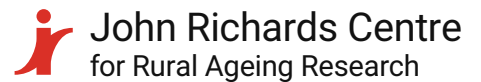




# 2022 *Annual Report*





(L to R) Dr Hannah Barbour, Dr Tshepo Rasekaba, Kayla Royals, Dr Stacey Rich, Dr Rachel Winterton, Dr Naomi Paine, Professor Nicholas Morris, Professor Irene Blackberry, Bronwyn Carter, Dr Sean MacDermott, Dr Clare Wilding, and Craig Gilbertson.

## Contents

Director’s Foreword .....	3
2022 Snapshot .....	4
Funding Snapshot .....	5
Strategic Goals .....	6
Our Reference Group .....	8
Research .....	9
Our Research Team .....	10
Our Research Affiliates .....	14
Higher Degree by Research Students .....	18
Higher Degree by Research Students - Completion .....	21
Student Milestones .....	22
Key Research Areas .....	23
Aged Care and Dementia .....	24
Ageing in Place .....	26
Health Service and Workforce .....	29
Technology .....	34
External Projects .....	36
Engagement and Impact .....	37
Our Research – Impact .....	38
External Engagement .....	39
Community Engagement .....	43
Awards .....	44
Professional Participation .....	46
Invited Presentations .....	47
Conference Presentations .....	48
Media .....	51
Publications .....	54



# Director's Foreword



As Australia and the world began to reopen following two years of COVID-19 restrictions, the John Richards Centre (JRC) returned to doing what we do best – co-producing research with partners and stakeholders.

The year 2022 is special to us as we celebrated our 15th anniversary in November. This provided an opportunity to reflect on our achievements and the impact of our research to our community locally, nationally and globally. Professor Ngaire Kerse visited us from New Zealand and delivered an oration on “Ageism, resilience, and contribution through ongoing challenge”. As part of the 15-year celebrations we produced a [commemorative report](#) showcasing our research over the years, which is available on our website. Our achievements include 69 completed research projects; 242 publications; 225 Conference Presentations; 11 Higher Degree completions; 110 media appearances; and the attraction of \$8.2 million in external research revenue.

The 15-year event was the second oration of 2022 following on from a very successful event held in April titled “Future-proofing mental health for older people in rural Australia”. Professor Richard Gray moderated the discussion with panellists: Professor David Perkins (University of Canberra), Dr Sue Wilson (Murray PHN) and Maria Berry (Older Persons Advocacy Network).

The excellent achievements of the JRC team were also acknowledged during the Wodonga campus 30 years anniversary celebration held in October.

I was privileged to lead the Care Economy Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) bid, a ten-year collaboration of 94 industry partners to co-create best practice solutions for and transform our growing social assistance, welfare and healthcare services from what is perceived as welfare services into a recognisable economy. This is the largest bid that La Trobe has submitted where we progressed to stage 2. Following very positive feedback, we will re-apply in 2023.

On a related matter, I was successful in leading a team to establish the flagship Care Economy Research Institute (CERI) at La Trobe University. The Institute will bring

together research leaders across Care Technology, Care Workforce, Care Delivery, Care Experience, and Care Economics and Social Policy in 2023.

Our team surpassed all the benchmarks set during the Research Centre Renewal process in late 2021, including attracting external research funding at more than twice the key performance indicators level. My sincere thanks to the dedication of our staff, student, stakeholders, and supporters that enable us to continue our research to improve the health and wellbeing of rural older Australians.

We welcome new additions to our team: Dr Sean MacDermott took up the role of Deputy Director in January; Dr Rachel Winterton returning from maternity leave; Drs Naomi Paine and Hannah Barbour commenced as postdoc fellows; we continue to attract high-calibre students with Dr Krishna Rachakonda (Mildura Based Public Hospital) and Rosa Goncalves (Grampians Health) undertaking higher degree studies. We farewell Dr Rebecca McKechnie and Associate Professor Kerryn Pike who both moved north to Queensland; Kim Young and Broni Carter secured other roles.

A special thanks go to Tony Dunn of Westmont who stepped down as chair of the reference group and Stephen Carroll and Catherine Morley who have moved to other roles. Thank you also to Nicole Doran, who represented the Victorian Department of Health. I would like to thank Andre Catrice of Department of Health for agreeing to step up as the JRC reference group chair. Professors Susan Dodds and Jane Mills, Dr Guin Threlkeld and the Alumni and Advancement Office team have been instrumental in supporting our team across all La Trobe University campuses.

Finally, on behalf of the John Richards Centre team, I would like to acknowledge ongoing core funding by John Richards OAM, Department of Health Victoria and La Trobe University that made our research possible in the past 15 years and beyond.

Professor Irene Blackberry  
John Richards Chair and Director

# 2022 Snapshot

The John Richards Centre is an interdisciplinary rural ageing and aged care research centre based at the Albury-Wodonga campus of La Trobe University, Australia.



**31**  
STAFF AND  
AFFILIATES



**9**  
HIGHER DEGREE  
BY RESEARCH  
(HDR) STUDENTS



**24**  
ACTIVE  
PROJECTS



**24**  
PUBLICATIONS



**16**  
MEDIA  
MENTIONS

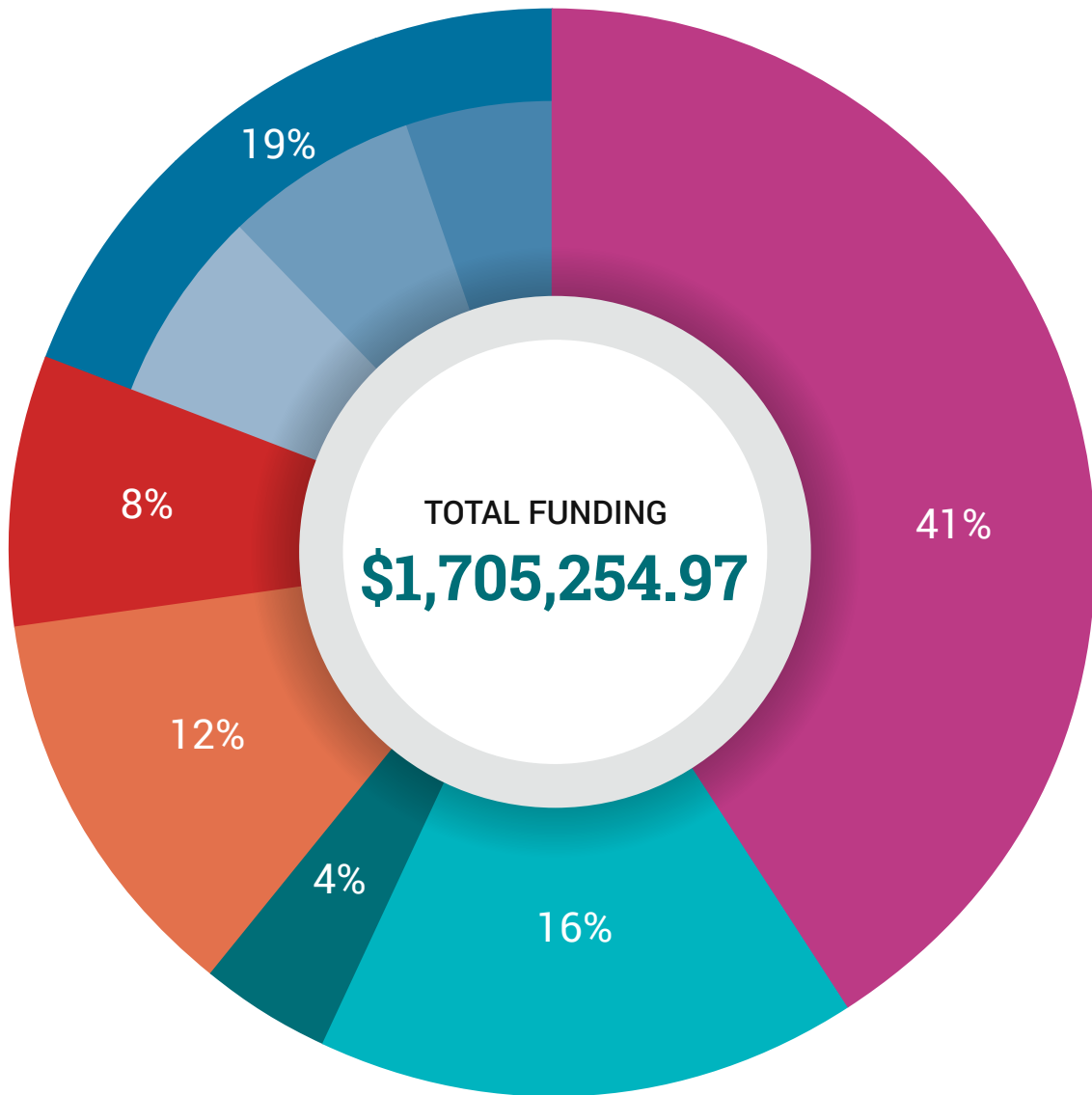


**25**  
CONFERENCE  
PRESENTATIONS AND  
INVITED SPEECHES



# Funding Snapshot

Opening balance as of 1 January 2022 was \$1,091,869 and closing balance as of 31 December 2022 was \$1,744,575.



- Category 1: Australian Competitive Grants - \$678,657.66
- Category 2: Other Public Sector R&D Income - \$269,480.00
- Category 3: Industry and Other R&D Income - \$62,165.00
- Block Grant Allocation - \$200,394.40

- Victoria Department of Health - \$136,186.91
- La Trobe University - \$136,271.00
- John Richards' Donation - \$99,100.00
- Internal (LTU) Support - \$123,000.00
- Core Funding - \$371,557.91

# Strategic Goals



GLOBAL LEADER



RURAL AGEING

## 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.



RESEARCH










PARTNERSHIPS

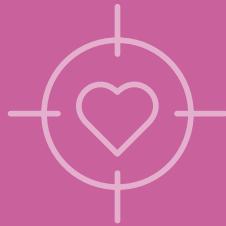
## Mission

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



	 Access	 Culture	 Equity	 Impact	 Recognition
 Objective	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 demonstrate leadership and embed the La Trobe University cultural qualities within all aspects of our research, knowledge exchange and collaboration activities.	To lead and conduct research that addresses issues relating to equitable health and wellbeing outcomes for diverse rural ageing populations.	To provide rigorous research evidence to inform initiatives and innovations that address real-life problems experienced by rural ageing populations.	To be recognised globally as the leading centre for rural ageing and aged care research.
 Target	To obtain research funding and develop funding streams to sustain and grow the John Richards Centre's operations.	To demonstrate the four cultural qualities within John Richards Centre's activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accountability</li> <li>• Care</li> <li>• Connectivity</li> <li>• Innovation</li> </ul>	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.	To conduct activities and produce outputs that facilitate opportunities for research uptake and knowledge translation.	To foster an environment that facilitates world-class research, leadership in knowledge translation, and high-quality research training opportunities.

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





## Our Reference Group

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 in the wider community.

