

# BEST OF health



## Sleep-deprived mothers

identified as a road risk

## World first for QUT

research into wound management

## CSIRO

funds scholarship examining health effect of heat waves

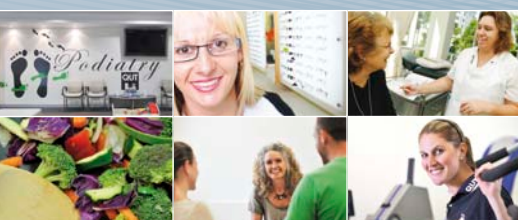
## QUT secures

emergency medicine research foundation grant

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# BEST OF health

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# From the **EXECUTIVE DEAN'S** desk



Welcome to the June edition of a new-look Best of Health. Since its first edition in 1999, Best of Health has been reporting on the achievements of students and staff in the Faculty of Health. In this edition you will see more stories about our successes including Australian Government funding for the Wound Innovation Management Cooperative Research Centre (\$28m), the Queensland Dementia Training Study Centre (\$1.5m), and re-funding of the Dementia Collaborative Research Centre: carers and consumers (\$4.1m).

Other highlights include research findings that indicate sleep-deprived new mothers are at a considerable risk of crashing when they get behind the wheel as a result of post-partum fatigue, and new cancer research by the School of Nursing and Midwifery into behavioural intervention for managing menopausal symptoms in women with breast cancer.

Recently we also celebrated the enrolment of our 300th Higher Degree Research student. The Faculty is focused on developing programs and research that make a direct and significant contribution to the community and to our daily lives. Our active student and staff researchers are investigating real health problems and developing solutions that make a real impact improving our health care and wellbeing.

In February this year I joined QUT as Executive Dean of the Faculty of Health. During the past five months I have been pleased and excited to witness the achievements of the staff and students. I look forward to sharing them with you in this edition of Best of Health.

**Andrew Wilson**  
Executive Dean, Faculty of Health



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# QUT welcomes **new Executive Dean of Health** **Professor Andrew Wilson**

In February 2010, QUT welcomed a new Executive Dean of Health, Professor Andrew Wilson.

Professor Wilson joins QUT after spending four years as Deputy Director-General, Policy, Strategy and Resourcing in Queensland Health.

Before working with Queensland Health, he was Deputy Executive Dean, and Professor of Public Health, Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Queensland. He has also been Chief Health Officer and Deputy Director-General, Public Health, in New South Wales Health.

Professor Wilson has specialist qualifications in clinical medicine and public health, and has a PhD in epidemiology.

QUT Vice-Chancellor Professor Coaldrake acclaimed Professor Wilson as an outstanding professional with extensive academic experience as well as vast experience in public policy.

'He has worked at the most senior levels of Health Departments in both Queensland and New South Wales and is perfectly equipped to provide leadership for QUT on important Queensland and national health issues,' Professor Coaldrake said.

'We believe he is the ideal person to lead and promote QUT's Faculty of Health and to forge priorities and directions which accord with national priorities in this most challenging and rapidly-changing arena.'

Professor Wilson is a member of the Repatriation Medical Authority and he has served in a number of other national roles including ministerial appointments as a member of the Australian Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee and the Medical Services Advisory Committee. He chaired the National HIV and Hepatitis C review and was on the implementation committee of the strategic review of the National Health and Medical Research Council.

Professor Wilson was also a member of the Board of the Garvan Research Institute for five years.

