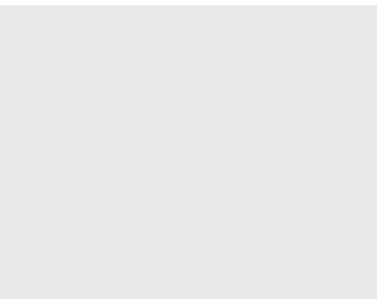


ANNUAL REPORT 2024



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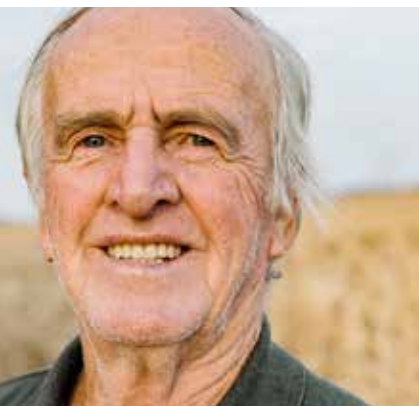
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Director's Foreword

As noted in last year's report, the centre entered a period of transition following the passing of John Richards OAM in 2023 and Professor Irene Blackberry's move to the Care Economy Research Institute in the same year. Irene continues her role as Chair of the John Richards Centre. Following this, 2024 saw a focus on building the teams and infrastructure necessary to deliver on the funding successes of late 2023. This involved a lot of work for Associate Professor Rachel Winterton and Dr Tshepo Rasekaba as they built and developed their respective teams to deliver projects associated with age-friendly health care in north east Victoria, and respite care for people with dementia and their carers.

2024 also saw the establishment of several new grants. In late 2024 the JRC successfully partnered with La Trobe's Australian Institute for Primary Care & Ageing (AIPCA) and the School of Psychology and Public Health to win a tender for evaluation of the Australian Government's new Virtual Nursing (VN) in Aged Care project. The \$1.66 million evaluation, funded by the government, will measure the impact of virtual care on clinical outcomes, workforce and service sustainability. The research team led by Associate Professor Sean MacDermott (JRC) and Professor Yvonne Wells (AIPCA) will focus on the implementation, effectiveness and efficiency of the VN program. This project will run until 2027. The JRC is also leading the evaluation of a student-placement model in rural aged-care settings (led by Associate Professor Sean MacDermott), which is a collaborative project among all four Victorian University Departments of Rural Health. In addition to these large projects, we continued to work with many smaller partners on a range of projects designed to improve health and service delivery for older rural-dwelling Australians.

These funding successes have resulted in a series of new staff appointments. During 2024 we were joined by Dr Steph Houghton, Dr Fisaha Tesfay, Dr Simon Haines and Natalie Gower. Dr Marita Chisholm also rejoined our centre after a period of external employment. We also farewelled Dr Naomi Paine and thank her for her contributions to the centre.

We hosted several successful events and launches in 2024, the highlight of which was the 2024 John Richards Centre Oration delivered by Marcus Riley.



Marcus captivated the audience with his presentation, which was titled "The Ageing Continuum – challenge or opportunity?".

I would like to acknowledge the contribution of the centre's Deputy Director, Dr Rachel Winterton, who was promoted to Associate Professor in 2024. In addition to her tireless work as Deputy Director, Rachel was also awarded a highly competitive university Targeted Research Excellence Scheme grant.

As always, the centre's direction has been guided by our Reference Group which saw some changes in 2024. I would like to acknowledge the contribution of Professor Susan Dodds who was a long-standing member until her retirement from La Trobe University in May 2024. We also farewelled Jackie Thompson who was replaced by Judith Perkins in October. Other new committee members include the inimitable Trent Dean (CEO, Gateway Health) and Sam Marchant representing the Richards family. Thank you to Andre Catrice for chairing the reference group throughout the year, and to Professor Jane Mills, Dean of the La Trobe Rural Health School, for her consistently strong support for the centre.

