

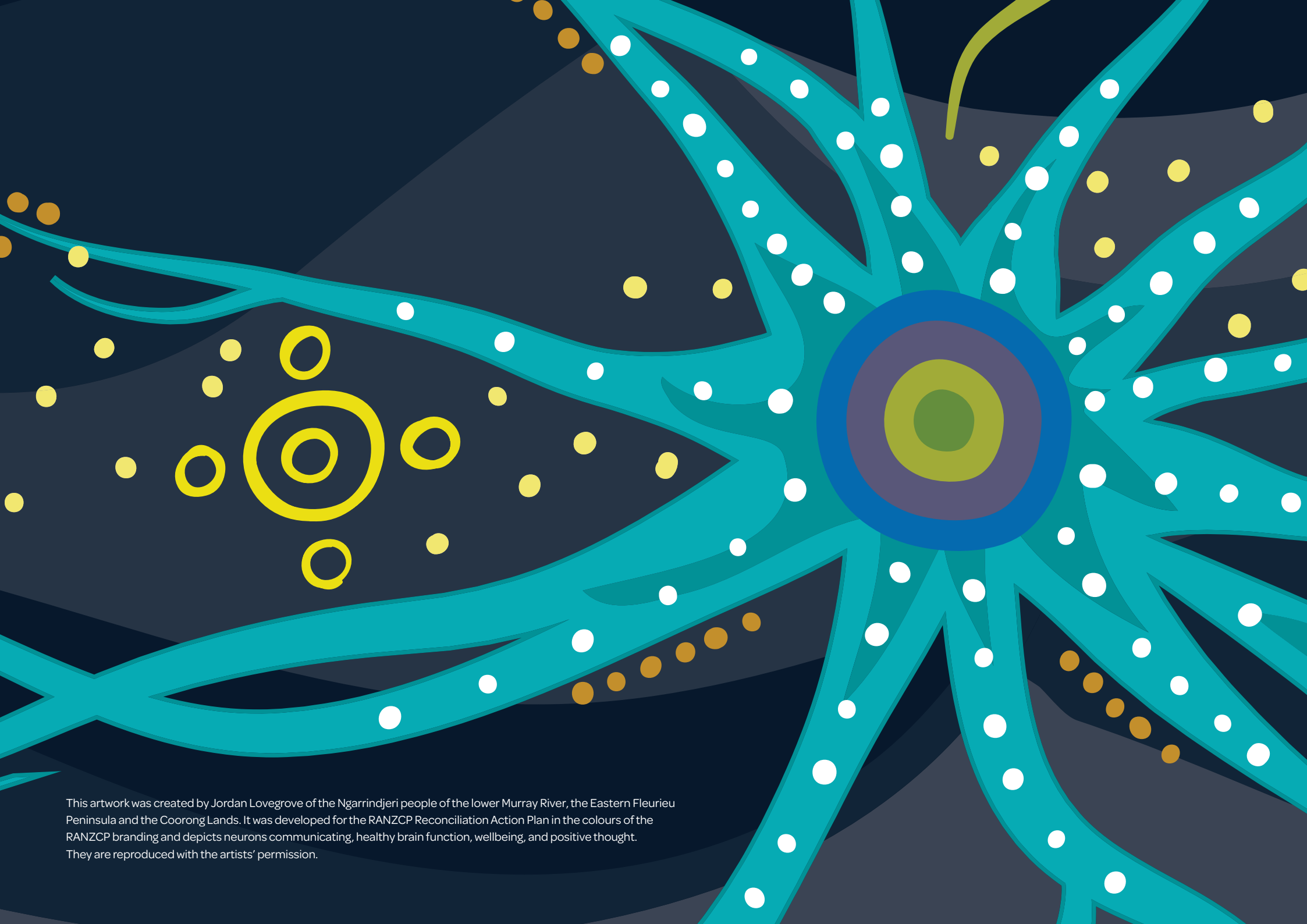
Impact Report 2025



RANZCP
Foundation

Transforming mental health care,
creating a world of potential





This artwork was created by Jordan Lovegrove of the Ngarrindjeri people of the lower Murray River, the Eastern Fleurieu Peninsula and the Coorong Lands. It was developed for the RANZCP Reconciliation Action Plan in the colours of the RANZCP branding and depicts neurons communicating, healthy brain function, wellbeing, and positive thought. They are reproduced with the artists' permission.

Acknowledgement of Country

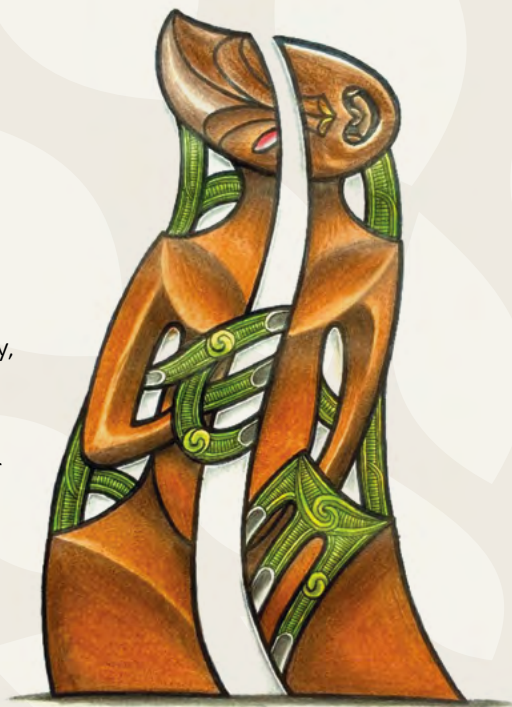
The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP) acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the First Nations and the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands and waters now known as Australia, and Māori as tangata whenua in Aotearoa, also known as New Zealand.

We recognise and value the traditional knowledge held by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Māori.

We honour and respect the Elders past and present, who weave their wisdom into all realms of life – spiritual, cultural, social, emotional, and physical.

Acknowledgement of Lived Experience

We recognise those with lived and living experience of mental health challenges and distress, their chosen families, whānau, carers and kin. Their contributions, diverse perspectives, insight, and courage keep us grounded and inclusive, and focused on humanity, healing, and hope. We strive to work in genuine partnership in all that we do, honouring their voices by centring their experiences and expertise.



