

The dKin Difference

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2022



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Front cover image: Michael Drapac, donor, Professor Gary Rogers, Dean of Medicine, Professor Liz Johnson, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic & Alfred Deakin Professor. Surrounded by Deakin colleagues who have and will continue to support Michael’s gift of The Damion Drapac Centre to advance socially inclusive medical education for generations to come. Photo by Donna Squire.

Deakin University acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of all the unceded lands, skies and waterways on which Deakin students, staff and communities come together. As we learn and teach through virtually and physically constructed places across time, we pay our deep respect to the Ancestors and Elders of Wadawurrung Country, Wurundjeri and Eastern Maar Country and beyond, where our physical campuses are located. We also acknowledge the many First Nations from where students join us online and make vital contributions to our learning communities.



Welcome from our

Vice-Chancellor

If 2021 was a year of transition, in 2022 we channelled all our energies back to what we do best: making a positive and lasting difference to the communities we partner with around the world.

In 2022 we welcomed almost 18,000 new alumni to our global community of more than 306,000 Deakin graduates. During the past 12 months, we were pleased to reconnect with thousands of alumni, donors, and partners – over the phone, online, and crucially, in person again.

Of course, behind every number there's a person and a story, and that's the focus of this publication.

Some of you may know the story of the late Dr Damion Drapac. Damion represented the best of Deakin's values – he joined us as a postgraduate, eager to start a long-awaited career journey to become a doctor. Damion thrived in our Rural Community Clinical School, and spent a year of his studies based in Daylesford. Damion's life was sadly cut short, not long after his graduation. But thanks to the love and vision of his father Michael, Damion's spirit lives on at Deakin, and will guide the journeys of the next generation of doctors who share his passion.

The Damion Drapac Centre for Equity in Health Education will offer life-transforming scholarships to Deakin medical students from disadvantaged, diverse, and regional backgrounds. And it will do so in perpetuity. Thank you to Michael for trusting Deakin with this history-making gift.

Speaking of our commitment to regional communities, the remarkable scholarship program driven by those living near our Warrnambool campus raised \$885,000 last year. It is astounding to see such grassroots investment in our Warrnambool students, and in the future of their communities. Alistair McCosh has spent much of his adult life connected to – and advocating for – the Warrnambool campus, and as our story shows, he's just getting started!

I'm proud that we can share in these pages the incredible work of HOME. This is a distinctively Deakin collaboration between experts from diverse research disciplines. Their shared aim is to tackle the deep and interconnected challenges of housing supply, and to create a home for all. Because of the genuine relationships formed between HOME and partners from government, the building sector, and charitable organisations, our architecture students have created seven new compact homes to house formerly homeless men living in Geelong. What a remarkable demonstration of how teaching, research, and engagement can align and deliver for the community.



The truth is, each edition of *The dKin Difference* could be written many times over, such is the support we receive from you. The following stories are but a window into how your generosity is making a real difference to the lives of many.

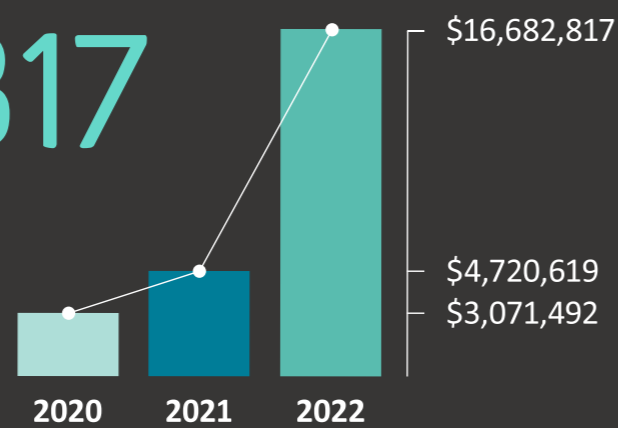
I look forward to catching up with you soon at one of our events for donors, alumni, and partners. I'd love to hear your story.

Professor Iain Martin
Vice-Chancellor

2022 the year in numbers

\$16,682,817

New philanthropic funds given



Philanthropy also supported the creation of successful learning, rewarding experiences and engaging and inclusive communities.