Associate Professor Sean MacDermott

Director - John Richards Centre for
Rural Ageing Research


2024 Snapshot



34 
PUBLICATIONS

15 
ACTIVE PROJECTS

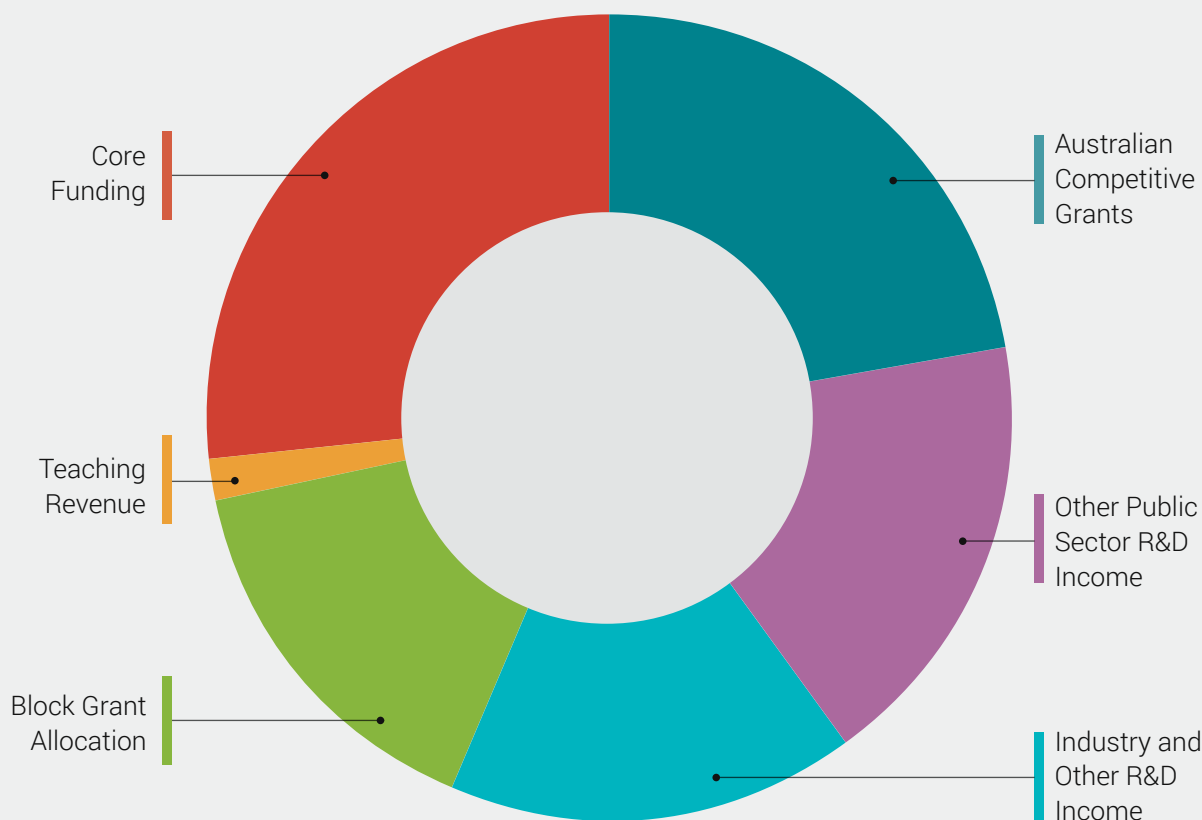
29 
STAFF AND
AFFILIATES

10 
HIGHER DEGREE BY
RESEARCH (HDR) STUDENTS



Funding

Opening balance as of 1 January 2024 was \$2,509,881
Closing balance as of 31 December 2024 was \$2,439,281



Category 1: Australian Competitive Grants	\$362,198
Category 2: Other Public Sector R&D Income	\$284,475
Category 3: Industry and Other R&D Income	\$266,330
Block Grant Allocation	\$247,670
Teaching Revenue (Higher Degree by Research)	\$24,118
Core Funding	\$429,072
Victorian Department of Health	\$145,897
La Trobe University	\$144,571
John Richards' Donation	\$138,604

TOTAL: \$1,613,863.00

Strategic Goals 2021-2025



GLOBAL LEADER



RURAL AGEING



RESEARCH



PARTNERSHIPS








Vision

To be a global leader in rural ageing and aged care research that promotes equitable health and wellbeing outcomes for diverse older people in rural communities.

Mission

To engage in research partnerships and knowledge exchange that is responsive and adaptive to societal, technological and environmental changes impacting on rural ageing populations.

The John Richards Centre strategic goals are aligned with the La Trobe University Strategic Plan and the La Trobe Rural Health School Statement of Strategic Intent

	 OBJECTIVE	 TARGET
ACCESS 	To leverage funding from John Richards, Victorian Department of Health and Human Services and La Trobe University to enhance access to research opportunities, knowledge exchange and collaboration.	To obtain research funding and develop funding streams to sustain and grow the John Richards Centre's operations.
CULTURE 	To demonstrate leadership and embed the La Trobe University cultural qualities within all aspects of our research, knowledge exchange and collaboration activities.	To demonstrate the four cultural qualities within John Richards Centre's activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountability • Care • Connectivity • Innovation
EQUITY 	To lead and conduct research that addresses issues relating to equitable health and wellbeing outcomes for diverse rural ageing populations.	To partner with rural older people and their families, rural communities and key stakeholders, governments, industry partners, peak bodies to develop research that addresses rural inequity.
IMPACT 	To provide rigorous research evidence to inform initiatives and innovations that address real-life problems experienced by rural ageing populations.	To conduct activities and produce outputs that facilitate opportunities for research uptake and knowledge translation.
RECOGNITION 	To be recognised globally as the leading centre for rural ageing and aged care research.	To foster an environment that facilitates world-class research, leadership in knowledge translation, and high-quality research training opportunities.