This artwork was created by Mark Kopua.
A unique wood carving and artwork visually represents Tū Te Akaaka Roa.

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Thank you

My sincere thanks to everyone whose generosity continues to shape the future of psychiatric research and practice.

Dr Astha Tomar



From the President

Writ large within the pages of this Impact Report is the power of philanthropy and the importance of leadership within the psychiatric profession.

The RANZCP Foundation is our College's quiet achiever, playing a key but unassuming role in sustaining academic psychiatry by funding and encouraging researchers at different stages of their careers.

Thanks to the generosity of donors, the Foundation continues to advance psychiatric research and practice, build capacity, foster innovation, and support research that delivers real-world impact.

Significantly, the Foundation invests in the people who will lead and shape the future of our profession. In 2025, the Foundation strengthened its investment in PhD research and maintained funding across a range of career stages, including early career and established researchers working on clinically focused projects relevant to contemporary practice.

The Foundation's activities also reflect the College's broader priorities, including equity, leadership development, and strengthening First Nations participation in psychiatry. Through careful governance and delivery, the Foundation helps fund research that underpins modern psychiatric practice.

On behalf of the College, I thank all those who contribute to the Foundation's work. Your generosity enables research that informs psychiatric practice and contributes to better care.

Dr Astha Tomar

PRESIDENT, ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND COLLEGE OF PSYCHIATRISTS



From the Chair

In 2025, the RANZCP Foundation continued to strengthen its financial position, reflecting the confidence and generosity of its donors. Fundraising income increased to \$607,942 (up from \$376,035 in 2024), and the Foundation's corpus grew to \$1.94 million. This growth has strengthened the Foundation's capacity to support academic psychiatry in a stable and sustainable way.

During the year, the Foundation awarded 16 grants and scholarships across a range of career stages, including support for three emerging PhD researchers. The Foundation acknowledges the support of Dr Bryanne Barnett AM, the Trisno Family, and its Foundation Partners, whose philanthropy made this funding possible. The continued commitment of Dr Alagappa Arumugam AM FRANZCP and Dr Banu Arumugam has also enabled the ongoing delivery of the gamadji nanggiti Scholarship program.

The Foundation also progressed the development of a new scholarship to be introduced in 2026. This initiative is intended to support emerging researchers working outside traditional academic pathways and to broaden participation in psychiatric research.

The Masterclass program continued to support professional learning, with funds raised reinvested into the Foundation's grants and scholarships—creating a strong link between education and ongoing investment in research, practice, and the future of psychiatry.

The Foundation thanks the contributors to the Psychiatry & Intellectual Disability masterclass – Scientia Professor Julian Trollor AM, Tahli Hind, Associate Professor Rebecca Koncz, Dr Cathy Franklin, and the National Centre of Excellence in Intellectual Disability Health – as well as the presenters of A Primer on Sleep and Sleep Disorders for the Practising Adult Psychiatrist: Dr David Cunnington, Dr Curtis Gray, and Dr Meryl Dahlitz.

The Foundation also welcomed growing community engagement during the year, including a new community-led fundraising initiative: a Bollywood concert held in Brisbane and led by Dr Siddhartha Makwana. This initiative reflects the diverse forms of support contributing to the Foundation's work.

The Foundation acknowledges the contribution of lived-experience community members, as well as members of the Committee for Research and other Faculties, who give their time and expertise to the assessment of grant applications. Their involvement is critical to a fair and robust review process.

This Impact Report profiles the sixteen grant and scholarship recipients supported in 2025 and outlines how their work, together with Indigenous leadership initiatives, is contributing to the future of mental health care.

The Foundation remains committed to advancing academic psychiatry for the benefit of the profession and the communities it serves, and thanks all those whose generosity and engagement made this work possible.

Associate Professor John Allan

CHAIR, RANZCP FOUNDATION COMMITTEE

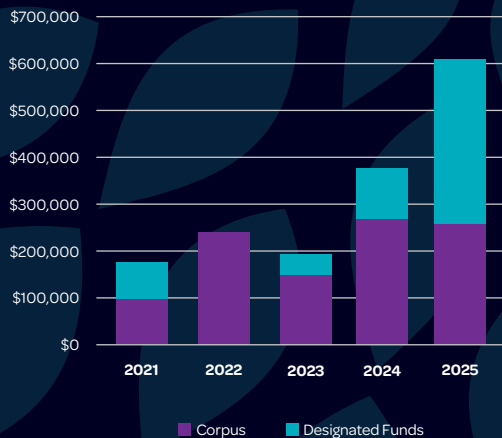
Financial snapshot

Fundraising income grew
62% to **\$607,942**

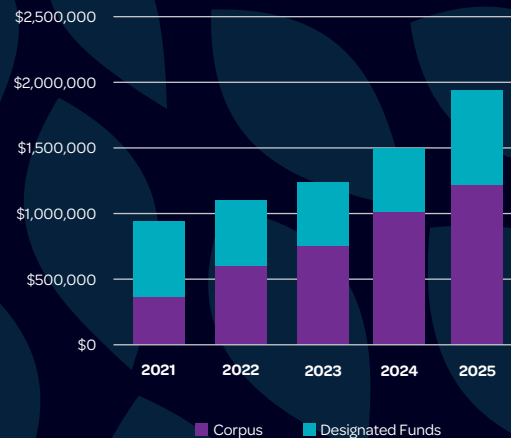
New projects funded:
\$246,959
awarded to 16 emerging researchers

Corpus of **\$1.94m** supporting a sustainable grants program
with over **\$1.2m** in untied funds and more than **\$700k** in tied funds

INCOME



FOUNDATION FUND



Five years on

By now, it goes without saying that 2020 was a uniquely challenging year for all of us. I am pleased to report that, despite the hardships of the bushfires and the global coronavirus pandemic, the RANZCP Foundation has continued to grow.