### 2022 members

- Ms Maria Berry  
Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN)
- Professor Irene Blackberry  
Director and Chair, John Richards Centre,  
La Trobe University
- Mr Stephen Carroll  
Senior Advisor, Community Partnerships, Ovens  
Murray Area, East Division, Department of  
Families, Fairness and Housing
- Mr Andre Catrice  
Senior Policy Officer, Chronic Care and Older  
People, Department of Health
- Professor Susan Dodds  
Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice President  
(Research and Industry Engagement),  
La Trobe University
- Mr Tony Dunn (Chair)  
CEO, Westmont Aged Care Services
- Dr Jane Fyfield  
Aged Care Sector Advisor
- Professor Ngaire Kerse  
Chair in Ageing Well, University of Auckland,  
New Zealand
- Professor Jane Mills  
Dean and Head, Rural Health School,  
La Trobe University
- Ms Catherine Morley  
Former Lead Executive Officer, Grampians Health
- Mr David Noonan  
CEO, Albury-Wodonga Aboriginal Health Service
- Mr John Richards OAM  
Founder, John Richards Centre,  
La Trobe University

*Above: JRC Reference group and staff: (L to R) Dr Stacey Rich, Fan He, Dr Naomi Paine, Kim Young, Professor Susan Dodds, John Richards OAM, Andre Catrice, Dr Tshepo Rasekaba, Dr Jane Fyfield, Dr Sean MacDermott, Professor Irene Blackberry, Professor Nicholas Morris, and Bronwyn Carter.*





# *Research*



## Our Research Team



### **Professor Irene Blackberry**

BMed, PhD, GradCert HealthProgEval

JRC DIRECTOR AND CHAIR

Irene is the John Richards Chair of Rural Ageing and Aged Care Research, and the Director of the John Richards Centre La Trobe University, Albury-Wodonga Campus. She is a committee member and past president of the Australian Association of Gerontology Victoria, and on the editorial board of Geriatrics and Associate Editor of Elsevier Primary Care Diabetes Journal. Irene has a background in medicine and is a health services and implementation science researcher of complex multifactorial care. She has over 20 years of research experience across the care economy in Australia and abroad, predominantly in healthcare, aged care, and informal care sectors. Her research examines access to care and models of care that are innovative, effective, and sustainable, and building skills in individuals and greater capacity of the whole-of-community to support people from diverse background and rural communities. Most recently, Irene focuses on addressing the care crisis by breaking down the siloing of care sectors. She is the leading force behind Australian's Care Economy research. Her achievements include developing an industry-led research partnership program on the Care Economy and establishing the Care Economy Collaborative Network. She has attracted over \$60M in competitive research funding, and has published 150 reports and journal articles, including as first author in the British Medical Journal and Medical Journal of Australia. Her research interests include dementia, diabetes, chronic disease, primary care, digital health, geriatric medicine, and rural health.



### **Dr Sean MacDermott**

BSc Hons (Innovation & Change Management), BSc Hons Psych, BSocWork, MSc Operations Management, MSocWork, PhD

JRC DEPUTY DIRECTOR

Sean's research interests are in dementia, aged care, rural/ regional health, end-of-life planning, palliative care, health workforce, telehealth, and travel for healthcare. He has experience in health-services design/redesign, and prior to joining La Trobe University was the National Project Manager for the Dementia Care in Hospitals Program. Sean is a mixed-methods researcher with expertise in quantitative and qualitative methodologies in health, social science, and change management research. Based at La Trobe University's Mildura campus, Sean works closely with health providers throughout the Wimmera and Mallee.



### **Dr Rachel Winterton**

BAppSc Hons, PhD  
SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW

Rachel is internationally recognised for her expertise in rural ageing studies, with specific expertise in voluntary sector responses to rural population ageing and rural age-friendly communities. She is the current convenor of the Australian Association of Gerontology Rural, Regional and Remote Special Interest Group, a member of the Research Working Group for the National Strategy for Volunteering Project and was called as an expert witness to the rural hearing of the Royal Commission for Aged Care Quality and Safety in 2019. Rachel has recently co-edited an international volume on critical rural gerontology (2021), in collaboration with Professor Mark Skinner (Trent University, Canada) and Professor Kieran Walsh (NUI Galway, Ireland). Her research has been published in leading journals such as *Health and Place*, *The Gerontologist*, *Geoforum*, and the *Journal of Rural Studies*.



### **Dr Tshepo Rasekaba**

MPH, PhD, GCALL  
SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW

Tshepo's research focuses on health services, chronic disease management and healthcare technology in the context of rural health and ageing; from research idea conception to execution, clinical and health service research project management and coordination, project evaluation, ethics, participant recruitment and data collection, and linked administrative dataset analyses. Recent projects include WPHN After Hours Primary Healthcare Co-design Projects, Geriatric Oncology (GO ReViTALISE), Dementia (GRaCE), and mHealth T2 diabetes self-management and a review into exercise prescription in T2 diabetes. Tshepo holds leadership roles of the industry engagement portfolio and the technology research stream of the John Richards Centre, sits on the Royal Flying Doctor Service Victoria Research Advisory Committee and is a regular peer reviewer in areas of ageing, diabetes, and digital health.



### **Dr Clare Wilding**

BAppSc (OT), MAppSc, PhD  
RESEARCH FELLOW

In 2022, Clare worked on a variety of projects in collaboration with her JRC colleagues, including an evaluation of the Older Men: New Ideas program, an evaluation of the Designing an age-friendly, rural, multidisciplinary primary care model using the Indigo 4Ms Framework project, and the Ageing on Farm study. Clare contributed to the celebrations marking the 15th anniversary of the JRC through creating biographical accounts for John Richards and the development of the JRC. She furthered the work of the JRC and LTU by mentoring staff, authoring reports and academic articles, and collaborating on grant applications. Clare has authored 7 book chapters and over 35 academic articles. Her research interests are varied and include rural ageing, technology, occupational science, health promotion, managing chronic illness and disability, arts and health, knowledge exchange, qualitative methods, and practitioner-academic alliances.



### **Dr Stacey Rich**

BPsySc (Hons), PhD  
RESEARCH FELLOW

Stacey holds a conjoint Research Fellowship partnering with Albury Wodonga Health and La Trobe University's John Richards Centre. She is working on the GO ReViTALISE initiative in partnership with Border Medical Oncology, looking at ways to improve access to cancer clinical trials for older persons living in rural and regional Victoria. Stacey was fortunate to be able to study where she lives, gaining her Bachelor of Psychological Science and her PhD at La Trobe's Albury Wodonga campus. She wants to help people to have a sense of personal agency in their lives and has been working to do this in a variety of ways; from working to understand the positive wellbeing experienced by adherents to the self-determined lifestyle known as voluntary simplicity, to finding and implementing better ways to support older adults in their health decision making in cancer care. Stacey believes personal agency and self-determination are important antecedents to optimal mental health, quality of life and physical health.



### **Dr Kathleen Brasher**

BAppSci (Nursing), GradDipA, PhD  
RESEARCH FELLOW

Kathleen is a social gerontologist with a long involvement in the health and community sectors as a clinician, academic, and advocate and in policy and program development and evaluation. She is currently managing the Indigo 4Ms Age-Friendly Health Care project, led by Beechworth Health Service, for the Upper Hume health services and John Richards Centre. This work is funded by the Commonwealth Government. Kathleen has been a part of the Age-Friendly movement since 2006 and is an advisor to the WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities.



### **Dr Naomi Paine**

BA, MPH, MHScPHP, PhD  
POST DOC RESEARCHER

Naomi works in the area of rural and regional public health. Her PhD was in the discipline area of healthy ageing and investigated social exclusion among people aged over 80, using mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative). Prior to her academic career change, Naomi worked in community development, health promotion and public health policy development, spanning community health, local and state government. Her research interests and passions are in health and social justice, with and for underrepresented population groups.



### **Dr Bonnie Martin-Giles**

BSW (Hons), PhD  
RESEARCH OFFICER

Bonnie is involved in a large research project that focuses on early detection and improved treatment of dementia in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations across Australia. She has a background in social work and has previously taught for the Department of Social Work at La Trobe University, Mildura. Bonnie's PhD focused on exploring the effects of chronic childhood maltreatment on brain development and how this may increase the risk of engaging in recidivistic offending later in life. Her research interests include child protection, brain development, dementia, and rural health.





### **Dr Hannah Barbour**

BSocSci, BA (Hons), PhD  
RESEARCH OFFICER

Hanna is a Research Officer in the John Richards Centre for Rural Ageing Research. Her research interests include international migration and labour mobility in Australia; changing family structures; population projections; citizenship and policy issues. She has experience in undergraduate teaching in topics such as population and environment, and cartography, at the University of Adelaide. In her current role, Hannah has been involved in research projects on primary health care and aged care provision in rural settings, using large scale surveys and analysis of data to address health equity.



### **Dr Rebecca McKechnie**

BHSc (Hons), PhD  
RESEARCH OFFICER

Rebecca joined the JRC in March 2020, coming from an academic position at the Queensland University of Technology. Her research interests include food security, measurement scale development, and socioeconomic inequalities in health and the role of policy in addressing these. Rebecca has experience in both quantitative and qualitative methods for research and health service evaluation. Rebecca left the JRC at the end of January 2022.



### **Kayla Royals**

BPsySc (Hons)  
RESEARCH OFFICER

Kayla's current research is focused on facilitating better access to dementia care and support services within the City of Greater Bendigo and exploring the capacity of rural and regional community organisations to support people living with dementia to volunteer. During her time at the JRC Kayla also previously worked on the Verily Connect project, trialling the use of online technology to support rural carers of people living with dementia. Working across a number of dementia-related projects, she has developed experience and interest in supporting people living with dementia and their carers through research.



### **Fan He**

MSc, PhD Candidate  
RESEARCH OFFICER

Fan is a quantitative and epidemiologic researcher with expertise in big data analysis, including genetic data, using Stata, R, and Python. He has extensive research experience in cardiovascular diseases, hearing impairment among children, and gestational diabetes. Currently, Fan is leading a multicentre, longitudinal study aimed at developing a risk score for predicting gestational diabetes mellitus in China. This project is a collaboration between Peking Union Medical College Hospital and La Trobe University and is generously funded by the China Medical Board Open Competition Research Funding. In addition, Fan is also involved in an ongoing research project at the Murdoch Children's Research Institute, investigating hearing loss among children using a state-wide longitudinal databank.



### **Bronwyn Carter**

MPH MPHAA  
JRC CENTRE COORDINATOR/RESEARCH OFFICER

Bronwyn is a public health academic with a background in teaching, academic editing, and research. Bronwyn is an Honorary Research Associate in the School of Psychology and Public Health and author and co-author of chapters and articles on policy, disease prevention, evidence-based practice, curriculum development, and research methodology. Having originally practiced in nursing, specialising in rehabilitation and complex community care, Bronwyn enjoys a challenge. Her passion is working on development of innovative research, policies and programs that promote equality. She is Deputy-President, Public Health Association Australia, Victorian Branch and led the development of the current Prevention Campaign advocating for increased government investment in preventive interventions.



### **Kim Young**

BHumanServ/MSocWk, BSc (Sp&HearSc)  
JRC CENTRE COORDINATOR/RESEARCH OFFICER

Kim's research focuses on improving shared decision-making for older persons with cancer, resilience in migrant women working in aged care, and evaluating the use of virtual reality to foster empathy in disability support workers. As a recent La Trobe Social Work graduate, with previous experience as a speech pathologist, Kim is passionate about older people and people with disabilities being supported to maintain their quality of life.



## *Our Research Affiliates*



### **Dr Mark Ashcroft**

RN, RM, GradDipN, GradDipBM, MCM, MM, PhD  
CEO Beechworth Health Service

Mark has a clinical background in healthcare across generalist, critical care, and obstetrics themes. He has an established health service leadership history in senior management roles, and a research and academic background including experience in health systems development and service delivery in the public health system in Victoria and in the NHS Scotland, UK. Mark has a well-established local health service and primary care working relationship and believes in the capacity of local rural health service models to contribute to their communities through local resource and asset development.