Our Reference Group in 2024

The objective of the Reference Group is to facilitate links between the John Richards Centre and key stakeholders to provide strategic direction to the Centre. The terms of reference include:

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

Mr Andre Catrice (Chair)

Senior Policy Officer,
Chronic Care and Older People,
Department of Health

Professor Susan Dodds

Deputy Vice-Chancellor and
Vice President (Research and
Industry Engagement),
La Trobe University

Professor Ashley Franks

Pro Vice Chancellor,
Research Capability,
La Trobe University

Professor Jane Mills

Dean, La Trobe Rural
Health School and
Pro Vice Chancellor Health
Innovation (Regional)

Professor Irene Blackberry

Chair, John Richards Centre
for Rural Ageing Research, and
Director, Care Economy Research
Institute, La Trobe University

Associate Professor**Sean MacDermott**

Director, John Richards
Centre for Rural Ageing
Research, La Trobe University

Associate Professor**Rachel Winterton**

Deputy Director,
John Richards Centre for
Rural Ageing Research,
La Trobe University

Ms Maria Berry

Community Development
Network Officer,
Elder Rights Advocacy

Dr Jane Fyfield

Aged Care Sector Advisor

Professor Ngaire Kerse

Chair in Ageing Well,
University of Auckland,
New Zealand

Mr David Noonan

Chief Executive Officer,
Albury-Wodonga Aboriginal
Health Service

Mr Bill Appleby

Chief Executive Officer,
Albury Wodonga Health

Ritchie Dodds

Chief Executive Officer,
West Wimmera Health
Service

Dr Dan Douglass

Chief Executive Officer,
Heathcote Health

Trent Dean

Chief Executive Officer,
Gateway Health

Jackie Thompson

Senior Program Adviser
Health Performance -
Hume, Department
of Health

Judith Perkins

Manager Health
Performance Barwon
South West, Western
Health Services and
Aged Care, Department
of Health

Sam Marchant

John Richards family
representative

Our Research Team



Professor Irene Blackberry

JRC CHAIR



Natalie Gower

RESEARCH OFFICER



**Associate Professor
Sean MacDermott**

JRC DIRECTOR



Dr Fisaha Tesfay

RESEARCH FELLOW



**Associate Professor
Rachel Winterton**

JRC DEPUTY DIRECTOR &
PRINCIPAL RESEARCH FELLOW



Kelly Tamang

RESEARCH OFFICER



Dr Tshepo Rasekaba

SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW



Dr Simon Haines

RESEARCH OFFICER



Dr Clare Wilding

RESEARCH FELLOW



Dr Marita Chisholm

RESEARCH OFFICER



Dr Stacey Rich

RESEARCH FELLOW



Jennifer Boak

RESEARCH FELLOW



Dr Kathleen Brasher

RESEARCH FELLOW



Dr Naomi Paine

POST DOC RESEARCHER



Dr Shahinoor Akter

RESEARCH FELLOW



Michelle Buckley

ADMINISTRATION OFFICER



Dr Carmela Leone

RESEARCH OFFICER

Our Research Affiliates

**Associate Professor
Carina Chan**

Psychology, Counselling & Therapy
La Trobe University

Dr Stephen Cousins

Lecturer Department of Rural
Allied Health
La Trobe University

**Associate Professor
Ali Lakhani**

Public Health
La Trobe University

Dr George Mnatzaganian

Senior Lecturer Paramedicine
La Trobe University

Professor Joseph Tucci

La Trobe Rural Health School,
La Trobe University

**Associate Professor
Raelene Wilding**

Head of Department Social Enquiry
La Trobe University

Centre Adjuncts and Honoraries

**Adjunct Associate Professor
Dr Mark Ashcroft**

Chief Executive Officer, NCN Health

**Adjunct Senior Research Fellow
Dr Wasek Faisal**

Visiting Senior Research Fellow,
La Trobe University
Medical Oncologist, Ballarat Regional
Integrated Cancer Centre

**Adjunct Professor
Christopher Steer**

La Trobe University
Associate Professor UNSW School of
Clinical Medicine
Medical Oncologist, Border Medical
Oncology and Haematology

**Adjunct Professor
Nicholas Morris**

La Trobe University

**Adjunct Research Fellow
Nicole Webb**

Cancer Nurse Coordinator
Albury Wodonga Health

**Adjunct Professor
Craig Underhill**

La Trobe University
Associate Professor (conjoint) UNSW
School of Clinical Medicine
Albury-Wodonga Regional Cancer
Centre, Hume Regional Integrated
Cancer Services, Victorian
Comprehensive Cancer Centre



Higher Degree by Research Students

Jennifer Boak

PHD CANDIDATE

Improving Quality of Care Through Detection of Complexity Amongst Older People in the Community: ImPaCt study

Supervisors: Professor Irene Blackberry and Dr Tshepo Rasekaba

Craig Gilbertson

MASTERS BY RESEARCH CANDIDATE

A Feasibility Study Exploring the Use of Virtual Reality to Alleviate Patient Fear of Needles During Medical Treatment

Supervisors: Professor Irene Blackberry and Dr Tshepo Rasekaba

Rosa Goncalves

PHD CANDIDATE

Reducing disparity in cancer outcomes through Health Literacy in culturally diverse and socially disadvantaged cancer patients: Challenges and opportunities in the age of social media.

