



Faculty of Health  
Research News April 2024



# Faculty of Health

Research Newsletter April 2024

Transforming  
> Tomorrow



## Faculty of Health

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# Welcome



We have had continued high research activity in the months of December 2023 through to the beginning of March 2024. I thought the burst of activity at the end of 2023 would see a quieter period in early 2024... I was wrong again!!!! In the first 50 working days of 2024 staff have advised me they will be submitting over 30 external grant applications and we have a long list of journal article publications to verify. In this newsletter we highlight some excellent research grant news, list some of our wide range of research publications and report on some important developments with our research Centres and Themes.

I would also like to welcome some senior staff to the Faculty of Health who will be developing new programs of research (and for a couple developing our education programs as well) – I’m sure you will all make them feel welcome:

- Professor Maria Constantinou has been appointed as Professor of Physiotherapy at Southern Cross University to lead the design and delivery of a new academic course offering in the discipline. Maria completed her PhD on hip osteoarthritis and her research interests are in sports and exercise physiotherapy, including osteoarthritis, sports injury prevention and taping.
- Professor Nat Munro has been appointed as the Professor of Speech Pathology and is profiled later in this newsletter.
- Professor James Bennett-Levy commenced on the 1st March as the Professor of Mental Health and Psychological Wellbeing. He is one of the world’s most published researchers on therapist training,

with ground-breaking research on his self-practice/self-reflection (SP/SR) approach to training and therapist skill development. Recently, he has focused on psychedelic-assisted therapy.

In this newsletter we also celebrate the 20-year anniversary of the establishment of the Centre for Children and Young People. This Centre has had amazing international impact especially in the area of leading work in the ethics of working with and researching with children. Throughout its existence the Centre has been led by Anne Graham and I am sure you will all join me in celebrating the Vice Chancellor’s recent announcement that henceforth she is to be accorded the, much deserved, title of Distinguished Professor Anne Graham AO. These titles are only rarely awarded

## Welcome

and recognize long and distinguished service to a particular University, and a particular area of academic study, in someone who continues to have a current appointment with the University. We will ask Anne to tell us about her amazing academic story for the next Newsletter.

There are a range of other interesting and important stories in this Newsletter and I hope you enjoy reading them all!

**Professor Marianne Wallis**  
Associate Dean (Research)  
Faculty of Health





# 1

**Centre updates**





# National Centre for Naturopathic Medicine

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

## Centre and theme updates

### Centre Update

The beginning of 2024 saw the National Centre for Naturopathic Medicine bustling with activity, highlighting our steadfast dedication to research and education. The Centre has also recently finalised its strategic planning for 2024, delineating priorities and focal points for the coming year(s).

Empowering the next generation of researchers through capacity building remains a key priority area, and this includes the annual delivery of the Research Futures Scholarship Program. During the Summer Term seven undergraduate students conducted small research projects under the supervision of experienced NCNM and SCU staff, and they presented their findings at the annual seminar. In the last four years, 26 undergraduate students have been awarded these scholarships, with nearly half of them currently enrolled in Honours, Master's, or PhD programs. Additionally, they have collectively contributed to seven peer-reviewed articles, with several more currently in progress. The transition into research degrees and ongoing publication efforts beyond the scholarship period serve as a testament to the program's efficacy in fostering capacity building and cultivating a new wave of researchers.

Researchers at the National Centre for Naturopathic Medicine have also been successfully applying for DVCR seed grants as part of the Harvest to Health Cluster. In her project, Andrea Bugarcic will investigate, using a pre-clinical approach, the potential therapeutic benefits of psychedelic mushrooms in managing Parkinson's Disease. Although there have been anecdotal reports of Parkinson's Disease patients trying psychedelics, their effectiveness and safety have not been firmly established. Andrea's research will utilise a precision medicine approach and serve as a crucial initial phase in identifying specific mushroom species for targeted therapeutic purposes. Dr Alana Gall has received a grant to examine the need for a best-practice framework for research and development with native Australian plants, to address the often-disparate needs of both Indigenous communities and research teams when it comes to native plants and their potential medicinal use.