DR ELIZABETH O'BRIEN, CHAIR OF THE RANZCP FOUNDATION COMMITTEE (2020)

Five years on, Dr O'Brien's words continue to ring true. The Foundation's corpus, which stood at \$281,044 in 2020, has grown to nearly \$2 million, and the scope of its work has broadened accordingly.

The confidence expressed in 2020 can be seen in the research trajectories shaped through the Foundation's grants and scholarships.

Researchers at formative stages

In 2020, while still a trainee, Dr Hannah Dobson received a Beverley Raphael New Investigator Grant for her project Detecting and managing PTSD amongst new mothers. Her work contributed to the validation of a rating scale for birth-related PTSD and the development of a manualised psychological intervention for birth trauma.

Reflecting on this early investment, Dr Dobson noted:

"The grant fostered my interest in perinatal psychiatry, an area I have continued to work in as a Fellow."

Another trainee recipient, Dr Magdalena Hagn, received a Beverley Raphael New Investigator Grant during the early stages of her research career for her project Investigating anxiety in older people with psychotic disorders.

As Dr Hagn reflected,

“Receiving the award was encouraging early in my research career. It contributed positively to my academic CV and helped me remain involved in research alongside clinical training.”

Her findings were later published in the Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry and presented at several conferences, forming part of a broader program examining psychiatric comorbidity in older adults.

Together, these examples demonstrate how early career funding can help emerging clinicians remain engaged in research and build experience over time.

Innovative research and emerging research careers

In 2018, Dr Nicky Korman received an Early Research Career Grant for her project *How can exercise be used in the holistic rehabilitation of people living with psychotic disorders?* Adapted in response to COVID-19, the research has led to two peer-reviewed publications in 2025 and 2026, with a third currently under review. These papers form three chapters of Dr Korman’s PhD, due for submission in January 2027.

Dr Korman noted:

“A relatively small grant went a long way, enabling us to run a clinical trial, publish the findings, and promote the value of exercise – particularly resistance training – in the rehabilitation of people living with psychotic disorders.”

Research as a long-term, collective effort

The Foundation also invests in established research teams, recognising that meaningful research depends on time, continuity, and collaboration.

In late 2019, Associate Professor Yoram Barak and colleagues were awarded the Pat, Toni and Peter Kinsman Research Scholarship to investigate progesterone loading as a treatment strategy for post partum depression. The project explored a potentially more accessible approach to treatment by stabilising allopregnanolone dynamics immediately after birth using progesterone.

Despite COVID 19 related delays, the scholarship enabled completion of the project’s second stage, including a small clinical trial. Findings were published in *Human Psychopharmacology: Clinical and Experimental* following close collaboration with colleagues at the University of Otago. The team is now preparing for a pilot trial in a relevant clinical population.

Dr Barak noted:

“The funding allowed us to take the next step – and work towards a future where this could become a more accessible option for post partum depression.”

A shared endeavour, sustained by giving

The impact described above reflects long-term stewardship rather than short-term intervention. Research takes time, as does building an organisation capable of guiding it responsibly and sustainably.

Since 2020, annual income has grown more than ten-fold – from \$46,461 to \$607,942 – with the Foundation’s corpus now approaching \$2 million. This growth strengthens the Foundation’s capacity to enable research in a measured and enduring way.

It is my hope that the Foundation can be one of several guiding lights in the College to take us towards a brighter horizon – without losing our collective focus on the potential within ourselves and our colleagues to be a positive force for all that psychiatry can become, now and into the future.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR JOHN ALLAN, RANZCP
PRESIDENT (2020)



Associate Professor John Allan and Dr Elizabeth O'Brien, 2020

PhD Scholarships

PhD research is a demanding undertaking, yet it plays a critical role in advancing psychiatric knowledge and practice. The Foundation supported three PhD candidates through its PhD scholarship program, contributing to research that addresses complex challenges across the field. We are deeply grateful to Dr Bryanne Barnett AM, Dr Roth Trisno and family, and our Foundation Partners, whose generosity and long-term vision made this support possible. Their commitment is helping to strengthen research capability and invest in future leaders in psychiatry.

My personal experience working across metropolitan, regional, and rural clozapine clinics has highlighted the stabilising impact that clozapine can have for people with TRS. It is an honour to have the support of the Barnett PhD Scholarship which will allow for the more rapid progression of a time-sensitive project with the potential to assist those living with TRS to resume clozapine as a gold-standard treatment.

DR LAURA MCMAHON



Dr Laura McMahon is an Associate Lecturer in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Queensland and a Psychiatry Registrar at Toowoomba Hospital.

Clozapine and myocarditis: Is it the end of the road?

DR MCMAHON WAS AWARDED AN INAUGURAL 2025 BARNETT PHD SCHOLARSHIP.

The overarching goal of Dr McMahon's PhD project is to improve safety and outcomes for people with treatment resistant schizophrenia who may have the potential to retry clozapine as an effective treatment option following clozapine associated myocarditis.

People with treatment resistant schizophrenia often experience limited effectiveness from standard antipsychotic treatments and frequently experience poorer symptom control, reduced quality of life, impaired functional outcomes, difficulties with relationships, and increased morbidity. Clozapine remains the gold standard treatment option for this group; however, it may need to be ceased due to concerns about clozapine associated myocarditis. The literature indicates myocarditis rates in clozapine prescriptions within Australia and New Zealand are amongst the highest worldwide, contributing to clozapine cessation in affected individuals.

Rechallenge with clozapine following clozapine associated myocarditis may offer a unique treatment opportunity for people with treatment resistant schizophrenia, potentially resulting in fewer hospital admissions, improved functioning, and reduced long term suicidality.

Dr McMahon's project proposes that rechallenge with clozapine, following clozapine associated myocarditis, may be undertaken with increased understanding of monitoring and dosing requirements to assist in improving safety and outcomes.

The project aims to explore current post myocarditis clozapine rechallenge practices and outcomes – including safety, functional, and systemic impacts – using a range of local and international data sources, and to compare these findings with the existing international literature. Ultimately, this project seeks to increase awareness of the risks associated with clozapine associated myocarditis and to identify factors that should be considered when optimising clozapine rechallenge outcomes in clinical practice.