\$359,658

In philanthropic support went towards Indigenous-led initiatives that boost staff and students' knowledge of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and values

\$885,000

In donations directly supporting students and initiatives in Warrnambool and surrounds

\$6,172,722

Largest gift given from Mr Michael Drapac (Founder and Chairman of Drapac Capital Partners) in honour of his late son and Deakin graduate, Dr Damion Drapac

\$6,550,107

Given to scholarships for Deakin students facing social or financial disadvantage



637

Donors



827

Total number of gifts



Still waters run deep

When the late Dr Damion Drapac (BMBS '18 *Deakin*) received his medical degree from Deakin University in December 2018, it was the realisation of a decade-long dream.

A deep thinker, confident in himself and who he was, Damion's capacity for kindness and compassion was not as intellectual as it was innate within him. He had an optimistic and generous nature, paired with a harmless sense of mischief. Damion knew in his heart that being a doctor, where he could give himself to others, was the best way he could achieve the best version of himself.

That dream was tragically cut short, less than a year after graduation, when Damion was killed in a road accident while cycling. In his memory, the **Damion Drapac Centre** was established, which will encourage other aspiring doctors with a vocation to make a positive impact on communities for generations to come.

Damion's father, Michael Drapac, recalls how driven his son was to achieve his goal, on his own terms.

I knew how tenacious he was in wanting to be a doctor, and it was a ten-year journey. He was absolutely single-minded. I think the first thought when I heard he'd died was, 'this boy, this dear boy, his work shouldn't be forgotten'."

— Michael Drapac

When asked to describe his son, Michael refers to the saying, still waters run deep, and recalls a memory of when Damion was just two years of age. It was the final day of crèche for the year and Damion's teacher says to Michael, "Oh my gosh he speaks. He hasn't spoken all year." Michael reflects on this memory as a wonderful insight into the strength of mind that Damion had. And how this strength of mind grew and translated into his determination as an older man and the very deep thinker he was.

Associate Professor Lara Fuller, who leads Deakin's Rural Community Clinical School, saw Damion's passion up close.

"I was fortunate to teach Damion when he was based in Daylesford during his year with us and got to know him then, and of course was really upset and impacted when he was tragically killed just shortly after graduating."

Damion's story reflects the individual paths that lead to a career in medicine. He initially studied nutrition sciences, and attempted to enrol in medical school three times, before finally being accepted.

The late Dr Damion Drapac.





I think that medicine has never been more challenged than it is today. Never before have communities and marginalised groups in Australia been more underrepresented, and never before has medicine had greater challenges.”

– Michael Drapac

Professor Gary Rogers, having entered medicine from an unconventional background himself, connected both personally and professionally with Michael’s desire to change the landscape of medical education.

“It’s really important to realise that, traditionally, doctors in Australia have come from a very narrow social spectrum. They’ve come from people largely of social advantage, from the suburbs of the central cities, and they haven’t had that breadth of diversity of the communities they’re coming to serve. The evidence is there to show that people who are from unconventional backgrounds are more likely to go into practice in both the specialty areas and the geographical areas where they’re needed.” Professor Rogers says.

“If we can recruit doctors from beyond the conventional pathway to medicine of the advantaged private school, if we can provide them with support and access, over time, we’re going to see a community of Drapac scholars who will go on to serve their communities and make a real difference in the world.”

Michael Drapac wanted to honour his son’s journey and encourage other students with a strong vocation to pursue their goal of becoming a doctor. After discussions with Deakin University staff, including Associate Professor Fuller, Professor Gary Rogers, Dean of Medicine, and members of the Advancement team, the centre’s foundations were established. It represents the largest single gift in Deakin University’s history.

The first two Drapac scholarships will be awarded in 2024, increasing to three new scholarships every year from 2026, with a total of 12 scholars across all four year levels of the medical program by 2030. These transformational scholarships, totalling \$60,000 per student across the four years of their course, will be offered annually, in perpetuity.

The scholarships established in Damion’s honour will address structural issues that stop many committed and deserving students from pursuing a career in medicine, particularly those from disadvantaged, diverse, and rural backgrounds. Beyond the essential financial boost the scholarships will provide, the centre will also have staff to support each student on their medical education journey.

Deakin Vice-Chancellor Professor Iain Martin says the University’s own research illustrates the growing challenge of recruiting doctors to work outside of metropolitan areas.

“You don’t need to look hard at the moment to see just how difficult it is to get doctors in regional and rural Australia,” Professor Martin says.

“We really want to use this gift to make sure that our medical program increasingly reflects the diverse communities that we draw from and serve – from the western suburbs of Melbourne right out to rural southwest Victoria.”