### Project Update: Flood Recovery for Regional Marginalised Populations [FLOMAP]

Led by A/Prof Matthew Leach

In 2022, the Northern Rivers region of NSW encountered catastrophic floods. Researchers in the National Centre for Naturopathic Medicine have been examining the impact of these floods, and the adequacy of flood response and recovery efforts in addressing the needs of marginalised groups living in the Northern Rivers region; in particular, people identifying as migrant/refugee, those experiencing homelessness, and those identifying as sexuality and/or gender diverse. The study is currently inviting adults from each of these groups to participate in a 30-40 minute interview, either online or face-to-face. The research team welcomes you, or anyone you know belonging to one of these marginalised groups, who were impacted by the 2022 floods and would be willing to share their story about their experience, to please email [ncnmtrials@scu.edu.au](mailto:ncnmtrials@scu.edu.au) for further information.



# Centre for Children and Young People

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

## Centre and theme updates



## Centre for Children and Young People celebrates its 20-year anniversary

Late February 2024 marked the 20-year anniversary of the establishment of the Centre for Children and Young People. Two decades on, there's still much to be done in ensuring the dignity, rights and wellbeing of children and young people are understood and adequately addressed in research, policy and practice, including the right to be heard in matters that impact their lives.

Despite remaining committed to the work still to be done, we couldn't let this moment pass without acknowledging the contributions, support and vision of SO many colleagues right from the beginning, both internal and external to SCU, and those who joined along the way. You are an integral part of this story – thank you for being champions of the Centre's work. So, too, the support and collaboration we have enjoyed with over 100 government, non-government and community partners regionally, nationally and internationally, who have taught us much about ensuring the research we do is relevant, rigorous and accessible to those who can best use it. Some have been on this journey with us over countless years and many projects.

Very especially, though, we are indebted to the many thousands of children and young people who have participated in our research, as participants, co-researchers and advisors. It is from you that we have learned the most – and in return we hope that we've done justice to this.

Twenty years on, there is much that is happening across the world that is unsettling in its short- and long-term impact on the rights, wellbeing and safety of children. Moving forward will require, more than ever, that we each remain vigilant to the ways we listen to the views of children and young people and work together to find evidence informed solutions that honour their experiences and support their aspirations for the future.

For more information visit  
[scu.edu.au/centre-for-children-and-young-people/our-research/](https://scu.edu.au/centre-for-children-and-young-people/our-research/)



# Mental Health and Psychosocial Wellbeing

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

## Centre and theme updates

### Consulting with industry to achieve better mental health services for young children

Researchers from the mental health and psychosocial wellbeing cluster have been undertaking a scoping review focusing on mental health services for young children in rural, regional and remote settings. Key academic findings were that innovations around tele-health, service structures and shifting therapeutic roles were all viable solutions to the lack of services for this population.

These findings were then shared through industry-based workshops held in Lismore and Coffs Harbour in partnership with the North Coast Allied Health Association and The Federation University. Nearly 40 practitioners and service leaders attended these workshops and confirmed our academic findings as resonating with their industry-based experiences. Strategies for future improvements included:

- A dedicated tele-psychiatry service situated within a one stop integrated service hub that outreaches to schools, inclusive of early intervention.
- A hub and spoke, one stop shop, (multi sector LHD, PHN and university) offering clinical services, training and supervision. Hubs need to be co-designed and include cultural considerations. Funding for the hub would be a shared model.

The project led by Associate Professor Jacqui Yoxall and was supported by Professor's Happell, Hurley and Hutchinson, Dr Kitty Foley, Kate Curry (ECR), Paula Longbottom (RA) and Jill Parkes (Library).





# Health Services, Clinical and Community

This theme has three streams.

1. Health services research.
2. Pre-clinical and clinical research that involve a range of health professionals and biomedical scientists; and
3. Health workforce development for clinical service delivery. Nursing, midwifery, allied health and biomedical researchers work in multi-disciplinary teams with a range of clinical partners in this theme.