Dr McMahon's latest publication on this topic in CNS Spectrums (2024), Clozapine rechallenge following myocarditis: a systematic review of rechallenge cases, co-authored with N Korman, D Siskind, N Warren, and colleagues, provides the foundations for understanding clozapine rechallenge following myocarditis. The review highlights slower clozapine titration and increased monitoring as key factors in successfully returning to clozapine treatment.



Dr Sarangan Ketheesan is a Staff Psychiatrist at The Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital and a Senior Lecturer at The University of Queensland.

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and Allostatic Load in Military Veterans: Exploring longitudinal outcomes through data linkage.

DR KETHEESAN WAS AWARDED THE 2025 FOUNDATION PARTNERS PHD SCHOLARSHIP.

Dr Ketheesan was awarded the 2025 Foundation Partners PhD Scholarship. His research examines a critical gap in understanding the long-term health impacts of chronic trauma among Australian Defence Force (ADF) veterans.

The nature of military service exposes veterans to traumatic events, prolonged stress, and high-stakes environments. This exposure results in disproportionately high rates of PTSD, substance use disorders, and suicide. The burden of adverse mental health outcomes prevalent among veterans in Australia urgently calls for novel methods of conceptualising, measuring, preventing, and predicting psychiatric disorders among ADF veterans.

One such approach is the measurement of allostatic load (AL), a marker of multisystem physiological dysregulation. In the published literature, as well as Dr Ketheesan's preliminary analyses of data collected from a well-characterised veteran cohort, higher AL scores have been shown to be correlated with diagnoses of PTSD.

The Foundation Partners scholarship will fund an Australian-first study that will utilise data-linkage to investigate biological predictors of early death in a population heavily affected by combat-related

stress. The findings are intended to help inform early identification of at-risk individuals and guide evidence-based interventions.

The project aligns with national priorities and leverages established collaborations between The University of Queensland and Gallipoli Medical Research to enhance translation into policy and practice.

Dr Ketheesan's recent research outputs on this topic include:

- Ketheesan S, Mudur A, Vickers ML, Stjepanović D, Chan G, Lawford BR, Sarnyai Z, Connor JP. Allostatic load in anxiety and trauma and stressor-related disorders: a systematic review. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*. 2025 Apr 23:130-130. This conference presentation and published abstract from the 2025 RANZCP Congress highlighted preliminary findings from Dr Ketheesan's systematic review, showing multisystem physiological dysregulation in individuals diagnosed with anxiety and trauma and stressor-related disorders.
- Ketheesan S, Sarnyai Z, Lawford BR, Connor JP. Problem alcohol use, posttraumatic stress disorder and allostatic load in combat-exposed Vietnam veterans. Presented at: International

Society for Biomedical Research on Alcoholism 3rd World Congress on Alcohol and Addictions; 2024; Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, Melbourne, Australia.

This international conference presentation highlighted findings from Dr Ketheesan's secondary analysis of cross-sectional data, which showed elevated AL in ADF veterans diagnosed with PTSD compared with trauma-exposed controls.

It is an immense privilege to accept the Foundation Partners PhD Scholarship. The scholarship will support a project that is key to my PhD program, which aims to shed important insights on the longitudinal biological impacts of PTSD in military veterans.

DR SARANGAN KETHEESAN



Dr Katherine Donovan is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Psychological Medicine at the University of Otago, Christchurch.

Youth Group Project for adolescents impacted by the March 15 attacks

DR DONOVAN WAS AWARDED AN INAUGURAL 2025 BARNETT PHD SCHOLARSHIP.

This research project focuses on supporting young people impacted by the terrorist attacks perpetrated at two mosques during prayers on 15 March 2019 in Ōtautahi Christchurch, in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Those impacted by these attacks expressed the importance of spiritual and mental health support in their recovery, and the challenge of accessing appropriate supports. Research into the effects of their experience has identified significant concern about young people and their families' mental health in the Muslim Community, despite attempts to coordinate supports through schools, NGOs and primary and secondary mental health services. Stigma regarding mental illness has been identified as a major barrier.

Dr Donovan and her colleagues' study will investigate a novel treatment for Muslim teenagers affected by the shootings, incorporating transdiagnostic treatment principles into an Islamic Psychology framework to address the local population's need. Transdiagnostic

interventions, which have demonstrated support in adult populations, are emerging as promising approaches for adolescents. These approaches could appeal to teenagers and their families concerned about stigma and label 'difficulties' as 'disorders'.

An Islamic Psychology framework recognises spirituality as integral to the human experience, and has gained traction in recent years as its own paradigm. Spiritually integrated psychotherapy is associated with higher treatment adherence and good therapeutic outcome. Holistic approaches to health are also established principles of Māori models of health. Māori consultation suggests that findings from this pilot study may also have the potential to contribute to integrated approaches for Māori youth.

The preliminary findings are expected to be of particular relevance to Muslim youth in the Canterbury / Waitaha region, with potential implications for Muslim communities elsewhere in Aotearoa New Zealand and internationally. More broadly, this research aims to contribute to our understanding of how inequities in health provision may be addressed.

The March 15th attacks had such a huge impact on so many people in Christchurch. We were hearing that a lot of young people were really struggling, caught between dealing with their own distress and witnessing their parents and community dealing with the aftermath. The Barnett PhD Scholarship allows me to focus on the data analysis, write up and dissemination of results to the local and wider community. This ensures we can continue the conversation and grow much-needed support for young people across our increasingly diverse communities. We hope that this project assists adolescents navigating their way through tumultuous times and are grateful to Dr Barnett AM for this support.

DR KATHERINE DONOVAN

Catalyst Grant

The Catalyst Grant provides small-scale funding to support researchers at any stage of their career to develop a pilot study or proof of concept. The grants help move projects beyond an initial idea, enabling researchers to build the evidence and readiness required to apply for larger funding.

The Catalyst grant will help in providing early support for the research to adapt ATMAN treatment to the needs of young Australians who self-harm and for developing a delivery model for making it easily accessible to young people. The insights we generate during this formative work are crucial for future effectiveness and implementation trials using the ATMAN treatment.