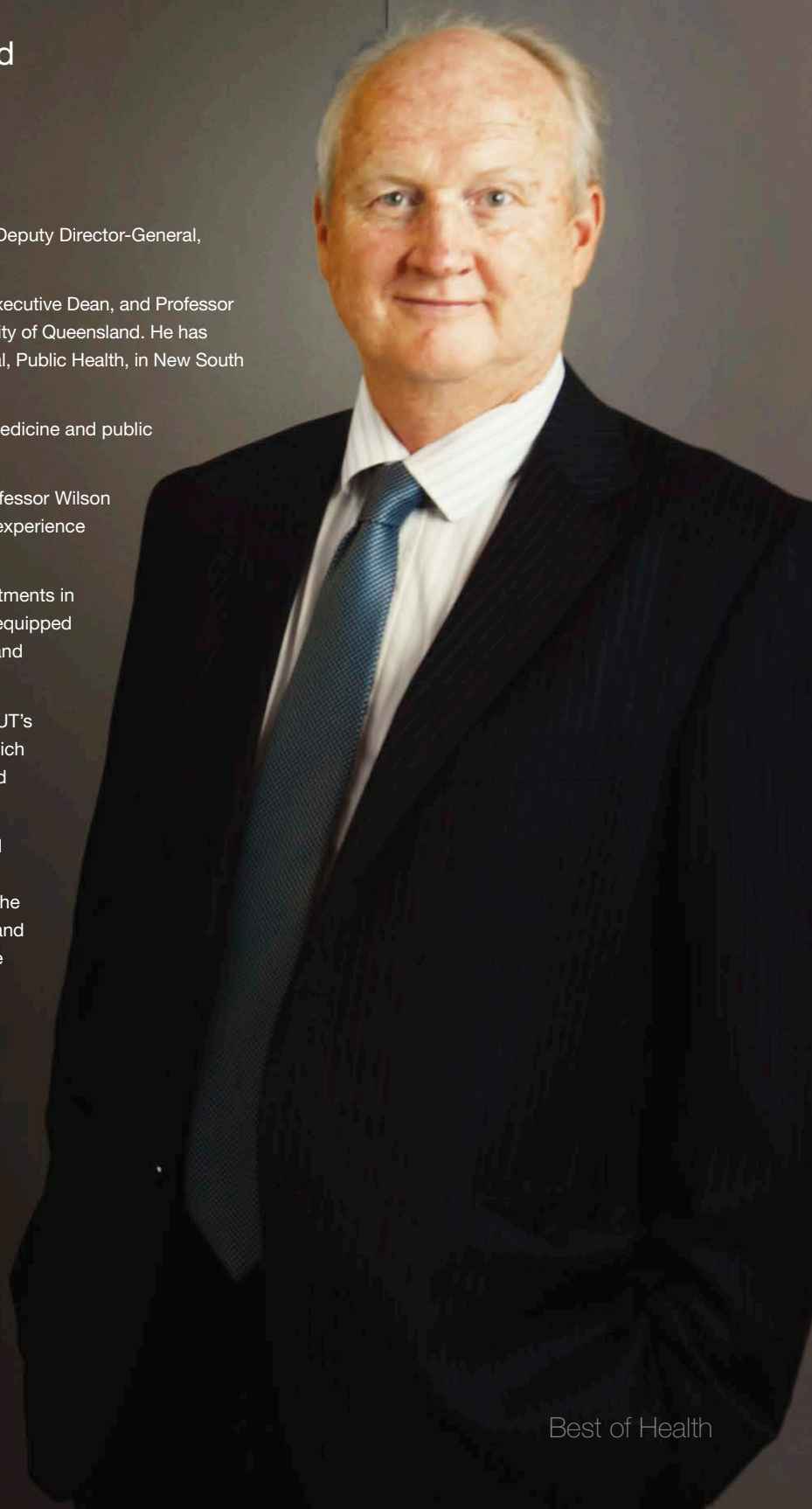


Image: Professor Andrew Wilson

# Alcohol-related injury numbers underestimated by hospital data

A National Centre for Health Information Research and Training (NCHIRT) study has found that using routinely collected Australian hospitalisation data underestimates the number of injuries where alcohol was reported to be involved by a substantial 62 per cent.

The Centre, which comes under the auspices of the School of Public Health, is dedicated to research, training and consulting activities with specific application to the quality and utility of routinely collected health data. Accurate and timely health statistics are essential to medical research and health service planning.

The recent study highlights the need for further work on improving the quality and completeness of routine administrative data sources for more complete identification of alcohol-related injuries NCHIRT Senior Research Fellow Dr Kirsten McKenzie said.

'There are concerns that the quality of information which is currently available for assessing the nature and extent of the problem isn't sufficient to support an adequate public health response,' she said.

The study involved obtaining a random sample of 4373 injury-related hospital admissions from 1 July 2002 to 30 June 2004 from 50 hospitals in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia.

It quantified the extent to which alcohol-related injuries were identified in hospital admission records using codes from the Australian modification of the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD-10-AM) and other information documented in the record to indicate the use of alcohol.

'The study found that in a sample of alcohol-related injuries only 38 per cent of cases were able to be identified using routinely available data, and the remainder were identified through the comprehensive audit of hospital records,' Dr McKenzie said.

'Records showed that the involvement of alcohol was only identified in four per cent of all hospital admissions using routinely available ICD-10-AM coded data but reviewing the hospital records revealed alcohol was in fact involved in 9.5 per cent of all injury cases.

'As a result we found that relying on current coded information in hospital records alone vastly underestimates the extent of alcohol involvement in relation to injuries which required admission.

'Given the national interest in identifying alcohol-related harm in the community, our study recommends that the use of a consistent code be made mandatory where there is evidence of alcohol involvement,' Dr McKenzie said.



## Advanced simulator set to drive down road toll

Researchers will study some of the most dangerous driver behaviours in challenging driving conditions, all in the off-road safety of a new \$1.5 million driving simulator.

Launched by the Hon. Andrew Fraser, Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development, at the Centre for Accident Research and Road Safety – Queensland (CARRS-Q), Australia's most advanced driving simulator provides cutting-edge technology to study human behaviour in different driving conditions.

CARRS-Q Director Professor Barry Watson said road crashes were, tragically, still a major cause of traumatic death and injury in Australia with an economic and social burden estimated at more than \$17 billion a year.

'The driving simulator will allow us to study drivers in safety-critical situations with a high degree of realism, while being in a protected environment,' he said.

Professor Watson said the key features that made the driving simulator unique included being able to replicate real-time traffic conditions, reproduce sensor and warning systems and allow researchers to manipulate driving environments.

'If we can recreate common yet potentially dangerous driving environments using simulation technology, then we can study how different people respond,' he said.

'This will give us a greater understanding of driver behaviour under difficult conditions which allows us to develop improved prevention strategies, thereby making our roads safer.'

Professor Watson said the simulator had already been earmarked for a number of research projects including a study on improving safety at railway crossings and understanding the impact of whiplash on driver performance.