## Centre and theme updates

### Accelerating Social Prescribing in Australia

HSCC members Associate Professors Michelle Bissett, JR Baker and Christina Aggar joined the best and brightest at The National Press Club in Canberra on Friday 29th February for the 'ACCELERATING SOCIAL PRESCRIBING IN AUSTRALIA' roundtable event.

Over 60 experts from a range of health, research, finance, government and non-government sectors worked together to co-develop a thought leadership White Paper designed to accelerate social prescribing policy and practice in Australia. The roundtable built upon the increasing momentum and potential for social prescribing services to strengthen primary, preventive, mental health, and aged care, which is increasingly recognised by stakeholders. There is new knowledge, new national and global networks, new and emergent commissioning practices, and new service models.

The work from the roundtable will generate a contemporary suite of strategic and practical recommendations to accelerate, scale and embed evidence-informed social prescribing services and evaluate their implementation. These will be of value to policy makers, researchers and health and social care providers. Within HSCC, Christina, JR and Michelle have recently begun working with PhD student Casandra Tognarini to explore permaculture, as a social prescribing intervention, with adults living with long term mental health conditions. This research is being completed in partnership with Primary & Community Care Services on the Gold Coast.

If you're interested to learn more about social prescribing, check out this link:

<https://www.creatingopportunitiestogether.com.au/>







# Physical Activity, Sport and Exercise Research

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

## Centre and theme updates

### Exploring Exploration: A New PASER-Movember Funded Research Fellow

Dr Scott Goddard, who completed his PhD at SCU in 2022, has started a new Research Fellow role within the Faculty of Health's Physical Activity, Sport, and Exercise (PASER) theme.

Funded by Movember, Scott's research project will focus on the psychology of exploration and exploratory behaviours in sport and how they can be used to avoid the negative effects of pressure as well as improving outcomes such as retention, flourishing, and well-being.

"My research interests align really nicely with Movember's impact strategy – so I'm very excited about the partnership," said Scott.

In terms of the project, Scott said, "exploration is at the heart of motivation and is linked to various positive outcomes such as enjoyment, confidence, and reduced pressure. But we often see sport structured around fixed outcomes and an emphasis on competition, which likely stifles explorative experiences".

"So, I'm interested in understanding more about the subjective experience of exploration, the structure of activities that promote it, and identifying how we can create more opportunities for exploration to help people get more out of sport".

PASER Lead, A/Prof Christian Swann, recognised that this is a unique opportunity for Scott to gain both academic and industry experience: "Movember have a strong focus on knowledge translation and scaling interventions to reach large audiences. This fellowship will give Scott scope to continue building his research track record, while also learning about how to work effectively with industry partners and communicate research findings in a way that's usable in the 'real-world'. We're excited to follow Scott's progress over the next couple of years."





# 2

**Publications**





# Publications

Faculty of Health staff have reported 44 peer reviewed research journal articles and two research book chapters in December 2023 - February 2024.

## Publications

Here is a selection of some recent publications to show you the breadth of work being undertaken by our health researchers:

Cashin, A., Morphet, J., Wilson, N., & Pracilio, A. (2024). Barriers to communication with people with developmental disabilities: A reflexive thematic analysis. *Nursing & Health Sciences*, 26(1). <https://doi.org/10.1111/nhs.13103>

Corcoran, D., Climstein, M., Whitting, J., & Del Vecchio, L. (2024). Impact Force and Velocities for Kicking Strikes in Combat Sports: A Literature Review. *Sports*, 12(3). <https://doi.org/10.3390/sports12030074>

Eccleston, C., Marsden, E., Craswell, A., Sweeny, A., Howell, N., Wallis, M., & Crilly, J. (2023). Impact of COVID-19 state-wide lockdown on older adult presentations to Queensland emergency departments. *Emergency Medicine Australasia*, 35(5), 799–808. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1742-6723.14236>