Supervisors: Professor Irene Blackberry, Professor Tonya Stebbins, and Dr Wasek Faisal

Fan He

PHD CANDIDATE

One-Year Clinical Patient Outcomes Following Acute Ischaemic and Haemorrhagic Stroke in Albury-Wodonga: A 10-Year Retrospective Cohort Study

Supervisors: Professor Irene Blackberry and Dr George Mnatzaganian

Chris Harvey

PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE CANDIDATE

Understanding the impact and experience of person-centred comprehensive suicide aftercare in a rural community

Supervisors: Associate Professor Sean MacDermott and Associate Professor Carina Chan.

Lucas Lloyd

PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE CANDIDATE

An analysis of older people with palliative care needs presenting to a rural emergency department and their care journey

Supervisors: Professor Irene Blackberry and Associate Professor Sean MacDermott

Darren Midgley

PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE CANDIDATE

The Evaluation of the Impact of Intergenerational Programs on Children in Long Day-Care and Older Adults Living in Residential Aged Care

Supervisors: Professor Irene Blackberry and Associate Professor Sean MacDermott

Dr Krishna Rachakonda

PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE CANDIDATE

Prevalence of polypharmacy among older adults with cancer in Mildura Base Public Hospital

Supervisors: Professor Irene Blackberry, Associate Professor Sean MacDermott and Associate Professor Joseph Tucci

David Brereton

PHD CANDIDATE

Regional Cancer Care for Older Persons: Exercise in geriatric oncology

Supervisors: Dr Tshepo Rasekaba, Dr Stephen Cousins, Professor Irene Blackberry, Adj. Professor Christopher Steer

Dr Mmakgomo Mimi Raesima

PHD CANDIDATE

Regional cancer care for older persons - geriatric assessment and enhanced supportive care

Supervisors: Professor Irene Blackberry, Dr Tshepo Rasekaba, Adj. Professor Christopher Steer

Higher Degree by Research Students - Completion

Dr Carmela Leone

Discourses relating to 'the right to the city' for people living with dementia and their carers in a regional Australian setting; implications for a rights-based dementia-friendly community

Supervisors: Professor Irene Blackberry and Dr Rachel Winterton

Carmela explored discourses about the socio-spatial rights of people living with dementia and their carers. The research identified discourses where socio-spatial rights were recognised, through personhood and citizenship lenses, and where they were overlooked, through subaltern or exclusionary perspectives. The findings will inform the development of rights-based dementia-friendly communities. Carmela celebrated her graduation on 18 April 2024 at Bendigo.

L to R: Professor Irene Blackberry, Dr Carmela Leone, Associate Professor Rachel Winterton





Key Research Areas

AGED CARE AND DEMENTIA



HEALTH SERVICE AND WORKFORCE



AGEING IN PLACE



TECHNOLOGY



AGED CARE AND DEMENTIA



The Aged Care and Dementia research stream is focused on developing translational research projects designed to improve the lives of older people in aged care, as well as those of people living with dementia and their carers. Projects also cover related areas such as cognitive decline and the safe use of medications.

Formative research on exploring the understanding and experiences of accessing dementia care among South Asian migrants living in Australia

Akter, S., Blackberry, I. & Rasekaba, T.

Funder: Care Economy Research Institute (Industry Partner Development Funding)

GreenConnect dementia respite project: improving respite care for people with dementia and their carers

Chappell, C., Rasekaba, T., Blackberry, I., MacDermott, S., Douglass, D., Midgely, D., & Slatter, S.

Funder: Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care

Early-stage evaluation of Treehouse4Two: helping to grow the understanding of dementia and keep people at home longer

MacDermott, S., Akter, S., & Rasekaba, T.

Funders: Care Economy Research Institute (Industry Partner Development Funding) and Central Highlands Rural Health



HEALTH SERVICE AND WORKFORCE



Our Health Service and Workforce key research area pursues inquiry that provides insights and understanding of the broad field of health care, in so far as these relate to the health and wellbeing of the ageing population, locally and globally. Our focus includes aspects of health care delivery, workforce, organisation, resource allocation, economics, program evaluation and health outcomes. These are all intended to improve the health of individuals and communities vis-à-vis implications for clinical practice, health service management and policy.

Health workforce program: expansion of the rural health multidisciplinary training programme in aged care services (evaluation component)

MacDermott, S., Chisholm, M., & Leone, C.

Funder: Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care (via Monash University Department of Rural Health)

A stitch in time: the Indigo 4Ms trial to enhance health for older people

Ashcroft, M., Winterton, R., & Brasher, K. on behalf of the Indigo Consortium

Funder: Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care – Innovative Models of Care Program

Developing a taxonomy of volunteer engagement in the age-friendly health care economy

Winterton, R., Brasher, K., Leone, C., & Houghton, S.