The driving simulator works by utilising eight computers, projectors and a platform capable of moving in three dimensions. It incorporates a real Holden Calais vehicle allowing the simulator to recreate realistic traffic situations.

The simulator has been funded by the Australian Research Council, QUT, The University of Queensland, Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads, RACQ, the Motor Accident Insurance Commission and General Motors Holden. It will bring together researchers from fields including psychology, road safety, optometry, mathematics and physiology.

# World first for QUT research into wound management

A new research centre established at QUT's Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation (IHBI) will change the future of chronic wound management in Australia and, quite possibly, the world.



Image: Professors Zee Upton and Helen Edwards

The Wound Management Innovation Cooperative Research Centre (WMICRC) has secured an eight year, \$28 million Federal grant to investigate the healing of chronic wounds and the associated quality of life for people with such wounds.

Faculty of Science and Technology researcher Professor Zee Upton and Faculty of Health researcher Professor Helen Edwards will lead a multidisciplinary team of researchers, clinicians and health service providers from across the country to develop the new CRC.

Both Professors are renowned for their expertise in wound management. Professor Upton, a biochemist and tissue engineer, invented the unique wound healing formulation VitroGro®, while Professor Edwards, Head of QUT's School of Nursing and Midwifery, has undertaken extensive research in wound healing and the self management of chronic wounds. Professor Upton leads IHBI's Tissue Repair and Regeneration Program and Professor Edwards is a member of IHBI's Human Health and Wellbeing Domain.

The Wound Management Innovation CRC's research will focus on the full spectrum of chronic wound management, from discovery and product development, to implementation

in hospital and community settings. Professor Edwards said IHBI was proud to lead the WMICRC as it would have significant impact on reducing the burden of chronic wounds on health services and health costs, and improving quality of life and, as such, was the first dedicated wound-healing research organisation in the world.

'This is the largest combined research effort to investigate chronic wound management and healing in the world.

'It's an Australian-first in priority health research.'

Often labelled as Australia's 'silent epidemic', chronic wounds are estimated to affect 433,000 Australians and conservatively cost the Australian health system \$2.6 billion each year. Wound care is the second most frequently billed item in Australian medical practices.

Chronic wounds are those which take more than three months to heal, fail to heal by conventional medical or surgical means, or are recurring.

'Australia's nursing homes alone have 60,000 residents with a chronic wound which costs the country tens of millions of health dollars and reduces quality of life for many Australians,' Professor Upton said.

'You don't see sufferers of chronic wounds because the majority are left debilitated and socially isolated, away from the public eye.'

Research partners include Curtin University, University of South Australia, CSIRO, Smith & Nephew, and Tissue Therapies, as well as community nursing services across Australia and state health departments.

Professor Edwards said a key focus of the WMICRC will be the practical application of research outcomes to educate the healthcare sector in the provision of best practice treatments for chronic wounds, and communicate important wound care practices to people suffering with chronic wounds.

She said these practices included educating wound sufferers to self-assess and monitor the status of their wounds and the development of bioactive gels to promote wound healing.

'We are also focused on undertaking research to develop and deliver cost-effective wound care products,' she said.

'Delivering these products will also lessen the burden of chronic wound treatment on the healthcare system.'

# Mind, body, spirit

## CAN ALL BE AFFECTED BY **chronic wounds**

Battling depression associated with a wound that won't heal has been a challenge for chronic wound sufferer Hazel Cairns.

Hazel, a patient at QUT's Wound Healing Service, said living with a chronic wound affected her mindset, quality and outlook on life.

'Oh I get depressed some days,' she said.

'But now that my wound is starting to heal I'm a lot happier. Coming here (Wound Healing Service) has done me a lot of good.'

For many people with chronic wounds, the emotional stress to mentally manage a long-term wound can often outweigh the physical pain burden.

Thousands of chronic wound patients endure months, even years, of physical pain and emotional torment. And many are told the only 'cure' for their wound is amputation.

However, according to QUT Wound Healing Service Nurse Practitioner Michelle Gibb, 85 per cent of wound-related amputations as a result of diabetes are considered avoidable.

Michelle runs the Wound Healing Service which is part of the QUT Health Clinics located at the Kelvin Grove campus.

Michelle and her team of registered nurses, community development workers and researchers are dedicated to improving the quality of life for people with chronic wounds in Brisbane.

Together they assist many people to manage their chronic wounds, including comprehensive assessments, and cost-effective, evidence-based wound treatments and interventions. They also work with patients suffering from chronic wounds to develop strategies to prevent recurrence as well as provide ongoing support and education to promote healthy living and wound improvement.

Glenn Wilson, another chronic wound sufferer, considered the possibility of amputation prior to visiting the Wound Healing Service.

'It's not just the physical; it's also the emotional side. Before I came here I was really down, as you do when you hear that something you're really attached to could go.

'Coming (to the Service) has meant I'm still attached to it and it's well, attached.'

Michelle said wounds could occur on any part of the body, and some took a long time to heal or could recur. For example, evidence suggests that up to 70 per cent of patients with a history of previous leg ulceration suffer from recurrence of their leg ulcer.