Grace, S., Engel, R., Mastronardo, C., Muddle, L., Fleischmann, M., Vaughan, B., & Fazalbhoy, A. (2024). Perceptions of Australian osteopaths on the use of telehealth for patient care: Barriers and enablers for implementation. *International Journal of Osteopathic Medicine*, 51. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijosm.2023.100696>

Lakeman, R., Foster, K., Happell, B., Hazelton, M., Moxham, L., & Hurley, J. (2024). Informing the development of a fit for purpose mental health nursing curriculum: A survey of mental health nurse academics in Australia. *International Journal of Mental Health Nursing*, 33(1), 93–103. <https://doi.org/10.1111/inm.13226>

Long, T., Aggar, C., & Grace, S. (2024). Trauma-informed care education for midwives: Does education improve attitudes towards trauma-informed care? *Midwifery*, 131. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.midw.2024.103950>



Poulus, D. R., Sargeant, J., Zarate, D., Griffiths, M. D., & Stavropoulos, V. (2024). Burnout, resilience, and coping among esports players: A network analysis approach. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 153. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2024.108139>

Russ, E., McFadden, P., Griffiths, A., Lähteinen, S., & Tham, P. (2024). How do we prepare students for the challenges of social work and what can we learn from each other? Examples from five countries around the world. In J. Przeperski (Ed.), *The Routledge International Handbook of Social Work Teaching*. Routledge.

Willis, R. L., Brymer, E., Sharma-Brymer, V., & Leach, M. (2024). Refocusing on nature: the role of nature reintegration in environmental, mental, and societal wellbeing. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 15. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1351759>



# 3

**Grant and Award Success**  
**Engagement and Impact**





# Grant and Award Success

## Successful external funding

In total, in the last three months, another \$662,004 of external funding has been fully signed off by the DVCR for FoH researchers. Here is a selection of the successful external competitive grants from December 2023 – February 2024. Congratulations to all the researchers involved:

### Grant success

**Graham, A** 2024. Collaboration Agreement: Mackillip DoE Grant. MacKillop Family Services Limited \$118,503

**Hassmen, P** 2024. Impact on Early Life Experiences on Neurodevelopmental and Mental Health Outcomes for Aboriginal Children in Out of Home Care. Commonwealth Department of Education and Training. \$41,400

**Swann, C** 2024. Open(ing up) goals and physical activity. Australian Research Council (ARC). \$438,567.

**Engel, R** 2024. Funding Agreement: Osteopathic intervention for inflammatory conditions of the lactating breast: a case series. PaulEva Pty Ltd. \$6,000.

It is very exciting to see A/ Prof. Christian Swann be successful with an ARC Discovery Project. Chirstian has slowly (well actually not that slowly) and surely built up his research track record, has worked with excellent external collaborators, has developed and refined his writing and project management skills and is now seeing the rewards for

this targeted, developmental approach to major grant success. Now we all just have to find out what are the benefits of Open Goals!!!

SCU is also very pleased to see that Prof. Hassmen has been successful in being awarded a National Industry PhD Program Scholarship for one of his students. The program (and the PhD project) is being undertaken in collaboration with AbCare and the details are:

**Award details:**  
**Program/Stream:** Industry Researcher  
**Project title:** Understand factors that contribute to high support needs and assess the efficacy of a tailored early support program for Aboriginal children in Out-of-Home Care  
**University:** Southern Cross University  
**Industry Partner:** Abcare (Coffs Harbour Aboriginal Family Community Care Centre Aboriginal Corporation)







# Engagement and Impact

Research in Work Integrated Learning: Innovations in student-led research

## Engagement and Impact

The collage features several key items:

- Social Work Education Journal:** "Connectivity: Engaging with Industry in the Creation of Student Placement Opportunities" by Monica Short, Erica Russ, Scott Garshore, Natalie Morton, Dalis Pisk, Robyn Fitzroy, Sara Hinchin, Sheridan Eynon, Davinia Jones, Bee Burrowes, and Angela Whisby.
- ANZSWWER Symposium:** "Transforming field education: Exploring creative innovations and practices in Aotearoa, rural Australia, Canada and Ireland" by Monica Short, Erica Russ, Cherie Appleton, Carole Adamson, Louise Whitaker, Caroline Walters, Melissa Petrakis, Lynn Berger, Ralena Darcombe, Emma Rush, Joanne Rose, Scott Garshore, Carmel Halton, Brenda Morris.
- Research Article:** "Enablers, markers, and aspects of quality innovative placements across distance: insights from a co-operative inquiry" by Monica Short, Carmel Halton, Brenda Morris, Joanne Rose, Louise Whitaker, Erica Russ.
- Research Article:** "Experiences of social work students undertaking a remote research-based placement during a global pandemic" by G. Lomas, L. Gerstenberg, E. Kennedy, K. Fletcher, N. Ivory, L. Whitaker.
- Doing Research Online:** "Cooperative Inquiry Online: Investigating Innovation in Work-Integrated Learning Across Four Countries" by Louise Whitaker, Erica Russ, Melissa Petrakis, Carmel Halton, Caroline Walters, Mark Woolvis, Monica Short.
- 2021 Asia-Pacific Regional Social Work Conference:** "Co-operative inquiry: Applying a collaborative research method for collectively capturing practice innovations" by Louise Whitaker, Erica Russ, Monica Short, Nicola Ivory, Robyn Fitzroy.
- 26th Asia-Pacific Regional Social Work Conference 2021:** "Student Led Co-operative Inquiry: Inquiring Into Rural Disadvantage and Advantage" by Jessica Lawson, Brona Piacca, Dr. Nicola Ivory.
- 9th ICSD Asia Pacific Biennial Conference:** "on Sustainable Development Efforts in Times of Crises" at Thammasat University, Bangkok campus, Thailand (29 November - 1 December 2022).

Student-led research of Dr Erica Russ and Dr Louise Whitaker has recently been acknowledged for *Achievement in research about collaborations between communities and education providers in work-integrated learning in community services, human services or social work* in the Australian and New Zealand Social Work and Welfare Education and Research (ANZSWWER) Research Achievement Awards 2023. The research was conducted in partnership with eleven academics (co-recipients of the award) and seventeen students from: University Colledge Cork, University of New England, Charles Sturt University and University of Sydney. Using cooperative inquiry, three student-led research projects were completed addressing:

- experiences of social work students undertaking a remote research placement during a global pandemic;

- a new perspective regarding the impact of rural disadvantage on accessing services: Hearing the Australian and Irish social work student voice; and
- a transnational student-led, rural-focused inquiry: Social work educational competency in disaster management.

Weekly intervarsity Zoom meetings fostered student and academic professional networks. Academic mentorship and direct experience of participatory research developed students' research and collaboration skills. Project findings were discussed at national and international conferences and published in reputable journals. The award acknowledges the development of methodological expertise and leadership of the SCU Academics in the participatory research methodology of co-operative inquiry.





# 4

**Faculty Researchers  
in the Media**



# Faculty Researchers in the Media

## Faculty Researchers in the Media

Social prescribing works, so why isn't it everywhere?

**Baker, JR Adjunct Associate Professor.**  
ABC Radio National. 17 February 2024

[abclisten.page.link/2ecAv6jGp76G5Ecr8](https://www.abclisten.page.link/2ecAv6jGp76G5Ecr8)

Slipping on Your New Year's Resolutions? Science Tips to Get on Track

**Swann, Christian.** Scientific American. 22 January 2024

[www.scientificamerican.com/article/slipping-on-your-new-years-resolutions-science-tips-to-get-on-track](https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/slipping-on-your-new-years-resolutions-science-tips-to-get-on-track)

The Role of Nature Reintegration in Well-Being

**Wills, Royce.** Therapy Tips. 5 March 2024

[therapytips.org/interviews/southern-cross-university-researcher-reveals-the-role-of-nature-reintegration-in-well-being](https://therapytips.org/interviews/southern-cross-university-researcher-reveals-the-role-of-nature-reintegration-in-well-being)



# 5

**Researcher in  
the Spotlight**





# Researcher in the Spotlight

Professor Nat Munro



Professor Nat Munro

## Researcher in the Spotlight

### Professor Nat Munro

Dr Natalie (Nat) Munro is a certified practicing speech pathologist who joins Southern Cross University as Professor of Speech Pathology. Nat's program of research focuses on optimising children's communication skills and in particular, their speech, language and literacy abilities.