Aside from his drive to become a doctor, Damion’s love for cycling was well known among his peers – a passion he shared with his father, who ran a high-achieving pro cycling team for 15 years.

“There was a particular time when, right in the middle of a tutorial with me, Damion got this message from his dad to say, ‘Come over to the Tour de France,’ because the team was doing well,” Associate Professor Fuller recalls. “So I let him go, and basically, he walked out of that tutorial, and he got on the plane to France. It was one of those memorable moments and we gave him an award at the end of the year for having the best excuse ever to leave a tutorial.”

Michael Drapac hopes his seed funding will have a multiplier effect, with every student who graduates as a Drapac Scholar touching innumerable lives through their medical practice, the benefits rippling out through the communities they represent and serve.



These scholarships will help students overcome barriers and produce graduate doctors with the same enthusiasm to give back to their communities as Damion had. When I see the light shine in them, and the many people in their communities that they will go on to serve, I will see my son.”

– Michael Drapac

With a scalable model, the sky is the limit for how far we can grow the fund, and support the next generation of Australian medical graduates, drawn from diverse professional and personal backgrounds.

For Michael, it is heartening to imagine a future where there will be an ever-growing community of scholars, doctors and graduates who will continue Damion’s legacy.

To learn about The Damion Drapac Centre [click here](#).



L-R: Associate Professor Lara Fuller, Director of Rural Medical Education and Deakin’s Rural Community Clinical School, Mr Michael Drapac, donor, and Professor Gary Rogers, Dean of Medicine. Photo by Donna Squire.

Making a lasting impact for rural medical students

“I wanted to leave a gift that would allow this rural access work to continue longer term, knowing that it's a huge need and something that can continue to happen even if I'm not around.”

Associate Professor Lara Fuller,
Director of Rural Medical Education
and Deakin's Rural Community Clinical
School, at Waurin Ponds Estate.
Photo by Donna Squire.



These days, Associate Professor Lara Fuller plays a key role in encouraging Deakin students to embark on a rewarding career in rural medicine.

But the clinical educator admits her own journey to become a GP wasn't a straightforward one. In fact, she originally planned to avoid general practice and focus on an entirely different specialty, before a life-changing overseas experience transformed her perspective.

Having completed her second year as a graduate doctor, Associate Professor Fuller and her husband, Dr Dave Fuller, made a decision to pause their training in Melbourne for a year, and journey to Nepal.

“It was working in that environment, which was a GP-run rural hospital about nine hours from Kathmandu in the Middle Hills of Nepal, that I realised just what a GP can really do, and I loved it,” Associate Professor Fuller says.



When I came back to Australia I enrolled straight into general practice training because I knew I needed a broad skillset to be able to work in that environment.”

– Associate Professor Lara Fuller

Associate Professor Fuller established a successful career as a GP in Geelong, before being encouraged to join Deakin's School of Medicine, which welcomed its first cohort of students to the Waurin Ponds Campus in 2008.

“I was working part-time as a GP and having a young family, and the Deakin School of Medicine was announced right on our doorstep, so that was a great opportunity and I was really interested to get involved in teaching,” Associate Professor Fuller recalls.

“I think I hadn't quite realised that I had a bit of a passion for teaching and that as soon as I started doing it, I just loved it and that really connected with me. I just got more and more involved in the teaching.”

For several years, Associate Professor Fuller juggled her roles as a GP and as an academic, before choosing to focus on teaching and research. Today, Associate Professor Fuller is the Director of Rural Medical Education and Deakin's Rural Community Clinical School (RCCS). The RCCS provides small numbers of students with a rich, immersive rural clinical experience. The hope is that many of them will choose to practice in rural areas upon graduation – an acute need for many smaller communities.

“It's a very different learning model,” Associate Professor Fuller explains. “It's not a lecture hall with 200 students. In the Rural Community Clinical School, each year we only have 20 students. I love that part of my work and getting to journey with them through the year, it's been fantastic. You get to know them quite well.”

One of Associate Professor Fuller's former RCCS students was the late Dr Damion Drapac, in whose memory the **Damion Drapac Centre** for Equity in Health Education has recently been established.

Having worked closely with Michael Drapac, Damion's father, to establish the priorities and goals of the Centre, Associate Professor Fuller was motivated to think about her own legacy, and recently included a bequest in her Will to Deakin. This gift in her Will is a donation made as part of Lara and Dave's financial estate planning. It's a wonderful and generous way to make a difference in an area they've been passionate about during their lifetime. Their gift will focus on equity – providing scholarships to First Nations students, and students from rural areas.