### **Associate Professor Carina Chan**

BSc (Psychology& Statistics), MSc (Health Psychology), PhD  
La Trobe University

Carina's interests and expertise lie primarily in the psychosocial aspects of understanding health and health behaviours. She has experience in conducting randomised controlled trials to promote health behaviours for health promotion and diabetes management, developing and validating health motivational measures, and investigating cultural and personality issues associated with eating behaviours, workplace stress, and chronic disease prevention and control. Currently, Carina is interested in extending her research expertise in the regional/rural context and focusing on psychosocial issues associated with ageing and chronic disease prevention and management.



### **Dr Stephen Cousins**

BSc (Hons) Sport & Exercise Science, PG Cert. Teaching in Higher Education, MSc (Strength & Conditioning), PhD  
La Trobe University

Stephen is a lecturer in Exercise Science at La Trobe University, Bendigo, and teaches across a range of Exercise Science subjects. He also coordinates the undergraduate placement program to align with course accreditation. In this role he has helped to establish and maintain placement partnerships with the Bendigo Pioneers (AFL), Bendigo Academy of Sport, The Human Mechanics, YMCA, Bendigo South-East College, and Girton Grammar School, providing strength and conditioning consultancy support. Stephen, along with other JRC team members, and collaborators from Lincoln University UK are currently undertaking work to understand Physical Activity in Community Dwelling Older Adults in Regional and Rural Areas.



### **Dr Wasek Faisal**

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

Wasek is a senior Medical Oncologist and a mid-career Clinical Researcher in the field of Medical Oncology and Tumour Immunology. He is a Fellow of Royal Australasian College of Physicians and completed his tumour immunology research thesis at the University of Nottingham, UK prior to completing his advanced training in Oncology in Australia. Wasek is the current Clinical Director of Grampians Integrated Cancer Services as well as being the Clinical Lead and Chair of the Thoracic Tumour Stream at the Grampians Health.



### **Dr William Keeton**

BA (Political Science), MS (Management and Transportation Management), PhD  
La Trobe University

William is a former United States Army Lieutenant Colonel and US Exchange Officer to the Australia Army. He previously taught logistics, leadership, and strategic military planning while working with the US Embassy's Australian diplomatic mission. He lectures at La Trobe University in the School of Business, Department of Management. William is Chairman of the Company Board of Directors for Westmont Aged Care Services. His research interests are in leadership, strategic planning, corporate governance, and aged care.



### **Dr Ali Lakhani**

BBA, MA, MES, PhD  
La Trobe University

Ali is an interdisciplinary and mixed-methods researcher who has led studies which utilise spatial, experimental, and cross-sectional and longitudinal observational methodologies. He is currently a Senior Lecturer in Public Health with the School of Psychology and Public Health at La Trobe University. Ali has a decade of experience conducting community-based research focusing on the environmental determinants of health. Ali also has extensive experience partnering with clinician-researchers and service provider-researchers to evaluate the effectiveness of clinical and community-based health practices on the health and wellbeing of ageing populations and people with disability.



### **Dr George Mnatzaganian**

MPhd Health, MHIthSc (Epidemiology), PhD  
La Trobe University

George has advanced quantitative statistical research skills and experience in analysing large, linked datasets, and routinely collected hospital databases. With a background in clinical epidemiology, George's research interests span chronic disease, patient outcomes research, health services research, big data analysis, statistics, evidence-based practice and health policy, international health, vulnerable communities, and gender and socio-economic inequalities in health outcomes.



### **Adjunct Professor Nicholas Morris**

MA, MPhil (Oxon), PhD (UNSW)  
La Trobe University

Nicholas has over 40 years' experience advising companies, governments, and international agencies, in the UK, Australia, Europe, China, SE Asia and the Middle East, on financial regulation, health and social support systems, and the financing of essential infrastructure. In recent years he has focused on regulatory and other reforms needed for sustainable development, in both developed and developing countries. Nicholas has led innovative research on health sector and aged care reform in the UK and Australia during several decades.



### **Associate Professor Kerryn Pike**

BA, BSc (Hons), DPsych (Clin Neuro), MAPS  
Griffith University

Kerryn's research program encompasses two broad areas: 1) Neuropsychological and biomarker characterisation of preclinical Alzheimer's disease (preAD), and 2) Interventions to improve cognition, and hence the lives of those with memory concerns or difficulties. Much of her work focuses on intervention with older adults, including people with subjective memory complaints, mild cognitive impairment, Alzheimer's disease, and other dementias, as well as those who are ageing normally. More recently, Kerryn has been working on evaluating cognitive interventions to improve the lives of cancer survivors.



### **Professor Tonya Stebbins**

PhD  
La Trobe University

Tonya's research is concerned with the ways in which language, communication, and identity can be enablers and barriers to service delivery and system engagement for a range of communities including particularly CALD communities and people with dementia. Tonya is an experienced consultant having completed projects across the Health, Human Services and Education sectors. Her projects include program evaluation, organisational development, program review, and qualitative research on topics including family violence, child protection, AOD interventions, homelessness, and financial capability.





### **Adjunct Professor Christopher Steer**

MBBS, FRACP,  
La Trobe University, Wodonga campus  
Associate Professor UNSW School of Clinical Medicine  
Medical Oncologist, Border Medical Oncology

Christopher has led advocacy, research, and education in the field of geriatric oncology for 20 years. He has served on the board of the International Society of Geriatric Oncology (SIOG) and was the chair of the national representative committee. He serves on the editorial board of the Journal of Geriatric Oncology and is a member of the US Cancer and Ageing Research Group (CARG) clinical implementation core. Christopher is an investigator at the Border Medical Oncology Research Unit and is co-lead of the geriatric oncology pillar of the Victorian Regional Trials Network ReVitalise Project that strives to improve access to clinical trials for patients living in regional Victoria. Christopher serves on the board of COSA and is the President of the Private Cancer Physicians of Australia (PCPA).



### **Associate Professor Joseph Tucci**

BPharm, PhD  
La Trobe University

Joseph has a background in developmental biology, and his past research has included the generation of transgenic animal models for the study of homeobox genes and other developmental factors. Some of his research interests include Bacteriophage as alternatives to antibiotics, personalising medicines for HIV/TB patients in Papua New Guinea, how medicines “fit into” the lifestyles of Indigenous Australians and optimising the health of older Australians in rural areas through implementation of Aged Care Pharmaceutical Stewardship.



### **Adjunct Professor Craig Underhill**

MBBS, FRACP  
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

Craig is a medical oncologist, and a regionally based clinician. After training in Melbourne and working as a research fellow at Guys Hospital London and Ludwig Institute Melbourne, Craig helped to establish a medical oncology service in Albury-Wodonga. He has also established an independent not-for-profit Clinical Trials Unit (Border Medical Oncology Research Unit) which has twice been awarded NSW Premier’s Award for Innovation in Cancer Clinical Trials. Craig supervises advanced trainees in Medical Oncology and teaches medical students and postgraduate programs at the Rural Medical Clinical School, University NSW, Albury Campus, and the University of Medicine Wangaratta Campus.



### **Ms Nicole Webb**

BAppSC(Nursing), GradDipEd, MC-CNCSC (Master of Cancer Science)  
Albury Wodonga Health

Nicole is a clinical nurse specialising in the supportive care for older adults with cancer. She has extensive experience in aged care, rehabilitation, and oncology in Australia and New Zealand. She completed her Master of Cancer Sciences from the University of Melbourne in 2021 and has a Diploma in Education Studies and a certificate IV in Leadership and Management. Nicole is also involved in several research projects, networks and committees dedicated to improving cancer care and reducing health inequalities in regional areas.



### **Associate Professor Raelene Wilding**

BA (Hons) Sociology and Anthropology, PhD  
La Trobe University

Raelene uses qualitative research methods to investigate ageing, migration, and new technologies. Her recent projects include an exploration of virtual reality as a tool for enhancing social connection in a rural town, and analysis of the health needs of older refugee-background migrants in a regional centre of Victoria. With a background in sociology, Raelene seeks to engage in research that identifies and addresses inequalities and to support families and communities to maintain strong social bonds of care and support.



### **Dr Monika Winarnita**

BComm, BA (Hons), PhD  
Deakin University

Monika completed research on an ARC Discovery and Linkage project “New Beats” (2017-2019). She has a background in academia teaching and research in anthropology, communication and media, and Indonesian studies. She is a board member of the Asian-Australian Studies Research Network. Monika’s research interests include migration, employment, family, gender, cultural performance, politics of culture, diaspora, digital ethnography, multimedia, media representation, identity, and belonging.



## *Higher Degree by Research Students*



### **Ms Jennifer Boak**

RN, Grad Cert Emerg, Grad Cert Gerontology  
PhD Student

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

Supervisors: Professor Irene Blackberry and Dr Tshepo Rasekaba

Jenny is an experienced nurse who currently manages a community nursing service in regional Victoria. She is committed to supporting clinicians to enhance their clinical judgement, thus providing timely and responsive care for older people. Jenny is a member of the Australian College of Nursing Chronic Disease Policy Chapter.



### **Mr Craig Gilbertson**

RN, GradDipN (Perioperative)  
Master’s Student

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

Supervisors: Dr Tshepo Rasekaba and Professor Irene Blackberry

Craig is a Master of Applied Science candidate with a research focus on virtual reality for the management of needle phobia in adults. A novice researcher, Craig is a registered nurse and currently an Associate Nurse Unit Manager with Albury Wodonga Health.



### **Ms Rosa Goncalves**

BBiomedSc  
PhD Student

#### **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

Rosa has a passion for researching and advancing current cancer outcomes. Rosa's PhD with the JRC is in collaboration with the Ballarat Base Hospital - Grampians Rural Health Alliance (GRHA) and funded by the Victorian Cancer Agency. It focuses on improving the current understanding of factors that affect a patient throughout their cancer journey, ranging from health literacy levels and remoteness to the use (or the lack of) technology and social media. Rosa's PhD also explores methods to reduce disparities in cancer patient's prognosis, quality of life, and access to different treatment options.



### **Mr Fan He**

MSc  
PhD Student

#### **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

Fan's project is based on the research partnership between La Trobe University and Albury Wodonga Health. His research will utilise routinely collected hospital data that will be linked to various external data sources to investigate in-hospital and post-hospitalisation outcomes following acute stroke. Findings of the study will inform policy and clinical practice in addressing inequalities of stroke care in regional Australia.



### **Mr Chris Harvey**

BPsych, MSW  
Professional Doctorate Student

#### **What effect does assertive holistic aftercare have on suicidality rates in a regional location?**

Supervisors: Dr Sean MacDermott, Associate Professor Fiona Gardner and Dr Carina Chan

Chris is currently the Manager of Suicide Prevention at Mildura Base Public Hospital – Mental Health Services. His journey into research commenced in 2021 when he was seconded into a Project Manager's position to implement recommendations from the conjoint La Trobe & Monash University study titled "Improving emergency and follow-up care for suicidal crisis in Mildura LGA." As part of this process, Chris conducted a thematic analysis regarding presentations of suicidality within the LGA which identified a need to provide consumers with both clinical interventions and psychosocial support. Chris subsequently developed an assertive integrated model of suicide aftercare which will be central to his Doctoral Research Study.



### **Ms Carmela Leone**

BAppSoSc, GradDip Integrated Human Studies, MCPD  
PhD Student

#### **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's academic background is in the social sciences, humanities, and community planning and development. Her PhD explores discourses about people living with dementia, carers, and their socio-spatial rights, to understand how they contribute to socio-spatial inclusion/exclusion. Her research considers the implications for dementia-friendly community which is grounded in a rights-based framework.