Funder: Care Economy Research Institute (Industry Partner Development Funding)

Geriatric Oncology Regional Victoria trials alliance: linkages, innovation, special populations, equity (ReViTALISE)

Underhill, C., Wright, T., Torres, J., Harris, S., Rachakonda, K., Brown, S., Collins, I., Campbell, D., Klein, O., Phillip, J., Eastman, P., Blackberry, I., Steer, C.B., Krishnaswamy, M., & Gibbs, P.

Funder: Medical Research Future Fund: Rural, Regional and Remote Clinical Trial Infrastructure Fund



AGEING IN PLACE



The Ageing in Place key research area engages in strategic research that builds the capacity of rural places to enable older adults to age in their homes and communities. Research in this area identifies barriers and enablers to accessing health, social, and community services within rural communities, and identifies strategies to increase community participation among diverse older adults.

<p>Understanding rural age-friendly perspectives on climate resilience</p> <p>Winterton, R., Butt, A., Rickards, L., & Leone, C.</p>	<p>Funder: La Trobe University Targeted Research Excellence Scheme</p>
<p>Building skills for rural positive ageing</p> <p>Winterton, R., Brasher, K., Blackberry, I., & MacDermott, S.</p>	<p>Funder: State Trustees Australia Foundation</p>
<p>Development of a Best Practice Resource to Support Implementation of the World Health Organization Age-Friendly Cities Framework in Manningham</p> <p>Winterton, R., Brasher, K., Leone, C., & Maylea, C.</p>	<p>Funder: Manningham City Council and Care Economy Research Institute</p>
<p>Understanding convoys of rural age-friendly health care</p> <p>Winterton, R. & Wilding, C.</p>	<p>Funder: Care Economy Research Institute (Industry Partner Development Funding)</p>
<p>Evaluation of Healthy Age Hub-Clunes</p> <p>MacDermott, S., Chisholm, M., & Houghton, S. MacDermott, S.</p>	<p>Funders: Care Economy Research Institute (Industry Partner Development Funding) and Central Highlands Rural Health.</p>
<p>Future-proofing social support for older people living in rural and regional Victoria, Australia</p> <p>MacDermott, S., & Leone, C.</p>	<p>Funders: Care Economy Research Institute (Industry Partner Development Funding)</p>





TECHNOLOGY



The focus of this key research area is exploring and trialling the use of technology to improve health and well-being as people age, and to support ageing-in-place. We also engage in community co-design to develop technology that assists older people living with chronic illness.

Falls risk buddy: development and validation of an artificial intelligence powered digital falls risk assessment tool for residential aged care

Rasekaba, T., Khalil, H., & Blackberry, I.

Funder: Care Economy Research Institute
(Industry Partner Development Funding)

Virtual diabetes clinic model

Rasekaba, T., Boyd, J., Sher, L. & Blackberry, I.

Funder: Care Economy Research Institute
(Industry Partner Development Funding)

Investigating the effect of a digital medication dose administration aid (Sasha) on medication round operational efficiency in residential aged care

Rasekaba, T., & Khalil, H.

Funder: Care Economy Research Institute
(Industry Partner Development Funding)

Engagement and Impact

External Engagement

John Richards Centre Oration

The 2024 John Richards Centre Oration was held at the La Trobe University Albury Wodonga campus on Thursday 31 October, with Marcus Riley as the presenter. His presentation was titled "The Ageing Continuum – challenge or opportunity?" which explored the new stages of ageing, asking who is responsible for ensuring we age well, considering what approach we should take for our increased longevity and understanding what factors are going to impact us the most. The event was a great success, with many of the local Albury Wodonga community and La Trobe University staff in attendance.

The video recording of the 2024 John Richards Centre Oration can be accessed here: <https://youtu.be/-f88f0cLpEw>



Top: Marcus Riley presenting the 2024 John Richards Centre Oration

Above: John Richards' family with Prof. Irene Blackberry and some of the oration guests



L to R: JRC Team: Dr Shahinoor Akter, Dr Kathleen Brasher, Dr Stacey Rich, Jennifer Boak, Dr Tshepo Rasekaba, Dr Steph Houghton, Michelle Buckley, A/Professor Sean MacDermott, Professor Irene Blackberry, A/Professor Rachel Winterton, Dr Fisaha Tesfay, Dr Clare Wilding, Dr Carmela Leone, Natalie Gower

Silver Age Conference 2024

International Conference on Gerontology and Geriatric Medicine

Associate Professor Sean MacDermott and Dr Tshepo Rasekaba attended the Silver Age 2024 International Conference on Gerontology and Geriatric Medicine Conference, held on Penang Island, Malaysia, from September 12-13, 2024. This conference brought together experts to discuss innovative approaches to healthy aging and improving the well-being of older people.