She said the significant pain and immobility associated with chronic wounds could interfere with a person's quality of life.

'There are so many factors that can impact upon a chronic wound sufferer,' she said.

'When first visiting the clinic it can be very challenging for people with wounds as they have already often tried many treatments and remedies which have been unsuccessful.

'We have to build rapport with that person and learn about their journey so that we can determine the next best course of action for them to turn things around.'

Since opening in 2008, the Wound Healing Service has treated 140 patients. The Service treats wounds associated with leg, pressure and diabetic foot ulcers; leg swelling; eczema; dermatitis; and non-healing surgical wounds.

A referral is not necessary to attend the Clinic. For appointments and further information, telephone 07 3138 9777 or visit [www.healthclinics.qut.edu.au](http://www.healthclinics.qut.edu.au)

Image: QUT's Michelle Gibb with patient Hazel Cairns



# CSIRO

## funds scholarship

## examining health effect of heat waves

While most publicity surrounding climate change relates to its impact on the environment and the earth's atmosphere, a QUT researcher is examining its potential impact on the health of our local population.

PhD Candidate Cunrui Huang, of the School of Public Health, has been awarded a 2010 CSIRO Flagship Collaboration Fund Postgraduate Top-up Scholarship (Climate Adaptation Flagship) to investigate the health effects of heat waves caused by climate change.

Mr Huang said his research was important to the future health of Australians, due to the increasing frequency and severity of heat waves which could have serious consequences on the population.

He said CSIRO scientists were confident climate change was already occurring.

'Although the adverse health effects of heat waves are largely preventable, many people die as a result of heat waves every year,' he said.

'Climate change can no longer be considered simply as an environmental or a developmental issue. It will affect the health and wellbeing of the entire population.

'Human health should be a central concern for policymakers when they consider how best to adapt to climate change.'

Mr Huang said a greater understanding of the health implications of climate change could also lead to improved policies and more active public engagement.

He said it was essential to formulate a clear response to protect public health from the impact of heat waves.

'Although there is no serious scientific doubt about the reality of climate change, there is much more doubt about its health consequences with some scientists predicting catastrophe for human populations, and others projecting far more modest outcomes,' he said.

'Given these projections, identifying current public health adaptation deficits is not sufficient enough to address the associated projected health impacts.

'Consideration is also required of future climate and socio-economic changes and how they will influence health outcomes.'



Image: Cunrui Huang

Mr Huang said the aim of his research was to establish a quantitative model which highlighted both existing and projected future impacts of heat waves. From this model, adaptation strategies would then be developed to deal with heat-related risks and reduce vulnerability to these risks.

'Projecting heat-related mortality under differing future climate change and socio-economic scenarios can provide significant insights to assist policymakers in planning and communicating the health risks of climate change to the public,' he said.

'Adaptation strategies require a portfolio of actions at different levels, including timely public and medical advice, improvements to housing and urban planning, heat/health warning systems and ensuring the health care and social systems are ready to act.

*'Human health should be a central concern for policymakers when they consider how best to adapt to climate change.'*

'My study also aims to integrate these adaptation strategies into existing public health promotion and protection activities to control and prevent the health risks of heat waves.'

While Mr Huang's research will focus mainly on measuring mortality and heat waves in Brisbane, his findings will be relevant on a national basis.

CSIRO's Climate Adaptation Flagship is a portfolio of research initiatives focused on developing strategies to both adapt to the expected damaging effects of climate change and capitalise on the opportunities that change can bring. The Flagship offers full and top-up postgraduate scholarships to high-quality students who are enrolled in a PhD at an Australian university, and who will be working on a project directly relevant to a Flagship.

# Behavioural intervention to manage menopausal symptoms LINKED TO BREAST CANCER



With breast cancer the leading cause of cancer-related death in Australian women, a research project led by QUT has received funding from the Queensland Cancer Council to investigate behavioural intervention to manage menopausal symptoms in women with breast cancer.

The research team led by Professor Debra Anderson of QUT's School of Nursing and Midwifery has received \$73,575 in funding in 2010 (with ongoing commitment in 2011) for the two-year project, which will be conducted in conjunction with the Kim Walters Choices Program and Haematology and Oncology Clinics of Australasia.

Professor Anderson said the project was important to breast cancer research due to the high prevalence of menopausal symptoms in women with breast cancer.

*'Due to improvements in cancer treatments and earlier detection, women with breast cancer usually undergo extensive treatments; a number of which can promote menopause.'*

'The number of women living with menopausal symptoms as a result of cancer treatment is therefore rising.'

While the effect of individual lifestyle factors on menopausal symptoms in breast cancer has been examined, few studies have explored the joint effect of multiple lifestyle factors on menopause-related health issues, she said.

'Many health professionals and breast cancer patients themselves are now seeking alternatives to reduce the impact of these symptoms on their daily lives,' she said.

'With the absence of safety data on many of the therapies used by well women for menopausal symptoms, let alone for women with breast cancer, there is an

urgent need to investigate the benefits of other non-pharmacological and lifestyle interventions such as smoking cessation, exercise, balanced diet and reduced alcohol consumption.

'For example, in well women, there is evidence that avoidance of and cessation of cigarette smoking can reduce the severity and frequency of vasomotor symptoms, while women who exercise three times a week suffer less from menopausal symptoms.