### **Mr Lucas Lloyd**

RN MN  
Professional Doctorate Student

#### **What Effect Does a Nurse-Led Model of Palliative Care Have on People Living in Rural Residential Aged Care**

Supervisors: Professor Irene Blackberry and Dr Sean MacDermott

Lucas is a Registered Nurse and has worked extensively as a senior clinician, manager and independent consultant in the UK, metropolitan Melbourne, and regional Victoria. He has worked in public, private and not for profit sectors as well as the Victorian Government. Lucas obtained a Master of Nursing (Clinical Leadership), from Western Sydney University in 2009. He has extensive experience in safety and quality, compliance, education, and aged care.



### **Mr Darren Midgley**

RN. BN, Dip. Mgt, Grad. Dip. Bus. Admin, MBA, GAICD  
Professional Doctorate Student

#### **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 Dr Sean MacDermott

A Registered Nurse with clinical and business acumen, Darren is well regarded within health and business circles. He is the Chief Executive Officer of Rural Care Australia, which operates Chaffey Aged Care, Bingarra Units and Generations Early Learning in the rural town of Merbein located in North-West Victoria. Darren is passionate about delivering innovative services that support and empower his community, helping people be at their best.





### **Dr Krishna Rachakonda**

MBBS, MD, FRACP, FRCP (Edin).  
Professional Doctorate Student

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

Supervisors: Professor Irene Blackberry and Dr Sean MacDermott

Krishna is a Medical Oncologist at the Mildura Base Hospital. His Professional Doctorate involves working with the Regional Trials Network to bring clinical trials to regional areas. Krishna has always chosen to work in regional areas and is very passionate about equitable access to healthcare, including clinical trials in all communities irrespective of their geographical location. He is very pleased to be studying with JRC through Mildura Base Hospital which is allowing him to pursue his aspiration for a career in research. Krishna is hoping to promote and contribute to regional education and further research in health



## *Higher Degree by Research Students - Completion*



### **Dr Diana Nabbumba**

Dr Diana Nabbumba graduated from La Trobe University in May of 2022, having submitted her PhD thesis titled “Examining responsibility allocation within the social care system for older people in rural Uganda: An ecological systems approach”, for examination in October 2021. Her supervision team was JRC Senior Research Fellow Dr Rachel Winterton (principal supervisor), Professor Suzanne Hodgkin and Dr Jacqui Theobald (co-supervisors), and Dr Anne-Maree Sawyer (Progress Committee Chair).

Through the application of ethics of care and critical rural gerontology theories, Diana identified care disruptions that have policy and practice implications for improving aged care and healthy ageing in Sub-Saharan Africa. Diana’s thesis is novel in filling the gap in knowledge about the available social care services for older people in a developing country context.

*Above: Dr Rachel Winterton and Dr Diana Nabbumba*

# Student Milestones

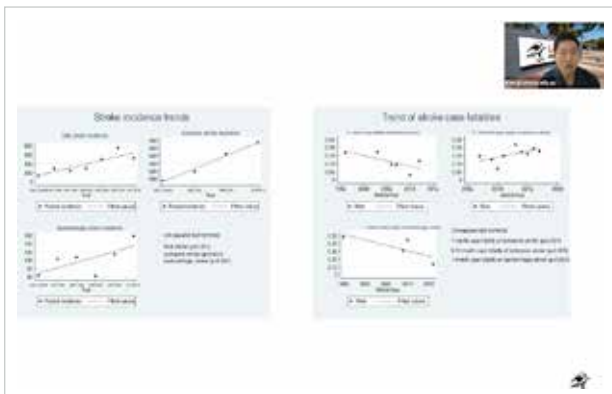


## Master's Confirmation

8 March

Craig Gilbertson

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



## PhD Mid-candidature Review

15 June

Fan He

One-year clinical patient outcomes following acute ischaemic and haemorrhagic stroke in Albury-Wodonga: a 10-year retrospective cohort study



## PhD Pre-submission Review

28 November

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

# Key Research Areas



AGED CARE  
AND DEMENTIA



AGEING  
IN PLACE

TECHNOLOGY



HEALTH  
SERVICE AND  
WORKFORCE







## *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.

### **Webster Rural and Regional Dementia Care Project**

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

The Webster Rural and Regional Dementia Care project aims to improve dementia care pathways within rural and regional Victoria, with a specific emphasis on facilitating better access to dementia care and support services within the Greater Bendigo region. As part of the project, a Dementia Care and Support Service Pathways Directory for the Greater Bendigo region has been developed to assist people living with dementia and their carers and families to connect with appropriate dementia care and support services that are relevant to their needs, at each stage of the dementia journey. The directory and project final report will be launched in 2023.

**Funding body:** Bequest from Mr Gordon Webster (Sandhurst Trustees)



## Barriers and facilitators to implementation and maintenance of cognitive screening of patients aged over 65 in rural and regional health services

**MacDermott, S., Blackberry, I., McKechnie, R., Royals, K., Hodgkin, S.,** LoGiudice, D., and Morgan, D.

From January 2019, health services have been assessed against revised National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) standards which identify patients aged over 65 as an at-risk population requiring cognitive screening. This research examined how regional health services implement and maintain cognitive screening. Focus groups and interviews were held to determine what barriers and facilitators to screening currently exist and whether any of these are unique, or more pertinent to, rural services. A lack of specialist services, patient concerns regarding screening results and outcomes, and a lack of workforce knowledge, experience and confidence related to available cognitive screening instruments and their use, were identified as potential barriers to screening programs. A paper was published in 2022, as an outcome of this project.

**Partners:** Sunraysia Community Health Services and Mildura Private Hospital

**Funding body:** La Trobe University Research Focus Area – Building Healthy Communities

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## Co-designing a pharmacist-led program for improving quality, safety, and effective use of medicines for rural older adults

**Blackberry, I., Tucci, J., Rasekaba, T.,** Hutchinson, A., LoGiudice, D., and Clark, M.

Limited availability of trained staff significantly contributes to missed opportunities to address medication related harm in aged care in rural settings. This project is the initial phase of broader research, including stakeholder consultation and research co-design, aimed to unpack issues and inform a framework for quality, safety, and effective use of medicines for older people. It will provide foundations for an Aged Care Pharmaceutical Stewardship Scheme. Five focus groups have been completed with 30 individual participants, made up of consumer representatives (independent citizens, the Australian Patient Association, Older Persons Advocacy Network), academic, clinical and community pharmacists, nursing (including residential aged care, community nursing, aged care nurse practitioner), geriatricians and general practitioners with residential aged care practice. Findings from these focus groups are currently being written up for the next steps in the project and a journal manuscript. Also, preliminary findings have contributed to a grant application, MRFF 2022 Quality, Safety and Effectiveness of Medicine Use and Medicine Intervention by Pharmacists – Stream 4 and three other submissions all focused on upskilling pharmacists to foster quality use of medicines in aged care.

**Partners:** Deakin University, The University of Melbourne and Royal Melbourne Hospital

**Funding body:** Pilot Grant Support Program, La Trobe Rural Health School

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## Implementation of cognitive interventions for people at risk of dementia

**Pike, K., Blackberry, I.,** Lautenschlager, N., and O'Connell, M.

This project aims to address the gap between research and practice for cognitive interventions for older adults with mild cognitive impairment or subjective cognitive decline. A systematic literature review is followed by an implementation study within a public hospital (Peninsula Health), using an implementation science approach to examine the process, and to evaluate the success of the implementation of an evidence-based cognitive intervention for older adults at risk of developing dementia.

**Partners:** University of Melbourne, and University of Saskatchewan, Canada

**Funding body:** La Trobe University ABC internal investment scheme



## *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.

### **Ageing on farm**

**Blackberry, I., MacDermott, S., and Wilding, C.**

In the past, family farms were typically passed down from parents to children, often with the parents remaining and ageing on the farm. However, cultures change over time. What happens if a farmer's children do not want to take on the family farm? Do older farmers still have the option to age on farm? This project aims to explore pathways for retirement-aged farmers realising their potential for physical, social, mental health and wellbeing on their farm, in partnership with younger farmers. It explores older farmers' perspectives about ageing on the farm and their decision-making about farm succession planning. The study is a collaboration between the John Richards Centre and Cultivate Farms, which is a social enterprise that aims to match older farmers and younger, aspiring farmers for mutually beneficial succession planning.

**Partners:** Samuel Marwood and Tam Marwood of Cultivate Farms

**Funding body:** Violet Vines Marshman Centre for Rural Health Research



Above: John Richards OAM and Helen Haines MP at the launch of the Designing an age-friendly, rural, multidisciplinary primary care model: the 4Ms approach project launch, in March.

## Designing an age-friendly, rural, multidisciplinary primary care model: the 4Ms approach

**Ashcroft, M., Brasher, K., and Winterton, R.**

This project, which commenced in 2021, will co-design an age-friendly, rural, multidisciplinary, integrated primary health care model for the Upper Hume Region of Victoria. The basis for the model is the Indigo 4Ms Framework which structures and prioritises care for older people in rural settings across four, evidence-based, interrelated core elements (the 4Ms): what matters, medications, mobility, and mental health. Working with older people, their families and carers, health, governments, aged care and community stakeholders, this project will co-design local and regional multidisciplinary assessments and interventions for the 4Ms Framework and test the feasibility of these interventions with end users. In doing so, it will develop the first unifying construct to guide an integrated approach to the care of rural older adults across the care continuum. It will formalise and standardise pathways for age-friendly primary care with an interdisciplinary, regional systems approach that encompasses diverse and geographically dispersed providers. The project is due to conclude in 2023.

**Partners:** Beechworth Health, Albury Wodonga Health, Upper Hume Primary Care Partnership, Gateway Health, Corryong Health, and Tallangatta Health Service

**Funding body:** Federal Health Workforce Program - Primary Care Rural Innovative Multidisciplinary Models

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## Building rural community capacity to enable voluntary and civic participation for people living with dementia

**Winterton, R., Araten-Bergman, T., Bigby, C., Royals, K., and Blackberry, I.**

This study aims to identify facilitators and barriers associated with enabling community-dwelling people living with dementia to undertake voluntary and civic engagement within rural and regional community organisations. Interviews were completed with 15 volunteer coordinators and managers across rural and regional Victoria. Data analysis is ongoing, and publications are currently being prepared.

**Funding body:** La Trobe University Research Focus Area – Transforming Human Societies



## Loddon Mallee Region (LMR) Move It

**Rasekaba, T., Blackberry, I., and McKechnie, R.**

The Loddon Mallee Region (LMR) Move It Project aimed to increase opportunity for, and encourage participation in, physical activity by inactive older people aged 65 years and over, as a way of combating chronic disease. Physical activity guidelines suggest that older adults should participate in regular physical activity of at least 30 minutes on most days of the week but only 25% of older adult Australian achieve this physical activity target. The LMR Move It initiative aims to encourage older adults to become more physically active and improve physical and mental wellbeing, as well as social connections. JRC researchers undertook an evaluation of the LMR Move It programs using a mixed methods approach following the RE-AIM framework. The project was completed in early 2022 and the project evaluation final report was delivered in March.

**Partners:** 10 local government areas in central and northern Victoria, led by Macedon Ranges Shire Council

**Funding body:** Sport Australia

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## Older Men: New Ideas (OM:NI) Evaluation

**Winterton, R., and Wilding, C.**

This project is an independent review and evaluation of the Older Men: New Ideas (OM:NI) program run by Council on the Ageing (COTA) Victoria, with the aim of providing targeted evidence to support informed decision-making and planning associated with program sustainability. It examined the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats associated with sustainability of the OM:NI program. This project was completed in 2022, with a final report provided to COTA. A summary is available on the [COTA Victoria website](#).