Sean delivered a keynote that showcased the mission, research and recent achievements of the JRC. Tshepo shared the current innovative work on the GreenConnect Dementia Respite Project. The JRC work attracted interest from

conference participants on what they can learn from the JRC and opportunities for collaboration on research and programs for older people in the South-East Asian subcontinent.

Key highlights included discussions on optimising physical, mental, and social well-being and fostering collaborations to enhance the quality of life for older adults. The conference aligned with

the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021–2030), emphasising the importance of addressing the challenges posed by an ageing population. It sparked meaningful dialogue on initiatives aimed at promoting healthy ageing, from potential advances in diagnostics, to interventions to ensuring age-friendly city planning and a sustainable social structure for older citizens.

"Key highlights included discussions on optimising physical, mental, and social well-being and fostering collaborations to enhance the quality of life for older adults."



Left: A/Professor Sean MacDermott presenting at the conference

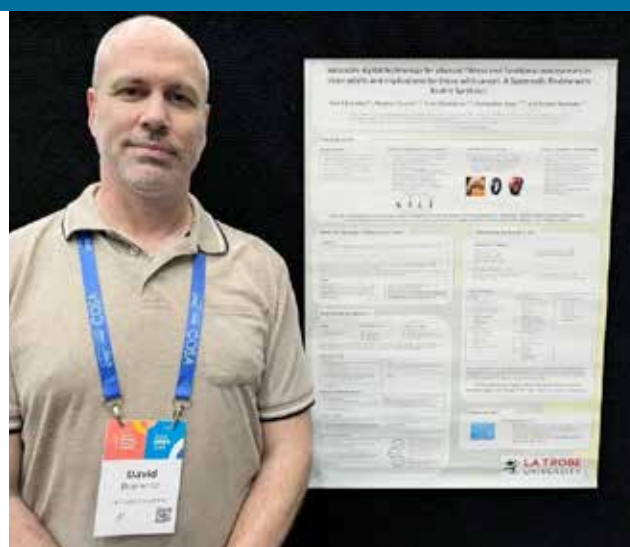
Above: L to R: Dr Tshepo Rasekaba 2nd from left and Associate Professor Sean MacDermott RHS with other SilverAge conference attendees

Aging and Social Change 14th Interdisciplinary Conference



Professor Irene Blackberry and Associate Professor Sean MacDermott both attended the Aging and Social Change 14th Interdisciplinary Conference which was held in Galway, Ireland in September 2024. Sean presented some of our work on innovative models of respite care for people living with dementia and their carers. Irene's presentation examined future challenges for Australian aged care. This conference also presented an opportunity to meet with longstanding collaborators and friends of the JRC (including Professor Kieran Walsh) from the Irish Centre for Social Gerontology (ICSG), which hosted the conference.

Clinical Oncology Society of Australia 2024 Annual Scientific Meeting



November 2024 marked the one-year anniversary of two of our PhD students, Mr David Brereton and Dr Mimi Raesima, collectively mentored by the JRC's Professor Irene Blackberry, Dr Tshepo Rasekaba, Adj Professor Christopher Steer and Dr Stephen Cousins. Mimi and David attended the Clinical Oncology Society of Australia 2024 Annual Scientific Meeting in November in the Gold Coast where they shared preliminary findings of their work, contributing to the JRC and GO ReVITALISE Initiative's efforts to improve cancer care for older adults in rural and regional settings.

Indigo 4Ms Video Kit launch

The Indigo 4Ms Video Kit was launched in Wodonga on Tuesday 1 October (International Day of Older Persons) by Dr Helen Haines MP.

The Indigo 4Ms Video Kit was developed as part of the Australian Government Innovative Models of Care project, aimed at supporting implementation of age-friendly, interdisciplinary models of care in rural primary care settings. The project is led by Beechworth Health Service, with Alpine Health, Corryong Health, Tallangatta Health Service, Gateway Health, and the John Richards Centre for Rural Ageing Research (La Trobe University, Wodonga) as partners. As part of this project, the *Indigo 4Ms Tool for Health Care Workers* is being implemented across five rural health services in north-east Victoria. This locally co-designed tool supports health care practitioners to structure conversations with older people to reflect the essential elements of evidence-based age-friendly integrated care.

The Indigo 4Ms Video Kit comprises a package of education and training materials for health services and allied health professionals to support them to use the tool in their health care settings. Local health executives and clinicians, older people and La Trobe University academics (Associate Professor Rachel Winterton) are featured in the videos. The videos were produced by Red Hat Films.

'Live their best lives': focusing care on more than older person's ailment



By Layton Holley
October 1 2024 - 1:00pm



Gateway Health chief operating officer Simon Donohoe and Dr Rachel Winterton, deputy director of La Trobe University's John Richards Centre, at the Indigo 4Ms video launch at Gateway Health in Wodonga. Picture by James Wiltshire

The Indigo 4Ms tool is intended for primary health and social care workers caring for older people in rural and regional communities.