“I want to leave gifts to things that are important to me and things that are reflective of what I've worked on during my life, and what's been important to us as a couple,” Associate Professor Fuller says.

“And I wanted to leave a gift that would allow this rural access work to continue longer term, knowing that it's a huge need and something that can continue to happen even if I'm not around.”

If you are considering or have questions about leaving a gift in your Will to Deakin, please [click here](#) to find out more.

Scanning for threat

Deakin's pioneering research into obesity prevention – including its world-leading AI-driven youth project – has the potential to change billions of lives globally.

Without philanthropy though, this innovative and momentous work would simply not be possible.

The university's **Global Centre for Preventive Health and Nutrition (GLOBE)**, is principally funded by the Ian Potter Foundation and supported by numerous other vital partnerships.

Awarded \$590,000 from the Foundation, *DIGITAL-YOUTH: An intelligent systems approach to monitoring harmful online advertising to children and youth*, also has collaborative and advisory partners including VicHealth, Cancer Council Vic, QUIT, Responsible Gambling Foundation, FARE, and The Australian Prevention Partnership Centre.

At a time when algorithms increasingly determine the content individuals see online, adolescents are particularly vulnerable to targeted messaging from advertising.

DIGITAL-YOUTH is allowing researchers to break down the formula for a marketing diet of harmful products, by capturing and quantifying what appears on the screens of study participants aged 8-25.

The project's vision is an online world where children and young adults are protected from commercial exploitation by industries selling unhealthy foods, e-cigarettes, alcohol, and gambling.

Recently highlighted on the ABC TV program, **Magda's Big National Health Check**, *DIGITAL-YOUTH* is led by Professor Kathryn Backholer.

[Watch Magda's Big National Health Check now.](#)

The series touched on the debate concerning personal versus societal responsibility, which Professor Backholer identifies as a key issue surrounding policy governance.



It highlighted to the Australian population some of the systemic or environmental issues. How on earth do we expect people to try and maintain a healthy weight unless we tackle these societal issues?"

– Professor Kathryn Backholer

Professor Backholer says that beloved comedian Magda Szubanski, with her lived experience of health challenges, was the perfect host to balance a serious theme with lightness of tone. "It was really fun being part of it, and Magda was very funny. I just laughed the whole time."



Professor Kathryn Backholer, Co-Director of the Global Centre for Preventative Health and Nutrition (GLOBE). Photo by Paul Hermes.



GLOBE focuses on the environment in which dietary and physical activity behaviours occur. However, many current environments “are established by these profit-driven industries to promote unhealthy choices.”

– Professor Kathryn Backholer

GLOBE’s work challenges politicians to create “an environment that supports our children’s health and not the deep pockets of industry.”

Despite the World Health Organization (WHO) identifying the global challenge of monitoring unhealthy advertising to children, an oft-recited defence of the status quo is that digital marketing can’t be properly monitored because different people are served different content at different times.

That challenge provided the impetus for *DIGITAL-YOUTH* to devise a resource-efficient automated way to capture digital content for analysis. “I rang a colleague in the Deakin Institute for Intelligent Systems Research and Innovation and said, ‘Do you want to brainstorm it together?’,” Professor Backholer recalls.

A Cancer Council Victoria Venture Grant, funding “blue sky” ideas, then enabled the team to adapt military defence training iPupilX glasses, to the areas of public health to track the harmful marketing that youth are seeing as they go about their daily lives.

In a world first, the Venture Grant enabled the development of a proof-of-concept AI-enabled system to automatically detect and classify unhealthy advertising online and in video or photographic footage.

The system, called SCANNER, is now being expanded to cover all food categories, plus gambling, alcohol, e-cigarettes, and tobacco.

The project’s next stage involves recruiting 300-plus children and youth aged 8-11, 12-17 and 18-25, to collect data on their digital lives, which will be analysed using the SCANNER system, so that their exposure to, and engagement with unhealthy digital marketing can be quantified.

“Because algorithmic targeting is done behind closed doors and it’s been such a resource-intensive task in the past, nobody has looked across the life course regarding when does marketing start for gambling, or for e-cigarettes,” Professor Backholer says.

“It’ll be the first time we can really show solid evidence on who these harmful industries are targeting, at what stage across the life course, and in what way.”