**Funding body:** Council on the Ageing (COTA) Victoria







## *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.

### **Breast cancer screening motivations and behaviour among women aged 75 and over**

Dickson-Swift, V., Spelten, E., **Blackberry, I.**, Wilson, C., and Yuen, E.

Funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health, this qualitative project aims to investigate breast screening motivations and how this impacts the behaviour of Australian women aged 75+. The results of the study will provide BreastScreen Australia with a more nuanced understanding of the decision-making process used by older women when accessing breast cancer screening services. Using in-depth interviews, data has been collected from a range of older women from across Australia. Our preliminary findings to date (n=20) highlight that there are many different motivations for continued screening including a strong desire to remain healthy and well as they age, and to maintain independence. Despite being outside of target age for invitation to screen, many women continue to screen and would like to continue to receive invitations. Risks of screening for older women are seldom discussed with GPs and it is recommended that this is a key gap in the current program.

**Partners:** Violet Marshman Centre for Rural Research and Olivia Newton-John Research Centre

**Funding body:** Commonwealth Department of Health

## Regional Victoria Trials Alliance: Linkages, Innovation, Special populations, Equity (ReViTALISE) program – Geriatric Oncology Initiative

**Blackberry, I., Steer, C., Rasekaba, T., Rich, S., Webb, N.,** and Davis, R.

### **ReViTALISE Investigators:**

**Underhill, C.,** Wright, T., Torres, J., Harris, S., **Rachakonda, K.,** Brown, S., Collins, I., Campbell, D., Klein, O., Philip, J., Eastman, P., **Blackberry, I., Steer, C.,** Krishnasamy, M., Gibbs, P., Lackovic, K., Sabesan, S., McArthur, G., Zeps, N., Lusic, N., and Wilkins, K.

In 2020, ReViTALISE was successful in an MRFF Regional, Rural and Remote Infrastructure competitive grant to continue and expand this program of research, including the Geriatric Oncology Research stream which is led by Professor Irene Blackberry and Dr Christopher Steer. Other research streams led by other academic and health service partners include Nurse-led and Allied Health, Palliative and Supportive Care, Registry Trials, Indigenous Trial Access, and Immunotherapy. ReViTALISE is now in its second year of activities. The MRFF Regional, Rural and Remote Infrastructure funded initiative aims to improve the care of older persons diagnosed with cancer through increasing access to and enrolment in clinical cancer trials in regional areas. Foundational work is underway, with the first phase of data collection due to commence in the coming months. In 2022, the GO ReViTALISE initiative had representation at five conferences including both international and domestic. The group has been actively applying for funding to support its efforts in the geriatric oncology space, and the GO ReViTALISE team has expanded to include 2 undergraduate medical student researchers and will take on 2 PhD candidates. Four projects are underway covering aspects of geriatric oncology including geriatric assessment and enhanced supportive care, ageism in oncology decision making, fear of cancer recurrence and understanding current geriatric oncology practices in regional Victoria.

**Partners:** Andrew Love Cancer Centre, Ballarat Integrated Cancer Service, Barwon Health (Geelong), Bendigo Health, Border Medical Oncology (Albury-Wodonga), Goulburn Valley Health (Shepparton), La Trobe Regional Hospital (Traralgon), Olivia Newton-John Cancer Centre, Mildura Base Hospital, Southwest Health (Warrnambool), and University of Melbourne.

**Funding body:** MRFF Regional, Rural and Remote Infrastructure Grant

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## Geriatric oncology in the Instagram era: Adopting PhotoVoice to enable empowerment, patient-centred care, and shared decision-making

**Steer, C., Blackberry, I., Rasekaba, T., Webb, N., Young, K.,** and Soo, K.

Age is one of the greatest risk factors for developing cancer, making the ageing process an important component of cancer progression and care. Hence multidimensional assessment of older adults with cancer is crucial for more holistic care, and results in better communication about age-related concerns and facilitates personalised and patient-centred supportive care. This study investigated the feasibility and acceptability of integrating patient-derived photographs (PhotoVoice) into geriatric oncology assessments and enhanced supportive care, to facilitate empowerment, patient-centred care, and shared decision-making in cancer care.

**Partner and funding body:** Albury Wodonga Regional Cancer Centre Trust Fund

## One-year clinical patient outcomes following acute ischaemic and haemorrhagic stroke in Albury-Wodonga: a 10-year retrospective cohort study

**He, F., Blackberry, I., Mnatzagnian, G.,** Rutherford, D., and Njovu, M.

This project is a research partnership between La Trobe University and Albury Wodonga Health (AWH). The research utilises routinely collected hospital data that will be linked to various external data sources to investigate in-hospital and post-hospitalisation outcomes following acute stroke. Data from Albury Wodonga Health, Australian Institute for Health and Well-being, and the Australasian Rehabilitation Outcomes Centre will be analysed, and findings will inform policy and clinical practice in addressing inequalities of stroke care in regional Australia.

**Partner:** Albury Wodonga Health

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## Small Rural Health Research Team Partnership (SMART)

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

The SMART partnership is a dynamic group of 10 Victorian rural and community health services who join with academic partners to improve health outcomes for rural Victorian communities. The partnership brings together rural and community health services to lead the health policy agenda through the development of evidence-based research and application of that research into innovative practice. Since 2016, the partnership has attracted over \$2M of research funding in dementia, mental health, volunteering, telehealth, and community development.

Website: <https://smartruralhealth.wordpress.com>

**Partners and funding bodies:** Swinburne University, Heathcote Health, Cobaw Community Health Service (Macedon Ranges), Rural Northwest Health, Robinvale District Health Services, Edenhope and District Memorial Hospital, Kooweerup Regional Health Service, The Kilmore & District Hospital, Wimmera Health Care group, West Wimmera Health Service, and Mallee Track Health & Community Services.

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## SMART responses to COVID-19: Provider perspectives from rural and regional health services

**MacDermott, S., Blackberry, I.,** McLaren, D., **Royals, K.,** and **Paine, N.**

This research addresses health inequalities for rural and regional Victorians by investigating their experiences during COVID-19 and the degree to which current Federal and State policies address perceived need. The project involves qualitative focus groups with health promotion and other staff across five rural health services from the Small Rural Health Research Team Partnership (SMART). A focus of this work is enhancing partnerships with regional health services to apply our findings to improve equality in response and recovery policies and to develop strategies and service models to address the key issues and impacts of COVID for regional areas. The five participating health services are Heathcote Health, Kooweerup Regional Health Service, Mallee Track Health and Community Service, Robinvale District Health Services, and West Wimmera Health Service.

**Funding body:** La Trobe University Rapid Synergy Initiative (Healthy people, families and communities theme).

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## Coping during Covid

McLaren, D., Buck, B., **MacDermott, S., Royals, K.,** and **McKechnie, R.**

The "Coping during Covid" project is based on a data set comprising nearly 1000 qualitative and quantitative responses from rural-dwelling Victorians. The work was undertaken in collaboration with West Wimmera Health Service and Central Highlands Rural Health and is designed to provide a rural compliment to the Vic Health Covid surveys. Post-Covid, this data also provides a mechanism to better understand the health needs of rural Victorians.

**Partners:** West Wimmera Health Service and Central Highlands Rural Health

**Funding body:** This project was supported by La Trobe University internal research start-up funding to Dr MacDermott.

## Western Victoria Primary Health Network after-hours co-design project

**Rasekaba, T., and Blackberry, I.**

This project is a collaboration between Western Victoria Primary Health Network (PHN) and the JRC as an independent research and evaluation partner. The PHN has funded three health services to implement quality improvement initiatives to expand their after-hours services. Another five providers have been funded to develop and implement new models of after-hours care, including a telehealth medical emergency care, nurse practitioner access in residential aged care and palliative care. The research and evaluation findings will be used to determine the overall impact of the After-Hours Co-design Projects on providers, patients and the broader after-hours primary health care system including the outcomes achieved, the key learnings, the replicability of the projects to other regions and the sustainability of the projects beyond the funding period. Initially planned for completion in November 2022, the project has been extended to be completed in August 2023. This extension was initiated by the WVPHN with additional funding and an updated scope.

Website: <https://westvicphn.com.au/health-professionals/health-topics/after-hours-care/after-hours-projects/>

**Partner and funding body:** Western Victoria Primary Health Network

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*Above: JRC researchers with the West Wimmera Health Service (WWHS) Health Promotion Team (L to R): Dr Naomi Paine (JRC), Alana Storey (WWHS), Jake Wiffen (WWHS), Dorothy McLaren (WWHS), Dr Sean MacDermott (JRC), Dr Abdul Bashir (WWHS), and Kayla Royals (JRC).*

## Development of health and wellbeing profiles for WWHS Communities

**MacDermott, S., and Royals, K.**

The West Wimmera Health Service (WWHS) Health Promotion team services nine diverse communities in a large rural catchment. Achieving a detailed understanding of the opportunities and barriers to health and wellbeing in each town and developing local impact and outcome measures to validate their work in these catchments requires the development of a comprehensive and detailed picture of each community.

**Funding body:** West Wimmera Health Service



## Café Health

**MacDermott, S., and Paine, N.**

The Café Health initiative is an initiative from the West Wimmera Health Service (WWHS) health promotion team. It facilitates thoughtful and productive discussion around the health and wellbeing issues that affect individuals and communities in an informal café setting to make everyone feel comfortable expressing opinions, personal experiences and thoughts about health and wellbeing. The café health program was initially piloted in three towns before being rolled out to the remaining six communities served by WWHS across the Wimmera and Southern Mallee. An evaluation of the efficacy of the program is required to understand its benefits, to further refine the program and develop a replicable model for other rural Australian communities.

**Partner and funding body:** West Wimmera Health Service (WWHS)

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## 3-in-1 towards a healthy town

**MacDermott, S., and Paine, N.**

The 3-in-1 program brings together Healthy Eating, Physical Activity and Social Connection. Current indicators and measures for success in health promotion activities are based largely on quantitative data and large-scale metropolitan project models. The project represents a unique opportunity to create an evaluation strategy for a new rural, multi-faceted health promoting activity. Such an evaluation strategy, including the methodology, developed indicators and measures, will be an addition to both the academic literature and to rural health promotion practice.

**Partner and funding body:** West Wimmera Health Service (WWHS)

**Primary funding body:** Violet Vines Marshman Centre for Rural Health Research



## 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.

### Care Economy Research Institute (CERI)

#### Blackberry, I., and the CERI bid team

Throughout 2022, Professor Irene Blackberry and JRC staff continued their work on the Care Economy Research Institute (CERI) proposal which has now been approved by La Trobe University for 5 years and is launching in June 2023. CERI is one of two flagship research institutes in areas where La Trobe University is able to demonstrate global excellence and is aimed to deliver a step change in La Trobe's multidisciplinary research excellence in health and wellbeing. Work is underway to bring together research leaders across five domains of the Care Economy, being Care Technology, Care Workforce, Care Delivery, Care Experience, and Care Economics and Social Policy. The groundwork is underway to identify research priorities and to form the core team. The first projects under this flagship institute will commence in the second half of 2023.

**Funding body:** Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Industry Engagement

## e-health literacy and decision making among people with cancer from disadvantaged populations

**Blackberry, I., Goncalves, R., Faisal, W., and Stebbins, T.**

This PhD project aims to study and understand the level of health literacy among a representative sample of people with cancer from disadvantaged populations, identify domains of health literacy that could potentially be improved at an individual and community level, and propose a broad action plan to address health literacy issues that could be tailored/aligned with the Victorian Cancer Plan 2020-2024 and the Victorian Health Priorities Framework 2012-2022. The current understanding of health literacy in the Australian population, especially in culturally diverse and socially disadvantaged groups, is inadequate given most of the data available are pre-Facebook era. It is now well known that social media plays a vital role in how patients obtain information about their disease, gather collateral opinions, and make decisions about their healthcare. This issue is compounded by the fact that in the socially disadvantaged groups, use (or the lack of) electronic media, (in)ability to distinguish between credible and 'pseudoscientific' information on social media, and the overall impact of misinformation negatively impacts their cancer care outcome. Ethics approval has been obtained and recruitment is underway.