DR SHILPA AGGARWAL

This grant funding will lay the foundation for building schizophrenia research capacity in Australia, through fostering partnerships across institutions and disciplines, and including meaningful lived experience input to ensure research reflects consumer priorities. In doing so, this project will contribute to long-term transformation of care for some of the most vulnerable individuals in our society – supporting better recovery, improved quality of life, and ultimately, a world of greater potential for people living with schizophrenia.”

PROFESSOR DAN SISKIND



Dr Shilpa Aggarwal is a Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist with Gold Coast Hospital and Health Services and holds the academic appointments of Associate Professor with Griffith University and Deakin University.

Adapting a self-harm intervention for a culturally diverse youth

Many young people who self-harm first seek help through primary care, often before distress escalates. However, access to low intensity psychological treatments remains limited, particularly for young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

ATMAN is a less resource intensive psychological treatment developed by Dr Aggarwal. Its name comes from Sanskrit, meaning the “eternal self,” reflecting a focus on inner balance and wellbeing. It was developed using a structured, stepwise approach with lived experience consultants’ input and has shown promising effectiveness in preliminary studies in India.

This project will adapt ATMAN for the Australian context, with the aim of enabling delivery by non-specialist providers to young people who self-harm. It will place particular emphasis on relevance and accessibility for culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and will explore potential pathways, barriers and facilitators to integration within primary care settings.

By strengthening early responses within primary care, the project seeks to improve access to timely, culturally responsive psychological support and contribute to better support pathways for young people at risk.



Professor Dan Siskind is a Professor at the University of Queensland Faculty of Health, Medicine and Behavioural Science, and a Clinical Academic Psychiatrist at the Princess Alexandra Hospital. He is also a University of Queensland Amplify Fellow and a Queensland Clinical Research Fellow.

Schizophrenia National Clinical trial Consortium

This project aims to improve care for people living with treatment-resistant schizophrenia (TRS), a severe form of mental illness that does not respond well to existing treatments. People with TRS often face ongoing symptoms, physical health problems, and social challenges.

To address this need, the project will create a national network – called the Schizophrenia National Clinical trial Consortium (SNaCC) – to support clinical trials across Australia. By training and mentoring doctors and researchers at trial sites, including in regional areas, the project will build long-term capacity to test and deliver new treatments.

Importantly, people with lived experience of schizophrenia will help guide the research to ensure it meets real-world needs and priorities. Over time, this work will make it easier to develop and deliver better treatments, improve quality of life, and reduce health inequalities. With future support, the network can expand and help Australia become a global leader in schizophrenia research and care.

Beverley Raphael New Investigator Grant



Professor Beverley Raphael AM FASSA was an inspirational and pioneering psychiatrist, as well as a deeply respected mentor. She was committed to helping others build self-belief and realise their full potential. It is fitting that the grant named in her honour supports and encourages those at the beginning of their psychiatry research careers. In 2025, the Beverley Raphael New Investigator Grant was awarded to six promising early career researchers.



Dr Dean Andronis and Dr Grace House are Stage 1 psychiatry registrars at the Princess Alexandra Hospital.

A guideline for clozapine commencement in treatment resistant schizophrenia

This project aims to create clear, practical guidance on how to safely start clozapine for people with treatment-resistant schizophrenia.

Clozapine is effective but complex to use, and current advice varies widely between services and countries. This study will bring together international experts with experience in clozapine prescribing and ask them to share their views through a series of online surveys.

Using a structured consensus method, the project will identify expert-agreed best practices for assessments before starting clozapine, how to increase doses safely, how to tailor treatment to individual patients in different settings, how to monitor for and manage common and rare adverse effects, and how to safely restart clozapine after missed doses.

Existing research and guidelines will be reviewed to inform the surveys.

The project will result in expert-informed recommendations that may help support safer, more consistent clozapine use and inform efforts to improve patient outcomes.

Having our project funded by a Beverley Raphael New Investigator Grant supports the development of practical, consensus-based guidance in an area where current practice is highly variable. We are motivated to undertake this work because it has clear, real-world benefits for clinicians and patients commencing clozapine.

DR DEAN ANDRONIS AND DR GRACE HOUSE



Dr Ria George is a Stage 2 Psychiatry Registrar at Te Whatu Ora Counties Manukau.

Mental health experiences & needs of young people during IBD Transition – A counties Manukau perspective

Young people with inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) in New Zealand face many challenges, not only with their physical health but also with their mental and emotional wellbeing.

The transition from paediatric to adult hospital services can be particularly stressful, as young people assume more responsibility for their health and adjust to new healthcare teams.

This study aims to understand how young people experience and make sense of their mental health during this transition period.

Through one-on-one interviews with participants, the research will explore participants mental health experiences, needs, and supports.

It is hoped the findings may inform the design of IBD transition programs, with a focus on mental health considerations in the local context.

Despite growing recognition that gut–brain interactions shape psychological wellbeing and illness trajectories, the lived experience of mental illness in this context remains poorly understood. This research – supported by the Beverley Raphael New Investigator Grant - will seek to deepen understanding about the unmet mental health and psychosocial needs during transition to adult services. This may highlight critical gaps in current service provision and in future, potentially inform more integrative, person-centred models of care.

DR RIA GEORGE



Dr Milla McLean is an RANZCP trainee at The Royal Melbourne Hospital, Melbourne Health.

Exploring blood immune markers in psychiatric disorders and early-onset dementia.

This exploratory study examines a broad range of blood-based proteins – including cytokines, growth factors, soluble factors, proteases and chemokines – using multiplex methods on serum samples from individuals living with primary psychiatric conditions (major depressive disorder, bipolar affective disorder and schizophrenia), as well as early onset dementia, specifically behavioural variant frontotemporal dementia.

The study provides a valuable opportunity to compare both well-known and lesser-known inflammatory markers across these groups, responding to calls for further investigation using wide panels of cytokines and chemokines, particularly in major depressive disorder and bipolar affective disorder.

Acknowledging its exploratory scope, this study aims to narrow down analytes and sample groups for future larger proof-of-concept studies. This work is intended to contribute to a larger body of research looking at inflammatory profiles and mechanisms in psychiatric and neurodegenerative disorders.