To learn more about Deakin’s Institute for Health Transformation and the Global Centre for Preventive Health and Nutrition (GLOBE), [click here](#).

One “fingerprint” at a time

Understanding neuroendocrine cancers.

Cancer is a diagnosis none of us want to receive; however, the good news is that scientific advances and a shift towards personalised, holistic medicines are resulting in improved survival rates.

Up until now, neuroendocrine cancer diagnosis and treatments have not benefited from these advances, due to the complex nature of the disease.

Neuroendocrine cancers occur mostly in the gastrointestinal tract, but can also be found in other parts of the body, with tumours varying considerably between patients.

This form of cancer has two main “biomarkers”, including markers common to endocrine cells such as estrogen and progesterone, and markers common to nerve cells.

The incidence of neuroendocrine cancers is increasing. It is the 7th most diagnosed cancer with 5,437 cases a year.

The chance of surviving at least five-years was only 51% in 2022, compared to the nearly double, 91.8% five-year survival rate for women diagnosed with breast cancer.

As a leader in her field, molecular bioscience researcher Professor Leigh Ackland was the perfect candidate to lead the collaborative, groundbreaking research into neuroendocrine cancer, kick-starting in 2017.

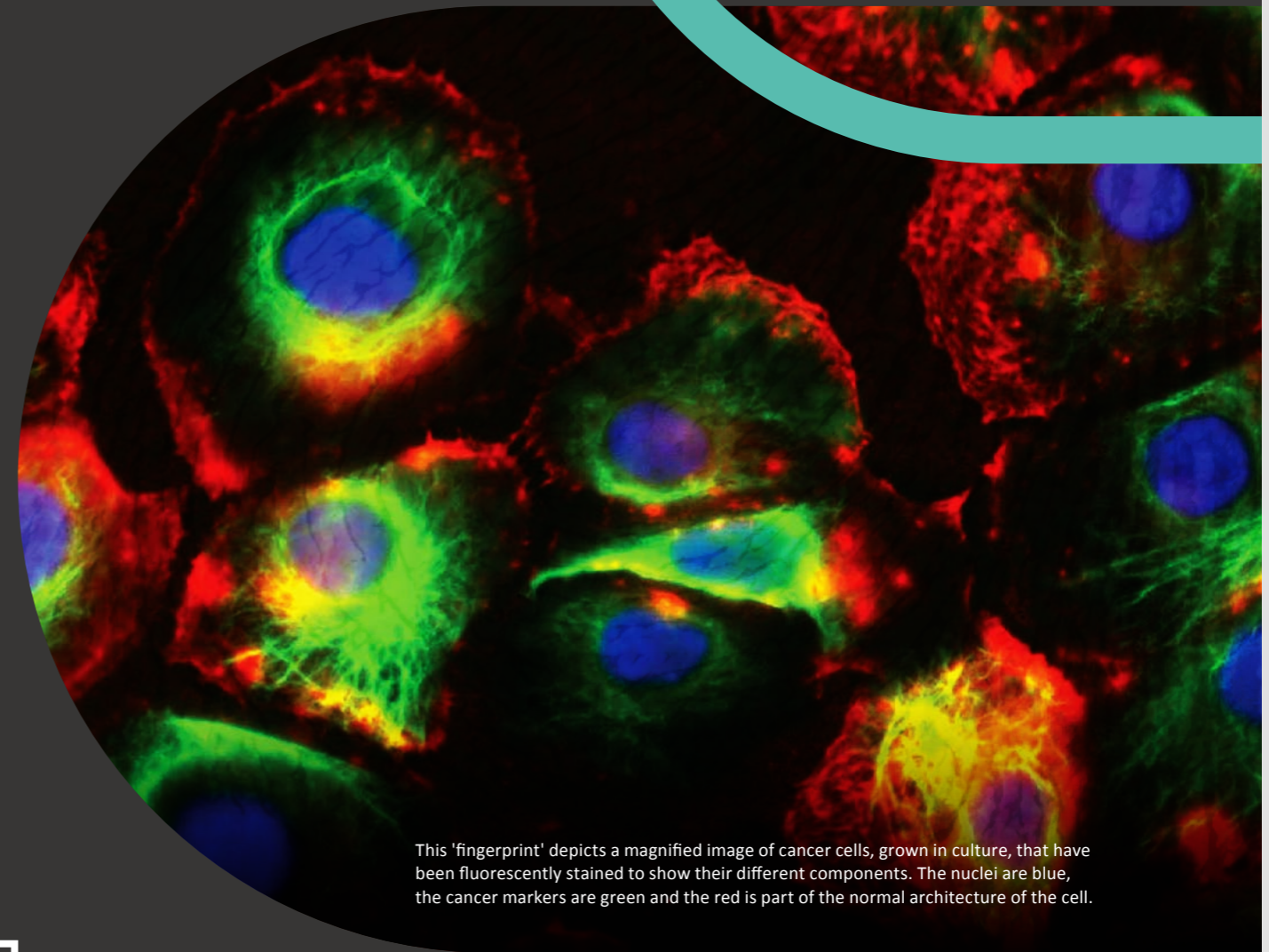
“Our successful National Health and Medical Research Council grant drew on the Australasian Gastro-Intestinal Trials Group showing the need for more personalised neuroendocrine cancer treatments,” Professor Ackland explains.