Nat is a graduate of The University of Sydney where she completed a PhD (2008) and a Graduate Certificate in Higher Education Studies (2009). Nat held leadership positions including Course Director undergraduate speech pathology, Honours Coordinator and Academic Advisor. She is also passionate about mentoring early and mid-career academics in programs like The Sydney Women's Leadership Program and APRU Asia-Pacific Women in Leadership Mentoring Program.

One of Nat's current research projects is supporting teaching staff in delivering the first Australian pilot of the Nuffield Early Language Intervention program for kindergarten children as part of the NSW K-2 English syllabus, implemented in 2023. Working collaboratively with teachers just makes good sense! This ensures that all children can thrive and develop their oral language skills – skills that are crucial for positive academic and social outcomes. The project is in its second year and on track for examining its implementation outcomes of teacher/school acceptability, appropriateness, fidelity and sustainability as well as tracking student outcomes on measures of oral language, literacy and psychosocial development.

Nat is also passionate about optimising participation of young people with communication disability. Young people with communication disability can have difficulties with speaking, listening, reading, writing and/or social interaction and this can impact both face to face and online worlds. Her PhD candidate, Nichola Shelton is conducting research to better understand the lived experiences of young people with communication disability and their use of social media. You can read about young peoples' access to speech pathology services around Australia [here](#).

Another favourite area of research and clinical practice for Nat is working with toddlers who are struggling to learn and say words. It is hard to discern late talkers from late bloomers but if a toddler has less than 50 words at the age of two and is getting frustrated by not having enough words to communicate with, then seeing a speech pathologist could help! Nat and her team have conducted vocabulary intervention research for late talkers with collaborators from The University of Hong Kong, The University of Sydney and Western University. Nat is keen to implement some training for SCU speech pathology students in the use of this vocabulary intervention for late talkers that could then be implemented during clinical placement across the Southern Cross University Health Clinics.

Nat is keen to greet and meet SCU colleagues so if you'd like to [get in touch with Prof Munro](#), she'd love to hear from you!



6

**PhD Candidate in the Spotlight**  
**Masters Candidate in the Spotlight**



# PhD Candidate in the Spotlight

Georgia Rowland

## PhD Candidate in the Spotlight



Georgia Rowland

### Georgia Rowland

Georgia Rowland has recently submitted her thesis for examination. Within the Faculty of Health, Georgia's research focuses on emotion regulation and improving outcomes for Indigenous Australians in out-of-home care. Supervised by Dr Emily Hindman and Prof. Julie Jomeen, her thesis topic, "Emotion Regulation and Mindfulness in Aboriginal Out-of-Home Care Children", explored how mindfulness could be utilised to improve emotional well-being in Aboriginal out-of-home care children. Specifically looking at how utilising novel technology such as Virtual Reality can help overcome adherence and engagement issues often faced by children in care.

Her systematic review, recently published in the Journal of Child and Family Studies, evaluated current mindfulness-based interventions targeted at children and evaluated not only their efficacy on emotion regulation but also the empirical quality of this current research. The findings of the review presented as part of this thesis revealed that while there are elements of mindfulness-based interventions that can lead to improved emotion regulation such as the length and consistency of intervention, the diversity of interventions which yielded improvements in emotion regulation implies no "best practice" format has yet been developed.