This is my first research grant and represents my leap into combining immunology and psychiatric research. The Beverley Raphael New Investigator Grant allows me to actively engage with immunology research alongside training in psychiatry and pursue the career I hope to enjoy for many years to come as a clinician and researcher. I’m incredibly appreciative of all the opportunities afforded to me through this grant.

DR MILLA MCLEAN



Dr Yalan Mo is a registrar with Te Whatu Ora Health New Zealand.

Mental health staff perspectives on home visits in Aotearoa New Zealand: A cross-sectional survey.

Psychiatric home visits are a routine part of mental health service provision across Aotearoa New Zealand, involving doctors, nurses and allied health staff. This study will use an anonymous nationwide survey to gather data from Te Whatu Ora Health New Zealand staff on their experiences of risk incidents during home visits and their perceptions of existing home visit policies, decision-making processes, police support, safety training, and perceived barriers to raising concerns.

This study will compare responses across professional roles and demographics to determine if there are systematic differences between groups.

The data will provide an evidence base for discussions around the safe conduct of home visits by Te Whatu Ora Health New Zealand staff, and may help inform future service development.

Ensuring the physical and psychological safety of mental health staff during home visits is vital for protecting staff wellbeing and morale, and for sustaining and enhancing the use of home visits, which we know are an important means of providing care to our communities. As a psychiatric trainee who cares deeply about the safety of other trainees and all of our mental health colleagues, and for the high-needs populations we serve, I hope that the data generated by this study will help to improve the way that home visits are conducted, and to advocate for greater resources and training, so that home visits are safer for all involved.

DR YALAN MO



Dr Laurant Kang is a Psychiatry of Old Age trainee with Hunter New England Network and a PhD candidate with the Centre for Healthy Brain Ageing.

Social determinants of health, epigenetic aging and their influences on cognitive trajectories for older adults

Social determinants of health (SDoH) such as education, housing stability and social connections play a major role in shaping brain health as people age. Individuals who experience long-term social disadvantage are known to have a higher risk of cognitive decline and dementia, but the biological pathways linking social experiences to brain ageing are not well understood.

This project will explore whether social experiences influence cognitive ageing through their effects on biological ageing processes. Using large-scale international datasets of older adults, including information on SDoH, blood-based biological markers and longitudinal cognitive assessments, this study will examine how social disadvantage relates to biological ageing and changes in cognitive function.

Importantly, the project will also investigate why some people maintain good cognitive health despite experiencing social adversity, focusing on factors linked to biological resilience.

The findings are intended to support earlier identification of people at risk of cognitive decline and help inform more targeted, equitable strategies to promote healthy ageing and improve psychogeriatric care

In my clinical work with older adults, I see every day how deeply social disadvantages can affect cognitive health and quality of life. The Beverley Raphael New Investigator Grant is especially meaningful to me because it empowers clinician-researchers to explore these lived realities at an epigenetic level, with the hope of contributing to more compassionate, timely and equitable care for mental health and aged care.

DR LAURANT KANG



Dr Michael Weightman is a lecturer and PhD candidate at the University of Adelaide. He is also a consultant psychiatrist at the Central Adelaide Local Health Network.

Attitudes of medical students towards artificial intelligence in psychiatry teaching

This project seeks to answer the research question, 'What are medical students' attitudes towards the use of artificial intelligence in psychiatry education?'

It will qualitatively explore medical students' perceptions of both current and potential uses of AI in psychiatry education by using focus groups to collect relevant data.

The study aims to identify the perceived benefits, concerns and limitations of incorporating AI-based tools in psychiatry teaching from a student perspective.

It is intended that the findings may help inform future pedagogical approaches for how AI is used in educating medical students in psychiatry.

I am grateful to the RANZCP Foundation for this grant, as the funding has allowed me to expand the scope of my PhD research. This project would not have progressed without such support and I am now able to conduct focus groups with medical students to obtain valuable insights about the educational impact of AI from the learner perspective.

DR MICHAEL WEIGHTMAN

“Sustainable research impact is built over time, through continuity, collaboration, and shared commitment.”

Early Research Career Grant

The Early Research Career Grant is designed to encourage psychiatrists and researchers in the early stages of their careers, recognising that strong research skills are an essential part of contemporary psychiatric practice. The program enables recipients to undertake high-quality research while building confidence, capability, and momentum for future research and leadership.

“We know lifestyle interventions work – the challenge is getting them to the young people who need them most, in a format that fits their lives and in a language they can engage with.”

DR CATHERINE MCHUGH



Dr Catherine McHugh is a consultant psychiatrist with the headspace Youth Psychosis Program Western Sydney, a senior lecturer at UNSW, and a translational research fellow with the Mindgardens Neuroscience Network.

Growing Minds Feeling Good – A lifestyle program for young people taking psychotropic medication

Psychotropic-associated weight gain is a major concern for young people accessing early psychosis services, with approximately 44–56% of young people with psychotic disorders being non-adherent to prescribed medications, with weight-related concerns a key contributor to discontinuation. Clinician-supported lifestyle programs such as Keeping the Body in Mind (KBIM) have demonstrated effectiveness, yet real-world implementation is constrained by competing clinical priorities, workforce limitations, and geographical and time barriers.

For culturally and linguistically diverse communities, these barriers are compounded by limited cultural adaptation of existing resources and language accessibility issues – with no validated lifestyle intervention resources currently available in written Chinese or Mandarin, despite Mandarin-speaking young people and families representing one of the largest non-English speaking cohorts in Australian early psychosis services.

To address these gaps, Dr McHugh is leading the development of Growing Minds Feeling Good - Youth (GMFG Youth), a 12-week self-directed digital lifestyle intervention informed by evidence-based programs such as Keeping the Body in Mind (KBIM). Designed for young people aged 13–24 taking psychotropic medications associated with weight gain, the program delivers bite-sized, mobile-first content on nutrition, physical activity, sleep, and smoking cessation alongside usual

care. The project will also pilot translation and cultural adaptation of the intervention for Mandarin-speaking young people.