“Our laboratory-based research utilising patient biopsies from the clinical trial taken at the commencement and end of cancer treatment, highlighted each patient’s unique biochemistry, in relation to the different levels of cancer markers within their cells.”

Thanks to this major grant, and other generous funding, Professor Ackland and the team have been working to pinpoint early, less invasive detection of neuroendocrine cancers using blood sampling, and to better understand what causes these cancers to spread throughout the body.

Their plan to embark on molecular-based research, integrating immunochemistry and genomics, in partnership with experienced clinicians, was inspired by a meeting at Deakin University.

The conversation between Professor Ackland and visiting oncologist Dr Mustafa Khasraw, resulted in scientists, doctors and nurses partnering to bridge the gap in cancer treatment. Initially, the team looked to integrate the latest blood sampling technology as a key diagnostic and research tool.



This ‘fingerprint’ depicts a magnified image of cancer cells, grown in culture, that have been fluorescently stained to show their different components. The nuclei are blue, the cancer markers are green and the red is part of the normal architecture of the cell.



Our goal from the start was to explore this disease from several angles, and ultimately design targeted, individualised treatments.”

– Professor Leigh Ackland

Deakin researchers have been using new technologies, such as digital droplet PCR, to identify blood markers for neuroendocrine cancer and define clinical parameters to help diagnose the disease.

Biological information on individual cancer traits is being collated to help develop powerful “molecular fingerprints” that more effectively distinguish neuroendocrine cancer cells from normal, healthy ones.

“We are tapping into evolving knowledge of the mRNA activities of cancer cells, and are beginning to understand how differently this cancer manifests itself in individual patients,” Professor Ackland says.

According to Professor Ackland, philanthropic support plays an essential role in advancing her team’s work.

“The generous support of our donors, including the Bourne Foundation, is a game-changer and makes this research possible.”

The Bourne Foundation has donated \$300,000 over three years, helping to fund the invaluable contributions of Deakin’s Higher Degree Research students essential laboratory work, and other key aspects of the project.

For Professor Ackland, this support has been a lifeline.

“We are very grateful to our donors for their generous funding, helping us to identify cures faster, ultimately giving the gift of life.”

Securing a HOME for all

Professor Richard Tucker (GCertHigherEd '08 *Deakin*) and his colleagues are playing their part to solve the growing housing crisis – one (tiny) home at a time.

With Dr Fiona Andrews, Professor Tucker is the co-leader of **HOME** Research Centre – a unique, interdisciplinary group of more than 30 researchers based at Deakin University. The team work to provide co-designed solutions to complex problems of access to affordable housing, homelessness, and social inclusion.

Professor Tucker is an award-winning architecture scholar, with a particular interest in sustainable design. His HOME colleagues come from diverse disciplines including health, disability studies, geography, anthropology, policy, law, and economics. The group was drawn together by shared values, and the ever-present challenge of sourcing funding for new research.

“We realised that we had to reach out to other disciplines and work with them to try and communicate the value of our research in a wider context,” Professor Tucker explains.

Through those conversations we realised that there were quite a few Deakin people working on housing, but they were all working on it from different disciplinary perspectives, and what a good idea it would be to bring all those people together.”

– Professor Richard Tucker

The university provided seed funding for an initial workshop, where HOME's four key themes were established. They are:

1. Home for life
2. Home we can afford
3. Home where we know neighbours
4. Home that is connected.

An early HOME project that generated significant attention was the Geelong Microvillage Project. The six-stage analysis explored the viability of increasing the supply of affordable, small houses in the region.