'There is also good evidence that regular exercise has positive effects upon other symptoms and health concerns that are associated with menopause in women with breast cancer, including depression, fatigue, bone density and cardiovascular health risk.'

Professor Anderson said focus group interviews with 18 women in early stage breast cancer would assist the research project to develop an intervention for women with breast cancer experiencing menopausal symptoms.

This pilot work assessed women's support needs in relation to menopausal symptoms associated with breast cancer treatment, and the willingness of women with breast cancer to trial a lifestyle-related program for such symptoms.

She said the most common symptoms of menopause experienced by the women were hot flushes, night sweats and vaginal dryness. Other symptoms included joint aches and pains, swollen/tender breasts, depression, irritability, weight gain and memory impairments.

'Women also report that the menopausal symptoms experienced are worse than other side-effects of chemotherapy,' she said.

'In 2006, 13,261 women were diagnosed with breast cancer in Australia and it is projected that there will be 24,800 new cases in 2011.

Professor Anderson said women with breast cancer undergoing cancer treatments could experience menopausal symptoms, regardless of their age.

For pre-menopausal women receiving either endocrine or chemotherapy, premature and permanent menopause is common. For post-menopausal women, therapeutic hormonal manipulation with agents such as tamoxifen and the aromatase inhibitors can lead to an adjustment of a woman's endogenous estrogen state and consequently menopausal symptoms.

'In 2005, approximately 25 per cent of women diagnosed with breast cancer were aged under 50 years, including six per cent of women who were under 40 years of age.

'As the average age of menopause is 51 years, these women are likely to be premenopausal at diagnosis. Using the projected figures for 2011, this suggests that up to 3,700 women a year, depending on their treatment regime, will be affected by treatment-induced menopause.'

The first stage of the project will be to modify and pilot the lifestyle intervention program that has been developed by the research team with women with breast cancer experiencing menopausal symptoms.

Professor Anderson's research focuses on understanding the basis and effects of risk behaviours in midlife and older women and the interventions to change them, focusing on wellness and healthy behaviours.

# Sleep-deprived mothers identified as a road risk

Exhaustion resulting from lack of sleep has placed new mothers at high risk of accident and injury on our roads, a recent QUT study has found.

Dr Kerry Armstrong, from QUT's Centre for Accident Research and Road Safety – Queensland (CARRS-Q), has confirmed a linkage between post-partum fatigue and the increased risk of injury for sleep-deprived new mothers on the road.

Dr Armstrong said contrary to previous research which indicated post-partum fatigue should disappear after six weeks, new mothers still felt exhausted 12 weeks after giving birth and often experienced 'near misses' on the road as a result of sleep deprivation.

She said there was limited research into the relationship between lack of sleep in new mothers and their incidence of crashes, despite fatigue being regarded as one of the major causes of motor vehicle accidents.

'With research suggesting sleepiness is a contributing factor in up to one in three crashes, new mothers represent an 'at risk' group who require an intervention specifically targeting their needs,' she said.

'New mothers are busy and juggle many activities like grocery shopping, clinic visits and daily school drop-offs, and often it's done on very little sleep.

'Most people accept new mothers will be exhausted, but up until now no one has looked at what that means for their safety both on and off the road.'

Previous research suggests a lack of sleep (for example, four-and-a-half hours instead of seven-and-a-half hours) can significantly impact driving performance, while continual sleep deprivation can impact tasks requiring vigilance and psychomotor skills.

'If someone has been awake for 17 hours, they have a driving performance similar to that of a person with a blood alcohol level of 0.05 per cent, and if they have been awake for 24 hours it is 0.1 per cent; or two times the legal driving limit,' Dr Armstrong said.

'This has serious implications for mothers suffering from interrupted sleep patterns, night after night and sometimes for several years.'

Dr Armstrong's study of 24 new mothers residing in South-East Queensland and aged 22 to 39 years, explored the impact of post-partum fatigue with lifestyle changes, interrupted sleep and high levels of unpredictability found to be the primary contributors to exhaustion.

'The mothers reported the fatigue they experienced felt deeper than a physical need for sleep and, whilst a nap alleviated their immediate feeling of sleepiness, it failed to lessen their overall fatigue,' Dr Armstrong said.

'They also said they were often unable to concentrate. Tasks that were once automatic such as preparing a meal were reported to be highly complex post-partum, requiring more cognitive resources than some mothers felt they could muster.

'Clearly this raises concerns for the driving task, which for an experienced driver is largely an automatic process.'

Dr Armstrong said also of concern were reports by some participants who indicated their ability to concentrate whilst driving had reduced so dramatically they sometimes were unable to recall operating their vehicle and once home, wondered how they had got there.

'A particularly alarming aspect suggested a decrease in the mother's reported awareness of their body's physical need for rest and the safety implications of fatigue,' she said.

'Instead of resting, the mothers often reported 'pushing on' because tasks still had to be done and the baby's needs still to be met.

'All of these effects substantially increase the likelihood of driving errors and risk of involvement in a crash.'

Findings from Dr Armstrong's study will be used to develop an information booklet for new mothers about post-partum fatigue and injury that will highlight the dangers of driving whilst tired.