The project combines co-design with young people, families, clinicians, and peer workers – including Mandarin-speaking participants – to inform the design and cultural adaptation of the GMFG Youth program. This is followed by a small feasibility randomised controlled trial comparing the GMFG Youth intervention plus usual care with usual care alone, focused on understanding feasibility, engagement, and acceptability.

Dr McHugh plans to build on this work by seeking NHMRC and MRFF funding to support larger-scale trials exploring how digital approaches integrated with clinical care may influence access, engagement, and cost-effectiveness in youth mental health services. Ultimately, this research aims to establish a scalable, culturally responsive model for addressing the physical health consequences of psychotropic medication in young people, helping to bridge the gap between metabolic monitoring and accessible, evidence-based lifestyle support.

Dr McHugh received the Beverley Raphael Early Investigator Award in 2017, which supported her first clinical research project in youth mental health services. That project, focused on cognition in young people accessing mental health care, contributed to her PhD and helped establish the clinical research foundations that underpin her current work.



Dr Jai Nathani is an RANZCP Fellow and Consultant Psychiatrist with the Dobney Hypertension Centre at the University of Western Australia.

Psychotherapy Research Award

Enhancing medication adherence through Cognitive Behaviour Therapy

This research project will explore the potential role of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), and the ways it may improve adherence with medications for blood pressure control in people who have treatment-resistant hypertension and complete non-adherence.

This research will explore how accurately people assess their levels of adherence, through the correlation of self-reported adherence scales with adherence testing using urine spot analysis. Additionally, the study will explore the acceptability of CBT as an intervention for improving adherence in individuals with complete non-adherence to their medication regimen.

Finally, the project will consider the feasibility of the widespread implementation of CBT by examining the long-term effects of CBT in sustaining and enhancing medication adherence in populations living with treatment-resistant hypertension.



Clinical nurse Sofia Watkins, nurse practitioner Anu Joyson, psychiatrist Dr Jai Nathani and nephrologist and hypertension specialist Professor Markus Schlaich.

This grant will support our research, enabling us to test urine samples to determine which medications our patients have or have not taken. This objective measure of non-adherence complements the subjective nature of psychotherapy, the other focus of our study. Together, we hope to evaluate whether therapy can help improve medication adherence. Additionally, the Psychotherapy Research Award will help increase recognition of our work.

DR JAI NATHANI

Indigenous leadership

The RANZCP recognises that First Nations doctors are underrepresented in the field of psychiatry, and is committed to providing support, visibility and cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and Māori to join the field of psychiatry. The Foundation is proud to contribute to this commitment.

The gamadji nanggiti Scholarship focuses on leadership development for emerging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander psychiatrists. Named with the guidance of Wurundjeri Elders, gamadji nanggiti means “emerging leader.” Recipients receive leadership training through the AMA Victoria Emerging Leader Program and individual coaching.



Dr Cassandra Geeman is a Stage 2 psychiatry registrar at the Central Coast and Northern Sydney training network, and a recipient of the 2025 gamadji nanggiti Scholarship.

Dr Geeman is a Southern Kaantju woman of Cape York Peninsula with connections to Waanyi people in western Queensland and the border of Northern Territory, as well as being of Malaysian descent. She is a Stage 2 trainee in the Central Coast and Northern Sydney training network and accepted by the Muluridji people where she was raised in Far North Queensland. Dr Geeman relocated to New South Wales where she completed her medical degree at the University of Newcastle in 2021.

The AMA Victoria Emerging Leader Program has strengthened my leadership capabilities and provided practical skills that I can apply directly within my clinical work. As an Aboriginal psychiatry registrar, these skills support my ability to advocate for culturally safe, patient-centred care and contribute to stronger connections between healthcare services and the communities we serve.

DR CASSANDRA GEEMAN



Dr Christopher Henry is an advanced psychiatry trainee at Albury Wodonga Health, and a recipient of the 2025 gamadji nanggiti Scholarship.

Dr Henry is a proud Walbunja man of the Yuin nation and a Stage 2 psychiatry trainee based at Albury Wodonga Health. Born and raised on Wadi Wadi Country in Nowra, he maintains strong ties with his family and community. Dr Henry entered medicine as a mature-aged Aboriginal student and completed his medical degree at the University of Newcastle in 2021.

The AMA Victoria Emerging Leader Program has been instrumental in helping me navigate the complexities of managing multidisciplinary teams and mentoring junior doctors. As an Indigenous psychiatrist in training, I am committed to leading in a way that values every voice while ensuring clinical practice remains culturally safe and community centred.

Stepping into a senior leadership role means taking responsibility for the growth of those around me. I'm applying the lessons from the Emerging Leader Program to empower junior colleagues and lead multidisciplinary teams with purpose. My goal is to ensure that Indigenous perspectives are not just an 'add on', but are woven into how we lead in psychiatry.

I am proud to continue my training as an Indigenous leader, focused on guiding teams toward more equitable and inclusive mental health outcomes.

DR CHRISTOPHER HENRY

Wānanga

“WHAIA TE ITI KAHURANGI, KI TE TUOHU KOE, ME HE MAUNGA TEITEI.”

“PURSUE THAT WHICH IS PRECIOUS, AND IF YOU MUST BOW, LET IT BE TO A LOFTY MOUNTAIN.”

In September 2025, the RANZCP Foundation was pleased to again enable a three-day wānanga for Māori Psychiatrists in Waitati, Dunedin.

The wānanga provides a dedicated and culturally safe space for Māori students and trainees in psychiatry. It nurtures whānaungatanga (connection), fosters mutual support, and creates opportunities for participants to share their experiences as they progress through their professional journeys.

Central to the wānanga is the importance of being grounded in Te Ao Māori (the Māori world) and being guided by mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge systems). Through kōrerorero (open discussion) and āta whakarongo (intentional listening), participants are invited to reflect, connect, and grow – both culturally and professionally.

The forum is led and facilitated by Kaumātua of Tū Te Akaakaroa RANZCP (Aotearoa New Zealand), senior Māori psychiatrists, and community members, who offer guidance, scholarly support, and cultural leadership through manaakitanga (care) and aroha (compassion).

