzanne Hodgkin with ‘Rural workforce challenges in community aged care’, and Dr Clare Wilding with ‘Well ageing vision and engagement (WAVE): Community consultation and supporting well-ageing in Wangaratta’.

DANCING WITH PARKINSON’S DISEASE
2 October 2017, La Trobe University.
An event, run during Wodonga Senior Celebrations week, with Professor Meg Morris presenting her world renowned research on ‘Dancing with Parkinson’s disease’. Also featuring at this event was a performance of “Music and Movement for Parkinson’s” by the Murray Youth Performing Arts group with an adult tap class.

3RD ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON AGEING AND OLD-AGE IN ASIA-PACIFIC
11 & 12 October 2017, Melbourne.
The 3rd Annual International Symposium on Ageing and Old-Age in Asia-Pacific brought together leading experts in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond to facilitate exchange of the latest knowledge on the health, social cultural, political, and economic challenges associated with ageing and old-age. The symposium was hosted by the John Richards initiative and La Trobe Asia.
Invited presentations

EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT


Keynote presentations


**INTERNAL ENGAGEMENT**

**Irene Blackberry, Suzanne Hodgkin** and **Clare Wilding** took part in Research Week. Irene’s talk was ‘Co-designing future rural dementia care: What is the role of technology to support carers?’ Suzanne’s talk was ‘Rural workforce challenges in community aged care’, and Clare’s talk was ‘Well ageing vision and engagement (WAVE): Community consultation and supporting well-aging’, 28 August – 1 September 1, Wangaratta, 2017.

**Irene Blackberry** presented posters on the role of technology in supporting carers of people with dementia and the Well Ageing Vision and Engagement (WAVE) during LTU research showcase evening, 31 August, Bundoora, 2017.

**Rachel Winterton** gave a talk as part of the China Studies Research Centre seminar series on rural-urban migration in older age. 21 September, 2017.
Irene Blackberry attended the La Trobe University Research Showcase event Sustainable Regions: Agriculture and Regional Communities and presented Emma’s poster on food insecurity, 14 September, Shepparton, 2017.

Irene Blackberry was an academic board panel discussant on the draft University Strategic Plan, 13 September, 2017.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Irene Blackberry was an invited speaker at the Older Persons Nurse Practitioners state forum, 10 February, Albury Wodonga Hospital, 2017.

Irene Blackberry hosted Dr Jing Wen Kong, GP and Deputy Head of National Healthcare Polyclinics Singapore research fellowship. Irene provides a research mentorship for Dr Kong and is developing a collaborative research on enhancing access to primary care in Singapore via telegeriatrics, February-March, 2017.

JRI celebrated their 10 year anniversary. Dinner with the Reference Group and other stakeholders was held on the 22 May, 2017.

Suzanne Hodgkin was a member of the Scientific Committee of the Hume Region Health conference by the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services, 22-23 June, 2017.

Irene Blackberry. Opening speech for the David Simmons address, featuring Hon. Kay Patterson OA, Aged Discrimination Commissioner, 31 August, Melbourne.


Irene Blackberry was elected as the President of the Australian Association of Gerontology Victoria, and is on the committee for the AAG National Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Special Interest Group (CALD SIG).

Irene Blackberry was elected as a member of La Trobe University Academic Board (2017-2019).

Irene Blackberry was invited to be in the Primary Care and Population Health of Albury Wodonga Health Committee.

Irene Blackberry was invited to be a member of the advisory committee of Stepping Up Diabetes project funded by the Travis Review Grant led by NorthWest Melbourne Primary Health.

Irene Blackberry is on the organising committee of the 51st Australian Association of Gerontology conference in Melbourne, November, 2018.

Irene Blackberry is a member of the Hume Regional Diabetes Collaborative Network.

Irene Blackberry is an Associate Editor of Elsevier Primary Care Diabetes, Review Editor of the Frontiers in Medicine and is on the Editorial Board of the Journal of Diabetes Research.

Irene Blackberry’s Stepping Up insulin trial [published in the British Medical Journal 2017;356:j783. IF 20.7 [doi.org/10.1136/bmj.j783]] was showcased in Nature Reviews Endocrinology with IF 18.318.
## Media

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>22 May</td>
<td>ABC Goulburn Murray – Irene Blackberry and John Richards interviewed about JRI on the 10th anniversary</td>
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<tr>
<td>22 July</td>
<td>Senior Australian News and Research - Virtual Dementia Friendly Rural Communities (VERILY) project was featured <a href="http://www.seniorau.com.au/7185-dementia-friendly-rural-communities-project">http://www.seniorau.com.au/7185-dementia-friendly-rural-communities-project</a></td>
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Publications

PEER REVIEW JOURNAL ARTICLES AND CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS


Mahoney, A.M., LoGiudice, D., & Blackberry, I. Preventing hypoglycaemia among older people with diabetes upon discharge from hospital. Primary Care Diabetes Journal of Australia in press.


BOOK CHAPTERS


INVITED OPINION PIECE

Blackberry I. What’s needed to ensure provision of aged care in regional, rural and remote areas? Australian Ageing Agenda. Apr 2017: 18-19. ISSN 1836-7348.
Be involved in our research

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