Image: Dr Kerry Armstrong

# Mothers know **only too well the effect of** **SLEEP DEPRIVATION**

New mum Ashlea Haddow knows only too well the harrowing effects of sleep deprivation.

While her daughter is now aged nine months, Ashlea can still vividly remember the first few months of her daughter's life and the impact of lack of sleep on her daily life.

'I had been told by many people to be prepared for the lack of sleep associated with a new baby, however I don't think you can ever know the true extent of sleep deprivation until your baby is born,' she said.

'Prior to giving birth I didn't actually think about the side effects of no sleep. I just thought it would mean whenever the baby was sleeping I would sleep too.

'I didn't ever stop to consider how I would go about everyday tasks such as cooking, cleaning and driving if I was sleep deprived.'

Thankfully, Ashlea did not endure any dangerous experiences whilst driving as a new mother and suffering from lack of sleep.

She said she tried to avoid driving unless her partner or a friend was with her so they could drive.

*'Without strong support from your partner, family and friends it is very easy to forget about taking care of yourself.'*

'I never had any accidents or near-misses but there were times when I felt like I was driving on auto-pilot and not taking any notice of what was going on around me,' she said.

'Sleep deprivation really did affect every element of my life. When you are sleep deprived and mother of a new-born all you can think about is caring for your baby and when you are next going to have a few hours sleep.

'Without strong support from your partner, family and friends it is very easy to forget about taking care of yourself.

'I guess when you get behind the wheel of a car all you are thinking about is getting to your destination and then getting home again so you can rest; you don't stop to think about the dangers whilst driving when you are sleep deprived.'

While Ashlea's sleep patterns are still not to the standard they were before her daughter was born, she has enjoyed a marked improvement.

'I'm pleased to be achieving a better night's sleep now that my daughter is a little older, and this has certainly allowed me to be able to better focus on my daily activities, especially driving,' she said.

Image: Ashlea Haddow with her daughter



# ‘Takeout’ lifestyle

## AN INGREDIENT FOR

# poor nutrition



Image: Helen Vidgen

The phrase ‘you are what you eat’ was once common speak within the verbal menu of society, however, a lack of food skills and lifestyle could be leading to a recipe for poor nutrition in today’s young adults.

A new QUT research project funded by Queensland Health is studying the food literacy of socially disadvantaged 16-26 year olds to examine their eating behaviours and ways to improve these behaviours.

Nutritionist and Senior Research Assistant within QUT’s School of Public Health Helen Vidgen is leading the \$220,000 two-year study, which will examine the food skills people in this age demographic require to be healthy, and how to measure and influence these skills.

Ms Vidgen said the findings of the study were likely to have broader application across healthy eating habits and nutrition in Queensland.

She said of particular concern were the eating habits and patterns of today’s young adults, who had often grown up within ‘fast food’ families.

‘Professionals have noticed that people’s food literacy, being a combination of food choices, shopping and cooking, have declined,’ she said.

‘Many young people are becoming ‘food illiterate’ after seeing their parents outsource food preparation.

‘People eat outside the home a lot more; they eat takeaway and they buy prepared food from the supermarket.’

Ms Vidgen said people could continue to eat takeaway and prepared meals, but the key was to understand what they were eating.

She said it was important for people to make informed food choices in their eating and food purchasing habits.

‘Being food literate is about shopping for food, understanding what you’re buying and your lifestyle so that you can provide yourself with healthy food on a day-to-day basis,’ she said.

‘A lack of food skills could be contributing to spiraling rates of overweight and obesity, with 62 per cent of Queensland males and 51 per cent of females overweight or obese in 2006, according to Queensland Health statistics.

‘It’s most worrying that over 1.7 million Queensland adults are overweight or obese, and over 2.7 million don’t eat enough fruit and vegetables for good health.’

Ms Vidgen said alarmingly nutritionists were reporting interactions with young mothers who did not know how to prepare food for their babies after themselves being raised on a diet of takeaway and fast food.

‘We’re also interested in looking at the link between food literacy and food security,’ she said.

‘For example, can knowing more about food and what to do with it help you stretch your limited food dollar further?’

Results from the food literacy research will inform the way food literacy projects are developed, evaluated or funded in the future by Queensland Health.





A team from the Faculty of Health and Red Cross has developed a retirement planning framework to help older employees with intellectual disabilities working in supported employment settings transition successfully to retirement.

The practical framework called Moving On was developed as part of a 12-month collaborative research project headed by Dr Marie Knox from Social Work and Human Services.

Dr Knox said the aim was to improve understanding of issues surrounding retirement planning for people with an intellectual disability who were employed in supported employment settings such as Red Cross Business Services.

She said the Moving On framework evolved from themes identified in the research phase of the project.

'Our research focused on issues which were identified by the workers, family members or unpaid carers and staff,' she said.

'These included having the need to be meaningfully involved in the retirement planning process as well as maintaining personal integrity and status.

'It was also important for the retiring worker to remain connected to their community and having other agencies involved in helping to widen their social networks.'

The Moving On framework involves a four-step process which begins by getting older workers to think about what they are currently doing and what they would like to do.