The Indigo 4Ms tool for Primary Healthcare Workers

Partners: Beechworth Health Service, Alpine Health, Corryong Health, Tallangatta Health Service, Gateway Health, John Richards Centre for Rural Ageing Research (La Trobe University).

The Indigo 4Ms Tools can be accessed here:
<https://www.agefriendlynev.au/>

Indigo 4Ms tool for Primary Healthcare Workers

▶ Play all



Video 2: How the Indigo 4Ms tool supports your work

Age-Friendly NEV
221 views • 8 months ago
Subtitles



Video 3: The Indigo 4Ms tool in action

Age-Friendly NEV
211 views • 8 months ago
Subtitles



Video 1: Why it's important for leaders to champion the...

Age-Friendly NEV
165 views • 8 months ago
Subtitles

The videos and facilitation guides can be accessed here: <https://www.youtube.com/@Age-FriendlyNEV>

Building rural community capacity to use the Indigo 4Ms

Researchers from the John Richards Centre for Rural Ageing Research (JRC) at La Trobe University have been working with rural communities in north east Victoria to identify and create resources, goods and services that will support rural older people's capability to use the Indigo 4Ms tool.

This three-year project is funded by the State Trustees Australia Foundation. Across four rural communities, older people, local government, and health and community organisations have come together as part of community action groups. So far, they have learned about the project and the Indigo 4Ms tool, reviewed local health and wellbeing data, and worked together to identify and map existing local assets that support older people's ability to use the Indigo 4Ms tool. Based on this, they have also created a common vision for healthy ageing in their communities and identified specific initiatives or resources that would support older people to use the Indigo 4Ms tool to support healthy ageing. Each community has established different areas of focus that are related to key priorities for their older people and existing resources within their communities. Members of these community action groups are currently working with the JRC to further refine and develop these initiatives and resources.



 **State Trustees**
Australia Foundation

Left: A/Prof Rachel Winterton and Kelly Tamang from the JRC with Mt Beauty community members

Australian Association of Gerontology (AAG) Conference

Members of the JRC also attended the 2024 Australian Association of Gerontology conference in Hobart in November. Associate Professor Sean MacDermott shared learnings from the Healthy Ageing Hub project, while Dr Shahinoor Akter presented on the GreenConnect Dementia Respite Project work. Associate Professor Rachel Winterton and Dr Kathleen Brasher, along with centre affiliate Dr Mark Ashcroft and research co-design group member Jenny Donnelly, conducted a Think Tank on rural age-friendly care. Rachel was also presented with a Distinguished Member award in recognition of her service to the Australian Association of Gerontology.



Age Friendly Australia National Conference

On December 4-5, the National Age-Friendly Australia Conference, hosted by LG Professionals WA (in partnership with the Department of Communities WA and the World Health Organization's Global Network for Age-friendly Cities) took place in Perth.

Prior to the conference, for the first time ever in Australia, Affiliates of the Global Network from Ireland, Slovenia, Canada, New Zealand, Japan, Sharjah (UAE), Quebec, Brunei, Queensland, and Western Australia met in person and online to discuss and improve how to measure and evaluate the impact of age-friendly programs and interventions. A concurrent technical session was held with the Global Network members from Australia, facilitated by Dr Kathleen Brasher (Research Fellow, JRC) and Christine Young. After lunch both members and affiliates combined for a networking session.

Kathleen also presented with the City of Ballarat on the development of an indicators framework to monitor and measure the outcomes of their age-friendly initiatives, and separately presented the initial stage of research funded by the State Trustees Australia Foundation with four



neighbourhood houses in north east Victoria describing the way older people in small rural communities use various spaces and places to maintain their health and wellbeing.

Above: L to R: Dr Emer Coveney, Age Friendly Ireland, National Programme Manager & A/Professor Sean MacDermott, JRC Director

Internal Engagement

La Trobe Rural Health School Conference

Over 200 attendees from more than 50 organisations attended the La Trobe Rural Health school conference over two days from Thursday 25th to Friday 26th July 2024 at the La Trobe University Bendigo campus. Six JRC staff members presented on the following topics:

- The importance of the clinical interaction in the delivery of rural age-friendly integrated care (Dr Kathleen Brasher)
- Can capacity for healthy ageing be improved in rural spaces? Exploring philosophical and methodological solutions (Dr Clare Wilding)
- GreenConnect Dementia Respite Project: Codesign and implementation of innovative dementia respite based on green care principles (Dr Shahinoor Akter)
- Place-based engagement: Evaluation of a Rural Healthy Age Hub model. (A/Prof Sean MacDermott and Dr Marita Chisholm)
- Rural organisational contexts for the implementation of age-friendly integrated care models (A/Prof Rachel Winterton)



Top right: L-R: Michelle Buckley, Prof Irene Blackberry, Dr Kathleen Brasher, Dr Clare Wilding, Dr Shahinoor Akter, A/Prof Sean MacDermott, A/Prof Rachel Winterton, Dr Marita Chisholm

Mid right: A/Professor Sean MacDermott, Phil Catterson (Central Highlands Rural Health), Lana de Kort (Clunes Neighbourhood House), Dr Marita Chisholm

*Far right: Dr Shahinoor Akter presenting at the LRHS conference
Right: Dr Clare Wilding presenting at the LRHS conference*

Connect and Grow event in Mildura

The 2024 *Connect and Grow* event incorporated an industry expo for attendees to explore. Associate Professor Sean MacDermott from the John Richards Centre for Rural Ageing ran a session on research partnerships titled *What's in it for everyone?* This was very well received by the industry partners in attendance and resulted in a collaborative project which will feature in next year's report.