**Funding body:** Victorian Cancer Agency Scholarship

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## Digital Optimisation and personalisation of self-management of Type 2 Diabetes (Digital OPTIMISM-T2D)

**Rasekaba, T.,** and Jayatilleke, S.

Infusing artificial intelligence to optimise and personalise diabetes self-management is a potential next frontier in diabetes-centred app development. Digital OPTIMISM-T2D is a two-phase small collaborative proof-of-concept project. The first phase involved the development of an integrated mobile app with artificial intelligence capability. The second phase is a pilot of the app in a convenience sample of patients with type 2 diabetes in a rural setting. We aim to uncover what improvements to the app would be required, how patients respond to the app, and assess diabetes related outcomes. We will leverage the findings for funding opportunities to further develop the app with additional enhancement and capabilities and undertake a definitive trial. Due to COVID-19, recruitment had to be suspended and the plan is to resume the project in 2023, albeit with ethics amendment to change recruitment strategy and sites.

**Partners:** Data Analytics and Digital Disruption Stream, La Trobe Business School

**Funding body:** College of Arts, Social Sciences and Commerce, New Staff Start-up Grant



# External Projects

## A risk score for prediction of gestational diabetes mellitus in China using routinely collected hospital data

Sun, Y., Liangkun, M., **Mnatzaganian, G.**, and **Blackberry, I.**

**Partners and funding bodies:** Peking Union Medical Center Hospital, and Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences (CAMS).

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## Let's CHAT (Community Health Approaches To) dementia in indigenous communities

LoGiudice, D., Flicker, L., Bessarab, D., Atkinson, D., Wenitong, M., Thompson, S., Strivens, E., Redford, K., and Smith, K. (**Blackberry, I.** as Associate Investigator).

**Funding body:** NHMRC

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## Mapping sex differences in the journey of an individual with coronary heart disease through the healthcare system

Huxley, R., Boyd, J., Lee, C., Robinson, S., **Mnatzaganian, G.**, and Randall, S.

**Partners:** Deakin University, Australian Institute for Health and Welfare, Centre for Health Record Linkage, Centre for Victorian Data Linkage, Curtin University, La Trobe University and NPS MedicineWise

**Funding body:** NHMRC Ideas Grant

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## MATCH (Music Attuned Technology for Care eHealth)

Baker, F., Lautenschlager, N., Varnfield, M., Waycott, J., Lampit, A., Tamplin, J., Redd, C., Sousa, T. V., and Lamb, K. (**Blackberry, I.** in the Advisory Committee).

**Partners:** University of Melbourne and CSIRO

**Funding body:** NHMRC-MRFF Ageing and Dementia

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## PRogression of Diabetic ComplicaTions – PREDICT (APP2000540)

Shaw, J., Speight, J., et al., (**Blackberry, I.** on the Steering Committee).

**Partners:** Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute, and Diabetes Victoria

**Funding body:** NHMRC Cohort and Clinical Trials Grant

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## Optimising health information exchange during interorganisational transfers of aged care residents

Andrew, N., Long, K., Srikanth, V., Haines, T., Hill, K., Bell, S., Olivier, P., Beare, R., Smith, K., **Blackberry, I.**, Moran, C., Barker, A., and Xie, J.

**Partners:** Monash Data Futures Institute, Peninsula Clinical School, School of Primary and Allied Health Care, Centre for Medicine Use and Safety, Department of Human Centred Computing, Community Emergency Health and Paramedic Practice, Victorian Heart Institute (VHI), School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine

**Funding body:** Medical Research Future Fund - Primary Health Care Research Data Infrastructure





# *Engagement and Impact*

## Designing an age-friendly, rural, multidisciplinary primary care model: the 4Ms approach

JRC Research Fellow Dr Kathleen Brasher spoke about her findings at the launch of this project on March 10, in Beechworth. It was attended by JRC benefactor John Richards OAM and Helen Haines, Independent Federal Member for the seat of Indi.



*Above: Dr Kathleen Brasher at the project launch.*

## West Wimmera Health Service health promotion projects

The JRC team have worked with West Wimmera Health Service on the delivery and evaluation of a number of community health promotion projects across the West Wimmera catchment including Nhill, Jeparit, Murtoa, Kaniva, Goroke, Rainbow, Minyip, Natimuk, and Rupanyup.

Evaluation projects include Café Health – an innovative program designed to build community capacity around health and wellbeing, and 3-in-1 Towards a Healthy Town (Social Connection, Physical Activity, and Healthy Eating). Research projects include the development of Health and Wellbeing Community Profiles for each of the nine communities in the WWHS catchment – designed as a benchmark for education and for future evaluation of other programs.

Together these projects aim to:

- understand the needs and challenges of rural/regional communities;
- impact and improve rural community health and wellbeing; and
- transform rural and regional health care.

Guided by a realist evaluation framework, focus groups have been conducted to understand how and why these health promotion interventions will or will not work for different groups of people living in West Wimmera rural communities.

# External Engagement

## Submission to Parliamentary Inquiry

31 January

Professor Irene Blackberry provided an invited submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into support for older Victorians from refugee and migrant backgrounds. The Inquiry made recommendations to address needs such as culturally appropriate aged care and home services, and mental health and wellbeing of multicultural seniors. A report was published in August 2022 and is available on the [Analysis and Policy Observatory website](#).

## JRC Annual Oration

7 April

The John Richards Centre 2022 Oration "Future-proofing mental health for older people in rural Australia" was held online on Thursday 7th April. The event attracted an audience of nearly 100, with the majority attending via zoom. This hybrid format facilitated the attendance of a number of international attendees who braved the time-difference. For those attending in person, a pre-oration lunch was held at the Albury Wodonga Campus with the guests then watching the online webinar in Lecture Theatre.

Professor Richard Gray expertly and good-humouredly moderated the discussion with panellists:

- Professor David Perkins: Conjoint Professor Rural Health Research University Newcastle and Adjunct Professor Centre for Health Research, University of Canberra.
- Dr Sue Wilson: Mental Health Promotion Clinician for Older Persons, Early Intervention and Capability Building Unit; Albury Wodonga Health / Evaluation and Data Management Lead; Murray PHN
- Maria Berry: Consumer Advisor with the Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN)

The depth and breadth of audience questions indicated a high level of audience engagement with the topic. The John Richards Centre 2022 Oration was recorded and is available on the [La Trobe University YouTube channel](#).



*Attendees at the JRC Oration event.*



*On screen: Professor Richard Gray speaking at the oration*



## 15-year Anniversary Event

15 November

In November 2022, the JRC celebrated its 15th anniversary, at the Wodonga Campus.

The event provided an opportunity to acknowledge the achievements of the centre and its staff over the past 15 years, and to acknowledge the generosity and foresight of John Richards OAM, as well the support received from the Victorian Department of Health and La Trobe University since the centre's founding in 2007.

Professor Susan Dodds, Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research and Industry Engagement) congratulated the JRC on its achievements. Professor Ngaire Kerse, 2022 Gary Andrews International Fellow of Auckland University, gave the 15-Year Anniversary Oration titled "Ageism, resilience, and contribution through ongoing challenge". The Dean of the La Trobe Rural Health School, Professor Jane Mills, facilitated a lively question and answer session with audience members joining in person and via zoom.

The JRC 15-Year Anniversary Report is available on the [JRC website](#).



*Top left: Professor Susan Dodds, Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research and Industry Engagement) speaking at the JRC 15-year anniversary event.*

*Left: Professor Irene Blackberry presenting John Richards OAM with a special hardcover copy of the 15-year anniversary report.*

*Right: Professor Irene Blackberry and John Richards OAM.*

*Bottom: Attendees at the JRC 15-year anniversary celebration.*



# Internal Engagement

## Staff team-building event

27-28 April

In April 2022, the JRC staff team met in person in Melbourne. Due to Covid, this was the first time some members had met in person with colleagues they had been working with for over 2 years.

Staff met with the Reference Group over lunch and participated in Team Building meetings and activities before dinner. Team building activities in the evening included augmented darts and ten-pin bowling.



*Top right: JRC staff enjoying activities.*

*Above: JRC staff enjoying dinner (L to R): Professor Irene Blackberry, Kayla Royals, Kim Young, Dr Naomi Paine, Dr Tshepo Rasekaba, Fan He, Dr Sean MacDermott, Bronwyn Carter, and Dr Stacey Rich.*

*Right: Staff enjoying ten-pin bowling.*



## Meet and greet at Bendigo campus

13 July

JRC held a 'meet and greet' with La Trobe Rural Health School (LRHS) staff on 13th July, at the Bendigo Campus. This event provided an opportunity for JRC staff from regional and city campuses to connect with other LRHS staff.



*(L to R): Craig Gilbertson, Dr Naomi Paine, Lucas Lloyd, Dr Stacey Rich, Dr Tshepo Rasekaba, Dr Sean MacDermott, Professor Irene Blackberry, and Jennifer Boak.*

## 3 Minute Thesis (3MT) competition

13 July

JRC students Craig Gilbertson, Lucas Lloyd, and Jennifer Boak presented at the 3MT competition, which was held in Bendigo in July 2022. Craig Gilbertson was placed second for his talk titled "A feasibility study exploring the use of virtual reality to alleviate patient fear of needles during medical treatment."

Lucas Lloyd's presentation was titled "What Effect Does a Nurse-Led Model of Palliative Care Have on People Living in Rural Residential Aged Care." Jennifer Boak's presentation was titled "Improving Quality of Care Through Detection of Complexity Amongst Older People in the Community: ImPaCt study."



# Community Engagement



## Opening Futures Hub - March 10, 2022

### Heathcote Dementia Alliance's (HDA) Futures Hub opening

10 March

The John Richards Centre was invited to the official opening of the Heathcote Dementia Alliance's (HDA) Futures Hub. The Futures Hub represents research, education, innovation, and translational research in the dementia space. Through such work, HDA aims to improve the design and delivery of new dementia care services, with a focus on rural and regional solutions. During the opening, a range of technologies were on show; including a virtual reality experience and educational resource to see life through the eyes of a person living with dementia, and "LIVE," a smart sensor camera for monitoring the home environment safety, falls prediction and alerts.

Representing the JRC, Dr Tshepo Rasekaba presented on Verily Connect, an online support service for carers of people with dementia. The JRC completed the Verily Connect research project in 2019 and findings demonstrated the capability of Verily Connect to improve the social wellbeing of carers of people living with dementia in rural communities. HDA is an important partner of the JRC and has recently taken on implementing Verily Connect and making the service available to Australian communities.

### Bendigo Healthy Systems Network

22 August

JRC PhD student Carmela Leone presented the research findings of her study titled "Discourses relating to the 'right to the city' for people living with dementia and carers: Implications for a rights-based dementia-friendly community in a regional Australian setting" to the City of Greater Bendigo Healthy Systems Network. The event was attended by representatives from local government, healthcare groups and partners, and community organisations from Bendigo. Carmela's presentation was followed by questions from the attendees and then small group discussions on how organisations might facilitate socio-spatial rights for people living with dementia and carers.