The project was created in response to the growing public interest in tiny homes, and their possible use to alleviate housing supply challenges. The report found that it was difficult to untangle the range of issues and possible solutions associated with the design, building, financing, and community integration of innovative housing models. Regulation is a key issue.

“We tend to live in houses that are far too big,” Professor Tucker says.

“In fact, Australia's got the biggest houses in the world. So the problem is with shifting those regulatory barriers that, rather than becoming the minimum standard, unintentionally become the standard.”

“There are certain circumstances where it might work, so for instance, if someone wants to build a tiny home in a relative's back garden, then that might be a very good solution.”

“If homes are well-designed, and we suggested 40 square metres being the minimum, then they can work.”

Thanks to the meaningful partnerships developed during its initial phase, the Geelong Microvillage Project scope was extended to involve Deakin architecture students in the design and prototype of a housing solution for local homeless men.

HOME collaborated with Samaritan House and FormFlow – a Geelong manufacturer of innovative building materials – led by Deakin alumnus and donor, Matt Dingle (PhD '02, BEng(Man) '98 *Deakin*). Via this partnership, FormFlow advanced the use of a new, prefabricated cladding technology that provides better performance at a cheaper price. Using this system, and collaborating with builders and clients, the Deakin students realised construction of one compact home prototype. The project received almost a million dollars of state and local government funding, allowing seven of these compact dwellings to be built.

HOME is continuing this research to determine if the housing model improves the transitioning process for homeless men, and may be transferrable to assist other groups providing housing to people experiencing homelessness. HOME's research projects are many, and include the design of family and child-friendly apartments, devising housing solutions for people with intellectual disabilities, and better understanding disaster relief housing responses.

Professor Tucker welcomes new business, not-for-profit, philanthropic and government partners to come on board and work towards a home for all. Together with the HOME team, he wants to first and foremost find out what is successful and what can be improved in housing, before spending money on unproven models. He also highlights the importance of bringing together those who cannot access well-designed affordable housing with those who might be able to help. Because it is through these partnerships that solutions are found.

“We're always looking for partners. It's really difficult to fund this research, but if we can bring enough people together who are like-minded, and who face similar challenges, then we can fund the research together.”

– Professor Richard Tucker

To learn more about HOME [click here](#).



Giving back, to the future

Through Deakin's 3 key priority funds.

For the Head of Deakin's School of Education, Professor Damian Blake (GCertHigherEd '08, PhD '05, MEd '97 *Deakin*), joining the University's GIVE workplace giving program was "a no-brainer."

Professor Blake completed his PhD while working full-time as a high school teacher and deputy principal. During this time, he also raised four young children who sometimes accompanied him to work, but observes that many of his own students face greater challenges.

Recognising the privilege of working in higher education, he has a drive to give back, by helping to fund programs that can change lives. By participating in GIVE (Generosity + Impact + Values + Empathy) Professor Blake joins colleagues who make a small, regular contribution via their pre-tax pay.

These contributions are used to fund scholarships for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, including those who come to Australia as refugees and asylum seekers.

"In supporting disadvantaged members of our community through workplace giving, it creates change in the world," Professor Blake says.

"Not just in terms of their family, it also changes the opportunities for young people that they educate. So it does propagate beyond just that one person. The benefits are multi-layered."

Professor Blake wants other staff to consider the value of participating by viewing the benefits to recipients. Afghan refugee Enayat Azimi was only able to attend university through receiving a [Deakin Achieving Potential Scholarship \(DAPS\)](#), another focus of the university's fundraising work.

Deakin Achieving Potential Scholarship (DAPS) recipient, Enayat Azimi.
Photo by Nick Hancock.



It gave me a push so I can reach my potential and make my family proud."

– Enayat Azimi

Enayat arrived in Australia aged 17 not speaking English, and learning the language as he completed years 11 and 12. Under his visa, however, he wasn't eligible for HECS, so receiving his scholarship was life-altering: "It shifted the whole path in the opposite direction," he says.

Enayat's goal is to change the "bad future" his sister and brothers face. "By the time they will be able to go to university I think I will be able to financially help them," he says.