Selected Publications

Adams, J., Dickson Swift, V., Spelten, E., **Blackberry, I.**, Wilson, C., & Yuen, E. (2024). Mobile breast screening services in Australia: A qualitative exploration of perceptions and experiences among rural and remote women aged ≥ 75 years. *Australian Journal of Rural Health*, 32(5), 1031-1040.

Boak, J., Rasekaba, T., Baxter, P., & **Blackberry, I.** (2024). How is complexity measured and detected among community dwelling older people aged 65 years and over? A scoping review. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 80(1), 84-95.

Brasher, K., Winterton, R., Wilding, C., & Tamang, K. (2024). Evaluating Age-Friendly Health Care Approaches in Rural Primary Care Settings: A Multi-Case, Mixed-Methods Hybrid Type 2 Effectiveness-Implementation Study. *Methods and Protocols*, 7(5), 81.

Conlin, M., McLaren, D., Spelten, E., & **MacDermott, S.** (2024). Community Driven Health Promotion: Evaluation of a Rural Microgrant Program. *Health Expectations*, 27(6), e70098.

Conlin, M., McLaren, D., Spelten, E., & **MacDermott, S.** (2024). Cultivating participatory approaches in health promotion planning, delivery, and evaluation: A case study of an academic health service partnership in rural Victoria. *Health Promotion Journal of Australia*, 35(3), 804-812.

Dickson-Swift, V., Adams, J., Spelten, E., **Blackberry, I.**, Wilson, C., & Yuen, E. (2024). Breast cancer screening motivation and behaviours of women aged over 75 years. *Psycho Oncology*, 33(1), e6268.

Fitzgerald, J., Haines, S., Clune, S., Wells, Y., Mahoney, A.-M., Jiang, H., Fetherstonhaugh, D., **Blackberry, I.**, Collier, J., Ratnaika, D., Rasekaba, T. and MacDermott, S. (2024). Virtual nursing in residential aged care: What is known? AIPCA, LA Trobe University.

He, F., Mnatzaganian, G., Rutherford, D., Njovu, M., & **Blackberry, I.** (2024). Weekend/holiday effect on stroke mortality in regional Australia: A ten-year retrospective study. *Journal of Stroke and Cerebrovascular Diseases*, 33(8), 107739.

Hodge, O., **Rasekaba, T., Blackberry, I., & Steer, C. B.** (2024). Age-friendly healthcare: integrating the 4Ms to enable age-friendly cancer care. *Current Opinion in Supportive and Palliative Care*, 10.1097.

Hung, L., Wong, K. L. Y., **Rasekaba, T.**, Ren, L. H., Douglass, D., Slatter, S., Berndt, A., & **Blackberry, I.** (2024). How can equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) principles be incorporated into research excellence with industry and community partners? Lessons learned from Canada and Australia on projects with a dementia focus. *Research Involvement and Engagement*, 10(1), 106.

Leone, C., Winterton, R., Chisholm, M., & Blackberry, I. (2024). Understanding the role of agency in the navigation of regional dementia care and support service pathways. *Dementia*, 24(3), 368-387.

MacDermott, N., Rahman, M. S., **Winterton, R.**, Ahasan, N., Barnes, C., & Kennedy, A. (2024). Perceived acceptability of online volunteer led exercise classes: Perspectives of rural volunteer exercise leaders and older people. *Australasian Journal on Ageing*, 43(4), 861-866.

Paine, N., Lowe, M., Young, C., & Turrell, G. (2024). Engaging under represented oldest old in research: An approach for inclusive recruitment. *Australasian Journal on Ageing*, 43(4), 844-851.

Petersen, M., **Winterton, R., Warburton, J.**, & Wilson, J. (2024). Negotiating the care convoys for a diverse group of older Australians living in rural communities: a large qualitative study. *Ageing and Society*, 44(7), 1494-1514.

Yates, M. W., Bail, K., **MacDermott, S.**, Skvarc, D., Theobald, M., Morvell, M., Jebramek, J. C., Tebbut, I., Draper, B., & Brodaty, H. (2024). The impact of the Dementia Care in Hospitals Program on hospital acquired complications—a non-randomised stepped wedge hybrid effectiveness-implementation study. *BMC geriatrics*, 24(1), 986.

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