'The process ends with the development of a monitoring and review system to ensure that quality of life continues for the older supported employee when he or she retires,' Dr Knox said.

The framework with its emphasis on retirement rather than retrenchment, and on the older worker maintaining control over the decision-making and being actively involved in the planning process, is quite unique.

Dr Knox said the process should contribute to a more complete understanding of the concept of positive ageing and retirement for this group of older workers.

As a result of the research a handbook titled Pathways and Possibilities for Life after Work has been developed by the Red Cross in conjunction with other Brisbane disability services. The handbook will be distributed to relevant older workers later this year.

## Program to help older workers with intellectual disabilities **MOVE ON**

Image: Dr Marie Knox from QUT and Melissa Patterson from Red Cross

# Student volunteers assist with Vietnamese community health care

A group of students from QUT's Faculty of Health were given a real-world insight into grassroots community health care through a recent volunteer placement program to Vietnam.

The collaborative trip organised by Antipodeans Abroad saw a group of 10 students – four from the School of Nursing and Midwifery and six from the School of Public Health – spend two weeks in Vietnam from November to December 2009. The students rotated between local clinics and schools in the rural hill tribe area of Mai Chau, located a few hours west of Hanoi in Vietnam's north.

School of Public Health Lecturer Dr Margo Sendall said the student volunteers were supervised by QUT staff and worked with clinic and school staff to provide community health care and education to local villagers.

'We extended the opportunity to students within the Faculty to ensure a multidisciplinary approach to the placements and to enhance our presence and existing relationships in these regions,' she said.

'It provides our students with international experience that can only assist their personal and professional development, by providing the opportunity to gain insight into and experience health care from a global perspective.'

Antipodeans Abroad aims to support the growing demand for greater global, personal and professional development opportunities for Australian-based students. Its programs provide flexibility for universities to tailor a program to meet the rapidly changing needs of the Australian tertiary sector.

Nursing and Midwifery Project Officer Tina Higgins said students experienced community health care at the grassroots level, often travelling by foot and vehicle to remote communities to assist local healthcare workers treating common illnesses and performing health checks on children.

Students also lived in authentic traditional huts and ate local Vietnamese food as part of their placement.

'Students said they enjoyed the opportunity to experience how ethnic minority groups live in Vietnam,' she said.

'They agreed that one of their greatest challenges was communicating with people who were from a different culture and who spoke very little English.

'Importantly, they learned to work as a team, and to teach and support each other.'

Theresa Harvey, a lecturer within the School of Nursing and Midwifery, was one of the staff who supervised the students during their placement.

She said the students conducted health checks of more than 740 people in two village health clinics.

'The days were long, as were the queues of people seeking a free health check,' Ms Harvey said.

'It was a great opportunity for the students to contribute in a worthwhile way to a needy community whilst developing sound assessment skills.

'The education activities were conducted in a very professional manner and are a credit to the students' abilities.'

Ms Harvey said the students should also be commended for their fundraising efforts undertaken prior to departure, to secure donations of medical supplies and money to purchase approximately \$2500 of medication to assist the clinic health checks in Vietnam.

'The outcomes for individual participants involved in this expedition were not only the increased health knowledge and hands on experience of working in a different country, but also a significant benefit on their resumes,' she said.



Image: Students in Vietnam. Students (Left to Right):

# QUT provides local insight to enhance Vietnamese health care

Health care in Vietnam is set to benefit from a new QUT project designed to support and enhance nursing education within Vietnamese hospitals.

Dr Yvonne Osborne of the School of Nursing and Midwifery has secured an Australian Leadership Award to deliver the project to four chief nurses (Fellows) from Vietnam.

The Strengthening Nurse Education in Vietnam to Meet ASEAN Professional Standards project will inform the visitors on policies, processes, and procedures for supporting nurse education in clinical settings in Queensland.

*The Fellowship program highlights the School of Nursing and Midwifery's strong industry connections with the international health community, and complements two other important projects currently being undertaken in Vietnam by the School.*

During their time in Australia, the Fellows, each representing a major hospital within four regions of Vietnam, will learn how clinical nursing education is supported and conducted at tertiary health care, university and government levels.

Dr Osborne said the current standards of nursing care in Vietnam were not consistent with national and international standards.

'This program aims to enable the Fellows to develop clinical learning environments that can support education for undergraduate students and newly graduated students, to ultimately develop nurses who can provide world standard care,' she said.

'Since Vietnam has become a signatory to the ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Nursing Services, nurses will need to be prepared to meet the professional and licensure standards within the ASEAN region.'

Dr Osborne said the program would provide leadership and knowledge to the Fellows, who will visit Queensland Health and four major Brisbane hospitals during their stay.

'They will also attend workshops and seminars with leaders in the health care sector in Queensland, and explore clinical education programs in nursing from both a hospital and university perspective,' she said.

'At the conclusion of their visit, the Fellows will be required to write and present an action plan to a panel of experts from Queensland Health, major Brisbane hospitals and senior QUT staff who will offer feedback and expert opinion.

'They will then take these action plans back to their hospitals in Vietnam to implement change within their clinical education models.'

Dr Osborne said each Fellow had been invited by QUT to participate in the program on the basis of their significant contributions to policy development and to advancing the Vietnamese Ministry of Health agenda. Each Fellow holds a key advisory position in the Vietnamese Nursing Association (VNA).