## LGPro 2022 Active Ageing and Wellbeing Award

March

The Loddon Mallee Region (LMR) Move It project won the LGPro 2022 Active Ageing and Wellbeing Award. This achievement was announced at the Local Governments awards ceremony under the category: Outstanding Program or Project – Grant Based (externally funded).

JRC researchers undertook an evaluation of the LMR Move It programs. They found positive outcomes and made recommendations for program improvements across all project objectives including program reach, effectiveness, adoption, implementation, and maintenance. Chief Investigators were Professor Irene Blackberry and Dr Tshepo Rasekaba.



### Nancy Mills Medal

12 May

Dr Diana Nabbumba was awarded the prestigious Nancy Mills Medal for her PhD thesis titled “Examining responsibility allocation within the social care system for older people in rural Uganda: An ecological systems approach.” Dr Nabbumba’s PhD thesis was accepted with no revision required. She was supervised by JRC Senior Research Fellow Dr Rachel Winterton (principal supervisor), and Professor Suzanne Hodgkin and Dr Jacqui Theobald (co-supervisors).



### 3MT Competition

13 July

Craig Gilbertson placed second in the 3MT competition for his talk titled “A feasibility study exploring the use of virtual reality to alleviate patient fear of needles during medical treatment.”

*Left: (L to R) Dr Rachel Winterton, Dr Diana Nabbumba, and Professor Irene Blackberry.*

*Above: Craig Gilbertson receiving his award from Associate Professor Leesa Hooker, Associate Dean of Research and Industry Engagement.*





### Best Collaborative Research Award

15 July

Dorothy McLaren (West Wimmera Health Service) and Dr Sean MacDermott (JRC) received the award for “Best Collaborative Research” at the La Trobe Rural Health School (LRHS) conference.

*Above: Dr Sean MacDermott receiving the award from Associate Professor Leesa Hooker, Associate Dean of Research and Industry Engagement (L) and Professor Jane Mills, Dean of LRHS (R).*

*Right: Dr Sean MacDermott receiving the LRHS Industry and Community Engagement Award from Professor Jane Mills, Dean of LRHS.*



### Vice-Chancellor’s Cultural Qualities Award

#### La Trobe Rural Health School staff award for Industry and Community Engagement

December

JRC Deputy Director, Dr Sean MacDermott, together with project team members Associate Professor Evelien Spelten, Professor Katie Holmes, Dr Julia Mynott and JRC PhD graduate Dr Heather Downey, were awarded the Vice-Chancellor’s Connected Award for their cross-collaborative work with team members from multiple campuses and disciplines, the cities of Albury and Wodonga, and Wiradjuri elders on one of the first studies into the recreational, cultural and environmental meanings of water for rural river community residents.

Dr Sean MacDermott and his team were also awarded the La Trobe Rural Health School staff award for Industry and Community Engagement.



# Professional Participation

## Professor Irene Blackberry

### INTERNAL

- Member, Academic Board
- Member, Research Strategy Committee
- Member, Research Centre Renewal Committee
- Member, Academic Coordination Group Albury-Wodonga
- Member, Healthy People, Families and Communities Advisory Group

### EXTERNAL

- Executive Member, Australian Association of Gerontology (AAG) Victoria
- Executive Member, Collaborative Health Research Committee Albury-Wodonga
- Founding Member, AAG rural VIC chapter
- Founding Member, AAG National Culturally & Linguistically Diverse Special Interest Group (CALD SIG)
- Associate Editor, Elsevier Primary Care Diabetes Journal
- Review Editor, Frontiers in Medicine Journal
- Editorial Board, Geriatrics Journal
- Member, Primary Care and Population Health Committee, Albury Wodonga Health
- Member, American Geriatrics Society
- Research Advisor, Heathcote Dementia Village Inc.
- Advisory Member, Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia
- Member, NHMRC Council and Principal Committees 2021-2024 Triennium
- Advisory Member and Scientific Advisor, Palliative Care Australia

## Dr Rachel Winterton

### EXTERNAL

- Convenor, Australian Association of Gerontology Rural, Regional and Remote Special Interest Group
- Member, Research Working Group for the National Strategy for Volunteering
- Member, Australian Association of Gerontology

## Dr Clare Wilding

### EXTERNAL

- Member, Australian Association of Gerontology (AAG)
- Member, Occupational Therapy Australia
- Member, International Society of Occupational Scientists (ISOS)
- Member, Psychiatric Disability Services of Victoria (VICSERV)
- Reviewer, Australian Occupational Therapy Journal
- Reviewer, Australian Journal of Rural Health

## Dr Tshepo Rasekaba

### INTERNAL

- Member Wellbeing in Later Life Research Interest Group
- Member, Healthy People, Families and Communities Research –
- Community of Practice Big Data Group
- Core member – Care Technology Domain, Care Economy Research Institute

### EXTERNAL

- Member, Royal Flying Doctor Service Victoria Research Committee
- Member, Australian Association of Gerontology (AAG)
- Member Australian Diabetes Society
- Reviewer Current Diabetes Care
- Reviewer Primary Care Diabetes
- Reviewer International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health



## Invited Presentations

**18 March**

Professor Irene Blackberry was invited to speak about intergenerational care by the University of Surabaya, Indonesia.

**14 June**

Professor Irene Blackberry was an Invited Keynote at the PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) and the Australian Institute of Family Studies event, to explore the topic of: “Carers, volunteers and workers: who is meeting the demand from social care reforms?” Professor Blackberry discussed the objectives of the proposed Care Economy Cooperative Research (CRC) and early thinking about the new knowledge and capabilities needed for the transition to a ‘future-ready’ care workforce.

**14-15 July**

Professor Irene Blackberry was invited to deliver the Keynote address at the La Trobe Rural Health School (LRHS) Conference in Bendigo. Her talk was titled “Care Economy: Reimagining Care in the 21st Century”.



*Professor Irene Blackberry presenting her keynote address.*

**21 September**

Professor Irene Blackberry presented an online keynote lecture on Intergenerational Care to the Atmajaya Catholic University in Jakarta, Indonesia. The event was attended by 50 staff and students.

**2-6 November**

Professor Irene Blackberry hosted a symposium on innovative cancer research methodology at the Gerontological Society of America conference in Indianapolis, USA.

**2 December**

Professor Irene Blackberry was on the panel at the Australia-China 50-Year Forum organised by Asia-Link at the University of Melbourne.



# Conference Presentations



(L to R): Alex Hall (Executive Director, Community Health, West Wimmera Health Service), Dorothy McLaren (Manager, Health Promotion Team, West Wimmera Health Service), and Dr Sean MacDermott, at the LRHS Conference.



JRC staff at the LRHS conference (L to R): Professor Irene Blackberry, Kayla Royals, Dr Tshepo Rasekaba, Dr Naomi Paine, and Dr Stacey Rich.

## LRS Conference (July 14-15)

There was a strong attendance of JRC staff, students, and affiliates at the LRHS conference held in Bendigo. Centre Chair and Director, Professor Irene Blackberry gave the Keynote address on Friday July 15. The title of Irene's talk was "Care Economy: Reimagining Care in the 21st Century".

Professor Irene Blackberry, along with Ms Jennifer Boak, Mr Fan He, Dr Sean MacDermott, Dr Tshepo Rasekaba, and Dr George Mnatzaganian, presented on the topics listed below.

- **Blackberry, I.** (2022, 14-15 July). Care Economy: Reimagining Care in the 21st Century [Keynote address]. La Trobe Rural Health School Research Conference 2022: New Frontiers in Rural Health, Bendigo.
- **Blackberry, I., Steer, C., Rasekaba, T., Webb, N., Jayasuriya, D., Young, K., Owen, K., & Kapur, M.** (2022, 14-15 July). Geriatric oncology in the Instagram Era: Adopting PhotoVoice to enable empowerment, patient-centred care, and shared decision-making [Conference presentation]. La Trobe Rural Health School Research Conference 2022: New Frontiers in Rural Health, Bendigo.
- **Boak, J., Blackberry, I., & Rasekaba, T.** (2022, 14-15 July). Improving care quality through detection of complexity amongst older people in a community setting (ImPaCt) [Conference presentation]. La Trobe Rural Health School Research Conference 2022: New Frontiers in Rural Health, Bendigo.
- Dickson-Swift, V., Spelten, E., **Blackberry, I.**, Wilson, C., & Yuen, E. (2022, 14-15 July). Breast screening in older Australian women: Key motivations and behaviours [Conference presentation]. La Trobe Rural Health School Research Conference 2022: New Frontiers in Rural Health, Bendigo



- **He, F., Blackberry, I.,** Yao, L., Xie, H., **Rasekaba, T., & Mnatzaganian, G.** (2022, 14-15 July). Pooled incidence and case-fatality of acute stroke in mainland China, Hong Kong and Macao: a systematic review and meta-analysis of longitudinal studies [Conference presentation]. La Trobe Rural Health School Research Conference 2022: New Frontiers in Rural Health, Bendigo.
- **MacDermott, S., Blackberry, I.,** Morgan, D., LoGiudice, D., **McKechnie, R., & Royals, K.** (2022, 14-15 July). Barriers and facilitators to cognitive screening in rural health services [Conference presentation]. La Trobe Rural Health School Research Conference 2021: New Frontiers in Rural Health, Bendigo.
- **MacDermott, S.,** McLaren, D., Buck, B., Rizio, T., **McKechnie, R., & Royals, K.** (2022, 14-15 July). 'Taken the life blood out of the community': COVID-related issues for regional Victorian communities [Poster presentation]. La Trobe Rural Health School Research Conference 2021: New Frontiers in Rural Health, Bendigo Campus.
- McLaren, D., & **MacDermott, S.** (2022, 14-15 July). Collaborations during COVID: Partnering with stakeholders to inform practice [Conference presentation]. La Trobe Rural Health School Research Conference 2021: New Frontiers in Rural Health, Bendigo.
- **Mnatzaganian, G.,** Woodward, M., McIntyre, H. D., Ma, L., **He, F.,** Nightingale, H., Xu, T., & Huxley, R. (2022, 14-15 July). Trends in percentages of gestational diabetes mellitus attributable to overweight, obesity, and morbid obesity in regional Victoria: an eight-year population-based [Conference presentation]. La Trobe Rural Health School Research Conference 2022: New Frontiers in Rural Health, Bendigo.
- **Rasekaba, T., McKechnie, R., & Blackberry, I.** (2022, 14-15 July). Facilitator and participant perspectives of the Loddon Mallee Region Move It: A physical activity initiative for older adults in the Loddon-Mallee rural and regional communities. [Conference presentation]. La Trobe Rural Health School Research Conference 2022: New Frontiers in Rural Health Bendigo.
- **Rasekaba, T.,** Syme, J., Moore, C., Trivet, M., & **Blackberry, I.** (2022, 14-15 July). Health care utilisation costs of the Royal Flying Doctor Telehealth Specialist Service [Conference presentation]. La Trobe Rural Health School Research Conference 2022: New Frontiers in Rural Health Bendigo Campus.



*Dr Sean MacDermott (R) and Dorothy McLaren (Manager, Health Promotion Team, West Wimmera Health Service) (L) presenting at the LRHS conference.*

## Other conference presentations

**Barbour, H.** (2022, November 23-25). Integrated Regional Labour Markets: Employment Outcomes and Life Satisfaction of Singaporeans in Australia [Conference presentation]. The Australian Population Conference, Canberra, Australia.

**Blackberry, I., Steer, C., Webb, N., Rasekaba, T., Rich, S., & Young, K.** (2022, June 12-16). Implementing and evaluating impact of a five-year translational geriatric oncology research program [Poster presentation]. 22nd World Congress of Gerontology and Geriatrics IAGG Online.