Her thesis further explores how little research aims to support Aboriginal children within the out-of-home care system, despite surplus research highlighting the high risk for negative later-life sequelae these children face. Georgia's research aimed to highlight the needs of Aboriginal children in out-of-home care through a chart analysis to inform future research and also provide the groundwork for Virtual Reality mindfulness training as a potential avenue of therapeutic care. Chart analysis findings revealed that clinical symptom scales completed by carers do not implicitly reflect the mental health experiences or needs of Aboriginal children in care. In particular, internal symptom expressions such as depression and anxiety are underreported. Despite the significant proportion of children experiencing poor mental health, over half the sample were engaging and achieving satisfactory grades at school, while just less than half were failing or consistently not attending.

Finally, findings from the pilot Virtual Reality Mindfulness study revealed positive improvement in state mindfulness and acceptance of the program in Aboriginal children in out-of-home care with complex mental health presentations. This thesis offers a jumping-off point for further research into an area with significant opportunity for impact, highlighting some of the considerations necessary for work within this sample, as well as tentative support for novel VR interventions.





# PhD Candidate in the Spotlight

Tendayi Roy Chihaka

## PhD Candidate in the Spotlight



Tendayi Roy Chihaka

### Tendayi Roy Chihaka

Tendayi Roy Chihaka is a second-year PhD candidate at the National Centre for Naturopathic Medicine under the supervision of Prof. Jon Wardle, Dr. Peter Bai James, and Prof. Ossy Kasilo. Roy's project aims to develop an appropriate model/framework for regulating Traditional and Complementary Medicines in Medicines Regulatory Agencies (MRAs) in sub-Saharan African countries. Traditional and Complementary Medicines (T&CM), a diverse healthcare system comprising of Practices, Practitioners, and Products, has seen increased usage and acceptance in the region under consideration. At the forefront of this recognition drive is the World Health Organization, which has called for member states to incorporate T&CM into national healthcare systems to attain universal health coverage (UHC). In the WHO Global Report on Traditional Medicines of 2019, member states from the SSA cited a lack of appropriate mechanisms to regulate T&CM practices and practitioners and a lack of expertise within Medicine Regulatory Agencies as barriers to UHC. This phenomenon is despite the different strategies and recommendations put forward by the WHO.

Roy's methodological approach would be by use of a mixed-method exploratory sequential study design comprising of the following:

- First, using document searches for legislation and a scoping review of T&CM-related scholarly work, a T&CM Policy typology for the SSA will be established.
- Secondly, in-depth interviews will be conducted with stakeholders in SSA to identify the enablers and barriers to T&CM regulation.
- Thirdly, a novel T&CM analytic tool will be developed and tested to establish the performance of current T&CM policy and regulatory strategies within the region.
- Lastly, a regulatory model will be proposed and tested using consensus methods with stakeholders in the SSA region.

This research is envisaged to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by providing practical application on the appropriate regulation of T&CM.



# Masters Candidate in the Spotlight

Lisa Couzens

## Masters Candidate in the Spotlight



**Photo:** Lisa examining the data logger and sensors with Kate Giles (who has wonderfully developed these for this empirical study).

## Lisa Couzens

Lisa Couzens is an occupational therapist with over 20 years clinical experience and a passion for pressure injury prevention, particularly for wheelchair users. Lisa made the move to the world of academia in 2019 and embarked on a research journey under the guidance of Chris Stevens and Ev Innes. Lisa's research is focussed toward the microclimate at the wheelchair cushion and wheelchair user interface, with the goal to minimise increases in body temperature and sweating for wheelchair users.

After going through a steep learning curve into the world of systematic review and meta-analysis, she has recently had her first publication accepted to the Australian Occupational Therapy Journal. The article is titled "The effect of wheelchair cushion properties on the microclimate at the cushion-user interface: A systematic review and meta-analysis".

Lisa is continuing on with her research for wheelchair users living and working in warm climates and is currently collecting data for a quantitative study to provide further evidence to guide practitioners with wheelchair cushion prescription to support pressure injury prevention.

[doi.org/10.1111/1440-1630.12932](https://doi.org/10.1111/1440-1630.12932)



## Share your research success with us

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

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

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