Their leadership provides real-world insight into the challenges of the profession, while modelling the resilience and strength required to succeed as Māori in psychiatry.

The 2025 program was designed specifically to meet the current and emerging needs of our tauira/students, providing not only professional development but also space for cultural reconnection and personal restoration.

The RANZCP recognises and promotes the importance of a holistic and culturally informed framework aligned with Māori perspective. This wānanga is one of several initiatives designed to advance the development of culturally responsive psychiatrists.

“A sincere thank you to the RANZCP Foundation and their donors whose generosity made this 2025 wānanga possible. We are deeply grateful for the Foundation’s commitment to advancing Māori health and wellbeing within psychiatry.”

WHAE MOE MILNE, PHYLLISTANGITU AND MATIRA TAIKATO



Whae Moe Milne

Strengthening psychiatry in rural communities

In 2025, the Country Psychiatrists' Association of New South Wales (CPANSW) made a generous gift to the RANZCP Foundation, marking the conclusion of an organisation that had played an important role in rural psychiatry for nearly four decades.

Founded in 1987, CPANSW was established at a time when few psychiatrists practised outside metropolitan centres and professional isolation was a significant challenge.

The Association sought to support rural psychiatrists and their families by creating opportunities for connection, shared learning and community. Conferences and dinners were held in regional towns, providing opportunities for members to present research, engage with visiting College Fellows, and share experiences unique to rural practice.

These gatherings were intentionally family-inclusive, with dedicated programs for partners and children.

Reflecting on this period, Dr Thérèse Grotowski, CPANSW Secretary and Treasurer, noted the importance of these connections:

“These conferences were a valuable opportunity to learn about the unique experience of working in a rural area. Being able to share that knowledge with each other was empowering.”

The CPANSW also assisted the NSW Branch with rural projects and workforce mapping initiatives. Prior to widespread digital connectivity, it was often difficult to know who was practising where. The ability to contact rural psychiatrists directly was central to understanding local needs, and CPANSW played an important role in facilitating this connection.

By 2025, many of the conditions that had prompted CPANSW's formation had changed. Improvements in workforce distribution, training pathways and digital connectivity had reduced professional isolation in regional areas. With its original purpose fulfilled, members made the decision to wind up the Association and considered carefully how its remaining funds could continue to benefit psychiatry.

“We wanted our remaining funds to support work related to psychiatry. The Foundation's sponsorship of research and training aligned closely with CPANSW's values, and we appreciated its broad approach to advancing psychiatry. CPANSW supported psychiatrists across New South Wales, and we liked that the Foundation supports psychiatry broadly, rather than benefiting a single location. It felt like a meaningful way to continue that legacy.”



The Foundation would like to thank Dr Grotowski and the CPANSW for their thoughtful generosity. This gift will enable 12 rural trainees to attend the RANZCP Congress in 2026 or 2027, helping make Congress more accessible for trainees working in rural and remote communities. The Foundation looks forward to sharing stories of the bursary recipients in the 2026 Impact Report.

We wanted our remaining funds to continue supporting psychiatry in a meaningful way – and the Foundation felt like the right fit.

DR THÉRÈSE GROTOWSKI



About us

Our Vision: Transforming mental health care, creating a world of potential

Established in 2019, the RANZCP Foundation is the charitable arm of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists.

The Foundation advances mental health through three key areas of focus:

- Preventing and treating mental illness, by enhancing both primary and secondary care at the individual level.
- Supporting community mental health, through addressing the systemic needs of identified and vulnerable populations.
- Promoting mental health across the lifespan, taking an intergenerational approach to achieving long-term wellbeing.

“Within a strong governance framework, 100 per cent of donations support grants and scholarships that help inform and improve mental health care across the lifespan.”

The Foundation is governed by a senior advisory committee comprising 12 experienced Fellows of the RANZCP.

The Foundation Committee oversees fundraising activities and the delivery of an annual program of grants, scholarships, and awards. The committee is responsible for ensuring that all funds are managed in accordance with donors’ intentions. The Foundation Committee reports directly to the RANZCP Board.

Specialist advice on the development and assessment of grant programs is provided by the Committee for Research, with independent assessors reviewing applications to support a rigorous and transparent assessment process.

Operating within an established governance framework, all operational costs are met by the RANZCP, allowing 100 per cent of donations to be directed to grants and scholarships. Donations to the Foundation are tax deductible in Australia.



RANZCP Foundation Committee

Associate Professor John Allan, Chair

Professor Gerard Byrne

Professor Valsamma Eapen

Professor Hinemoa Elder MNZM

Professor Anthony Harris, AM

Dr Rory Hutchinson

Associate Professor Michael Keem

Associate Professor Vinay Lakra

Associate Professor Louise Nash

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Professor Shuichi Suetani

Associate Professor Nicola Warren



Creating a world of potential

Your generosity is enabling research to progress and helping researchers at different stages of their careers to develop capability over time.

There are many ways to stay connected and contribute to the Foundation's work.

Ways to give

The RANZCP Foundation benefits from the generosity of Fellows and others who share a commitment to advancing psychiatric research and the wellbeing of our communities.

Give online

Donate to the Foundation at www.ranzcp.org/give

Foundation Partners

Foundation Partners is a pooled giving program that funds a dedicated PhD Scholarship in psychiatric research.

Focused philanthropy

Making a philanthropic gift is no small decision. If you are interested in creating a research grant, award, or scholarship, we would welcome the opportunity to discuss your ideas and explore how we could help bring your vision to life.

Gifts in wills

Including the RANZCP Foundation in your will is a powerful way of providing enduring support for the things you care about beyond your lifetime. If you have included the Foundation in your will, or are considering doing so, we would be pleased to hear from you.

Email: foundation@ranzcp.org.

Call: +61 3 9640 0646.

“The stories in this report speak to the depth and seriousness of psychiatric research underway across Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. They reflect long term work, careful thinking and a commitment to questions that do not lend themselves to quick answers. It is this kind of steady, thoughtful research – and the confidence placed in it – that allows progress to emerge over time.”

**ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
JOHN ALLAN, CHAIR,
RANZCP FOUNDATION**



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The RANZCP is a registered charity with the Australian
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