**Blackberry, I.** (2022, September 21). Current evidence on intergenerational care. [Keynote address]. Atmajaya Medical Faculty seminar on intergenerational care, Digital Event 2022.

**Blackberry, I.** (2022, March). Current evidence on intergenerational care. [Keynote address]. University of Surabaya seminar on intergenerational care, Digital Event 2022.

**Blackberry, I.** (2022, October 2-6). Implementing and Measuring Impact of a five-year Translational Geriatric Oncology Research Program [Conference presentation]. Gerontological Society of America (GSA) Conference, Indianapolis, USA.

**Blackberry, I., Rasekaba, T., Rich, S., Webb, N., Davies, R., & Steer, C.** (2022, November 22-25). Implementing and Measuring Impact of a five-year Translational Geriatric Oncology Research Program. [Poster presentation]. The Australian Association of Gerontology (AAG) Conference, Adelaide, Australia.

**Boak, J., Rasekaba, T., & Blackberry, I.** (2022, November 22-25). ImPaCt: Exploring the detection of complexity for older people in the community: a scoping review [Poster presentation]. Australian Association of Gerontology (AAG) Conference, Adelaide, Australia.

**Fan, H.** (2022, May 4-6). Stroke incidence and case-fatality in mainland China, Hong Kong, and Macao: Systematic review and meta-analysis [Conference presentation pre-recorded]. The 8th European Stroke Organisation Conference (ESOC2022), Lyon, France.

**Gilbertson, C.** (2022, August 27). A feasibility study exploring the use of virtual reality to alleviate patient fear of needles during medical treatment [Conference presentation online]. Victorian Perioperative Nurses Group Virtual Professional Development Day in Victoria, Australia.

**MacDermott, S., McLaren, D., Storey, A., Buck, B., Rizio, T., McKechnie, R., & Royals, K.** (2022, August 2-4). Everything Shut Down: COVID-related issues for regional Victorian communities [Conference presentation]. The National Rural Health Conference, Brisbane, Australia.

**Steer, C.** (2022 June 23-25). Geriatric Assessment in the Instagram Era: Adding photographs to an electronic geriatric assessment to enhance supportive care for older adults with cancer [Conference presentation online]. The Multinational Association of Supportive Care in Cancer (MASCC)/ISOO Annual meeting in Toronto, Canada.

**Steer, C.** (2022, October 28-30). Geriatric Assessment in the Instagram Era: The Addition of Patient Derived Photographs and Photovoice Discussion to an Electronic Geriatric Assessment to Enhance the Supportive Care of Older Adults with Cancer [Conference presentation]. The International Society of Geriatric Oncology (SIOG) Annual Conference, Geneva, Switzerland.



14 January

NEWSPAPER – ABC, GOULBURN MURRAY

***Photos could unlock better cancer care for geriatric patients, world-first study finds.***

Article about the PhotoVoice project including photos of Professor Irene Blackberry and Associate Professor Christopher Steer.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-01-14/research-finds-photos-can-improve-cancer-care-for-geriatrics/100756028>

**Professor Irene Blackberry, Associate Professor Christopher Steer**

14 January

TELEVISION – PRIME 7 NEWS

***Cancer Research***

A 2-minute news item about the PhotoVoice project including Irene, Christopher, and study participant Harry.

**Associate Professor Christopher Steer**

14 January

NEWSPAPER – THE BORDER MAIL

***Albury Wodonga Regional Cancer Centre study uses photos to improve care.***

Article about the PhotoVoice project including photos of Professor Irene Blackberry and Associate Professor Christopher Steer.

<https://www.bordermail.com.au/story/7581237/border-cancer-research-pictures-a-better-way-to-care-for-patients/>

**Professor Irene Blackberry, Associate Professor Christopher Steer**

14 January

RADIO – ABC BREAKFAST, BREAKFAST WITH SANDRA MOON

Associate Professor Christopher Steer was interviewed by Sandra Moon about the PhotoVoice project. The interview also played on Breakfast with Matt Dowling (Shepparton).

**Associate Professor Christopher Steer**

16 January

NEWSPAPER – THE BORDER MAIL, EDITORIAL

***OUR SAY: 'World-first' study another reason to support cancer centre.***

Editorial featuring the PhotoVoice project and including photos of Professor Irene Blackberry and Associate Professor Christopher Steer.

<https://www.bordermail.com.au/story/7581522/our-say-world-first-study-another-reason-to-support-cancer-centre/?cs=9683>

**Professor Irene Blackberry, Associate Professor Christopher Steer**

18 March

NEWSPAPER – OVENS AND MURRAY ADVERTISER

***Health Project for older people ramps up.***

An article about the project between Beechworth Health Services (BHS) and La Trobe University with other health service partners launched by Indi independent MP Helen. Dr Kathleen Brasher was mentioned as one of the guest speakers at the event launch.

**Dr Kathleen Brasher**

- 24 March** | NEWSPAPER – THE DAILY TELEGRAPH  
***Plan to stop medical bills bankrupting Australian cancer patients.***  
JRC affiliate researcher Associate Professor Christopher Steer was mentioned in his role as president of Private Cancer Physicians of Australia (PCPA).  
**Associate Professor Christopher Steer**
- 12 April** | NEWSPAPER – THE CANBERRA TIMES  
***Opinion: It's time to view the care economy as an investment, not a liability.***  
Opinion piece about reframing the care economy, by Professor Irene Blackberry.  
<https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/7695509/its-time-to-view-the-care-economy-as-an-investment-not-a-liability/>  
**Professor Irene Blackberry**
- 12 April** | NEWSPAPER – ST GEORGE AND SUTHERLAND SHIRE LEADER  
***Opinion: It's time to view the care economy as an investment, not a liability.***  
Opinion piece about reframing the care economy, by Professor Irene Blackberry.  
<https://www.theleader.com.au/story/7695509/its-time-to-view-the-care-economy-as-an-investment-not-a-liability/>  
**Professor Irene Blackberry**
- 4 May** | LA TROBE UNIVERSITY NEWS  
***Children helping our aged care crisis.***  
JRC Professional Doctorate student Darren Midgely's work in intergenerational aged care was featured.  
<https://www.latrobe.edu.au/news/articles/2022/opinion/children-helping-our-aged-care-crisis>  
**Darren Midgely**
- 1 June** | NEWSLETTER – AGED CARE INSITE  
***Boosting life quality through intergenerational programs.***  
JRC Professional Doctorate student, and Chaffey Aged Care CEO, Darren Midgely was interviewed about the intergenerational aged care program operated at Chaffey Aged Care.  
<https://www.agedcareinsite.com.au/2022/06/raising-quality-of-life-through-intergenerational-programs/>  
**Darren Midgely**
- 4 August** | NEWSPAPER – HERALD SUN  
***Rural aged-care crisis is just getting worse.***  
Opinion piece on the state of rural aged care, by Professor Irene Blackberry.  
**Professor Irene Blackberry**
- 23 August** | NEWSPAPER – ABC NEWS  
***Regional aged care shortage solution found by Gippsland community.***  
Professor Irene Blackberry was quoted in the ABC Gippsland piece on a community solution for aged care services.  
<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-08-23/regional-aged-care-shortage-solution-swiftscreek/101359722>  
**Professor Irene Blackberry**



31 August

NEWSPAPER – CANBERRA TIMES,

**The Jobs and Skill Summit can transform the entire care space.**

Opinion piece about the importance of integration in the care economy, by Professor Irene Blackberry.

<https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/7881215/the-jobs-summit-can-transform-the-entire-care-space/>

**Professor Irene Blackberry**

4 November

ALBURY-WODONGA HEALTH (AWH) RESEARCH OFFICE RESEARCH WEEK NEWS

Associate Professor Christopher Steer's research into the use of PhotoVoice in geriatric oncology to enable empowerment, patient-centred care and shared decision making, was highlighted in AWH Research Week, with a [video](#) describing his work.

**Associate Professor Christopher Steer**

4 November

ALBURY-WODONGA HEALTH (AWH) RESEARCH OFFICE RESEARCH WEEK NEWS

JRC Master's student Craig Gilberton's research into the use of virtual reality in adult patients with needle phobia was also highlighted in AWH Research Week, with a [video](#) describing his work.

**Craig Gilberton**



**Giving back to the elderly**

**The Jobs and Skill Summit can transform the entire care space**

**Photos could unlock better cancer care for geriatric patients, world-first study finds**

AWH Research Week | No City Centre Access and Lockdown  
Reported on Jan 2020 at 10:09am



Associate Prof. Chris Steer, Assoc. Prof. Christopher Steer and other researchers are asked about the new study. (Supplied: Albury Wodonga Regional Cancer Centre, Steer/PH)

A sleek Jaguar emblem, a black Labrador, a vintage car and a family portrait – these are just some of the photos that define cancer patient Henry Thomas. And they could be vital pieces in improving his oncology care.

The 75-year-old from Beechworth recently participated in a world-first study at the Albury Wodonga Regional Cancer Centre.

The study has an eye-catching title – Geriatric Oncology in the Instagram Era – and reveals how photographs could be key to improving hospital care for cancer patients aged over 70.

"They were getting a picture of who I am," Mr Thomas said.

"That allowed them to better tailor my care."

**Key points:**

- A world-first study has found photos can help improve supportive care for older cancer patients
- Patients submitted photos as part of the research which represented their identity, values and environment
- The project lead says more research is needed but it could be a powerful addition to standard practice



Old and young enjoy a walk with their family at Chaffey Aged Care Village, Picture Supplied.

**Boosting life quality through intergenerational programs**

An aged care home is bringing together older people and children to increase social connectivity and reduce loneliness.

Chief executive officer of Rural Care Australia, Darren Midgley, currently operates Chaffey Aged Care, a 130-bed residential facility in northwest Victoria.

He says that older people often become socially isolated as they come into aged care.

"In the program, we see a reduction in depression and social isolation amongst the older people," he told Aged Care Australia.

"They become more engaged – there is nothing more motivating than a five-year-old getting an older person to do something they might otherwise choose not to do."

Government data shows that over half of older people living in residential aged care show signs of depression.

Intergenerational programs may help to counter negative mental health effects, with emerging research showing promising results.

"Older people crave touch and interaction, and the children are very tactile," Darren points out.

"On the other side, children have a need to learn about the environment around them and older people want to share their life experiences."



**Cluster communities**

La Trobe University's Prof. Ann John, Research Centre for Rural Ageing Research director Irene Blackberry, said it was important for communities to step in when the government failed to provide housing.

"It is actually a good thing to see that the community actually are coming together to help solve the problems themselves," Professor Blackberry said.

Professor Blackberry said "cluster communities", where people of similar age lived near each other, provided independence alongside accessible care.

"It's about options for people to continue to live in that community because as people get older, they need to have some support," she said.



Professor Irene Blackberry, research director at the Research Centre for Rural Ageing.

**Regional aged care shortage solution found by Gippsland community**

AWH Research Week | No City Centre Access and Lockdown  
Reported on 21 Aug 2020 at 11:34pm, updated on 21 Aug 2020 at 10:09am



Local real estate agent and local council councillor Lisa Gorman (left) and local real estate agent Lisa Gorman (right). (Supplied: Lisa Gorman)



Chris Steer (left) and Christopher Steer (right) at the geriatric oncology study at the Albury Wodonga Regional Cancer Centre. (Supplied: Albury Wodonga Regional Cancer Centre)



## Peer-reviewed journal articles

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Gallegos, D., **McKechnie, R.**, McAndrew, R., Russell-Bennett, R., & Smith, G. (2022). How gender, education and nutrition knowledge contribute to food insecurity among adults in Australia. *Health and Social Care in the community*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hsc.13715>

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