Funds provided by DAPS are substantial – \$5,000 to \$10,000 per recipient, per year, whereas the [Student Emergency Assistance Fund \(SEAF\)](#) provides one-off grants of up to \$1,000 during times of emergency. The Student Emergency Assistance Fund (SEAF) has helped 1,074 students from 2020-2022. Students who have needed help with household bills, placement expenses, rent assistance, technology needs, food, medical costs and general living expenses. Collectively, the Deakin donor community, have helped to raise and distribute over \$571,009 in emergency grants to date. These numbers not only highlight the significant need for this type of support but also the very real impact communities can make together.

For those who've completed their undergraduate degrees, and are just getting started on changing the world through original research, the [Early Career Researches Fund \(ECRF\)](#) supports breakthroughs and innovation.

A focus across different Deakin schools is improving diet and nutrition to reduce chronic diseases. In Dr Christina Zorbas' (PhD '21 *Deakin*) quest to ensure everyone in Australia can achieve a healthy diet, junior researchers are a valued and integral part of her research team.

With communities reporting that unhealthy food is cheaper, Dr Zorbas, from the School of Health and Social Development, is building Australia's largest data set, researching food and drink prices over time and into the future.

She praises the PhD students and early career researchers on her team as among the most passionate colleagues she has worked with.

For those with charitable ambitions "to contribute to the career trajectory of a future community leader, and the advancement of society", Dr Zorbas declares, "this is the right fund for you."

To learn more about GIVE, DAPS, SEAF, and ECRF, and how you can contribute, [click here](#).



Professor Damian Blake, Head of School of Education at Waurn Ponds Estate.
Photo by Donna Squire.

Deakin Warrnambool

A community that support their own.



Deakin Warrnambool Campus Director, Alistair McCosh with his family. L-R: Zac McCosh, Ellie McCosh, Alistair McCosh, Leisa McCosh and Jake McCosh. Photo by Robin Sharrock.

You could say that the Warrnambool Campus is in Alistair McCosh's blood.

A young Alistair (BA, DipEd, '92 *Deakin*) grew up in the area, and commenced university at Ballarat, before returning home and transferring his studies to Warrnambool.

"I made my way back here because it's a beautiful part of the world and I'm a surfer. You can't surf in Ballarat!" Alistair jokes.

Many years later, Alistair is the proud Director of the Deakin Warrnambool Campus, overseeing the university's long-term plans for the area, and its deep connections with local businesses and community groups. He was recently named the Moyne Shire Council's Citizen of the Year for his work.

Alistair's story reflects a common one for those who choose to study at the campus, which became part of Deakin University in 1990 following three decades operating as the Warrnambool Institute of Advanced Education.

"I'm first in family in terms of going to university. I'm from a building background of tradesmen. I've got two older brothers, and my mother didn't want another builder in the family, so she pushed me to go to university."

In a nice twist, one of Alistair's sons, a tradesman, is currently studying at South West TAFE, which is a Deakin partner. In fact, all three of Alistair's children have ties to Deakin, and his wife, Leisa (BEd '91 *Deakin*) is also a Deakin alum.

At the end of 2016, Deakin committed to the sustainability and growth of the Warrnambool Campus. Underpinning this commitment was a new scholarship program to support the next generation of students drawn from the surrounding region. The local community has been incredibly supportive of the initiative, digging deep to donate \$885,000 to directly support students and initiatives in Warrnambool and surrounds in 2022.



These scholarships provide students with the support that they need to really transition towards studying in a higher education setting, rather than having to do a part-time or two part-time jobs to support themselves."

– Alistair McCosh

This support is particularly important for mature-aged students, who comprise a significant part of the Warrnambool cohort.

"Without the university being here, those touchpoints and that opportunity to fulfil a lifetime career dream to be a nurse or to be a social worker or a teacher, for example – those opportunities wouldn't happen, because they'd have to leave."

"I often say to anyone who wants to talk about Deakin – 'if you go into any school or hospital or accounting and financial business in our region, you'll definitely bump into a Deakin graduate,'" Alistair boasts.

Alistair's links to the Warrnambool Campus are many, and he has ensured there will be an enduring connection, thanks to a bequest to the university made in his Will.

"Deakin has played a huge role in my family's story, so deciding to give back and leave a legacy wasn't a difficult decision to make," he says.

As part of his role, Alistair regularly meets with business leaders from across the region who are keen to get involved in the university's teaching, research, and engagement activities. He says his door is always open, and has a simple message to those who have big ideas for the future of the Warrnambool Campus.

"Call me."

If you are considering or have questions about leaving a gift in your Will to Deakin, please [click here](#) to find out more.

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