She said each had the influence and ability to create positive change for nurse education in their workplace, their professional body (VNA) and Government departments.

The Fellowship program highlights the School of Nursing and Midwifery's strong industry connections with the international health community, and complements two other important projects currently being undertaken in Vietnam by the School.

Dr Osborne said the program would provide the Fellows with the opportunity to establish networks with experts from Queensland Health, hospitals and QUT.

'It really is an important project that will have practical, positive implications for the future health care of the Vietnamese community,' she said.



Charles Yuill, Tiana Innes, Paula Macdermitt, Karla Riddell



Image: Professor Mary Courtney with Kody Minnis and Hannah Bradley

## Meet Toebee the dinosaur

A VERY special dinosaur at the Podiatry Clinic now has a special name, thanks to 12-year-old Kody Minnis. Kody was one of 160 children who visited the clinic for free feet assessments in January before going back to school.

She also took part in a competition to name the clinic's 'pet' dinosaur – who doubles as a paediatric hydraulic examination couch.

Kody dubbed the dinosaur 'Toebee', with runner up Hannah Bradley, 3, providing the middle name of 'Feeto'.

The two girls and their families returned to the Clinic to be presented with their prizes (a Nintendo DS and a shoe voucher from The Athlete's Foot) by Professor Mary Courtney, Assistant Dean of the Faculty of Health.

The Podiatry Clinic is part of the QUT Health Clinics at Kelvin Grove which are open to the public and provide discounted or free services in optometry, podiatry, nutrition, exercise, psychology and counselling, and wound healing.

No referral is necessary to visit the clinics and free on-site parking is available.

Visit [www.healthclinics.qut.edu.au](http://www.healthclinics.qut.edu.au) or phone 07 3138 9777 for more information or to book an appointment.

# Retired professionals **targeted**..... .....to address **rural skills crisis**

A new QUT study will investigate the merit of encouraging retired and semi-retired professionals to volunteer in rural areas in an attempt to overcome skill shortages in these locations.

The three-year project, led by the School of Psychology and Counselling's Dr Patricia Obst and Associate Professor Katy White, has received \$141,000 in Australian Research Council Linkage funding to respond to the rural skills crisis and enhance social inclusion in rural areas.

The research team will be assisted by Professor Jennifer Warburton of La Trobe University, Dr Nancy Spencer from the Department of Communities and QUT PhD Scholar Nadine Brayley. Volunteering Queensland will also be involved in the project in an advisory capacity.

Dr Obst said the aim of the project was to develop and test a theoretical model of volunteer motivations and incentives that were designed to attract retired and semi-retired professionals as episodic volunteers to contribute to the social and economic development of rural communities.

'Outcomes from the study will provide important empirical evidence on the best means of encouraging retired and semi-retired professionals to utilise their skills through episodic volunteering in various agencies operating in the rural area, such as sports administration, youth services and aged care,' Dr Obst said.

'We will be examining the factors that may encourage these professionals to visit rural communities; whether it be through accommodation provisions, the options of flexible working hours or the opportunity to contribute as they pass from one town to another by tapping into the grey nomad mentality.'

Dr Obst said the project contributed directly to the national research priority area Promoting and Maintaining Good Health: Ageing Well, Ageing Productively by placing a high value on the skills of older Australians and encouraging them to remain productive in retirement by sharing their skills.

She said the project would also strengthen the social and economic fabric of rural communities by addressing skill shortages in rural areas by providing access to skilled professionals.

'The model developed in the first stage of the research will be evaluated and tested in the second stage through development of several volunteering projects with specific agencies in rural towns in Queensland and Victoria,' Dr Obst said.

'The practical application of this model will potentially lead to the development of a database that will connect agencies with potential volunteers and provide a framework for attracting volunteers to rural areas,' Dr Obst said.

# QUT leads

# state's response

# to national dementia initiative

It is well publicised that one of the major challenges facing the future of the Australian health system is the impact of the rising incidence and prevalence of dementia. According to a recent Access Economics report *'Keeping Dementia Front of Mind: Incidence and Prevalence 2009–2050'* (commissioned by Alzheimer's Australia in 2009), the number of people diagnosed with dementia in Australia is projected to rise from 245,400 in 2009 to 1.13 million cases by 2050.

QUT is leading Queensland's response to this national challenge by working with the Australian Government to improve evidence-based practice in dementia care.

The Department of Health and Ageing (DOHA) has awarded QUT \$1.3 million (January 2010 to June 2013) under its Dementia Initiative to establish the Queensland component of the Dementia Training Study Centres, which will see the development of a coordinated, nationwide approach to improving dementia education for health professionals through the creation of five specialist study centres across the country. Prior to January 2010, QUT hosted the Queensland node of the Eastern Australia Dementia Training Study Centre (EADTSC).

The new Queensland Dementia Training Study Centre (QLD DTSC) is located in the School of Nursing and Midwifery and has been deliberately established as a consortium of university and aged care industry providers in Queensland—each with specialist knowledge and expertise in the provision of dementia-related services, education and training.

The QLD DTSC supports existing research undertaken by QUT through the Dementia Collaborative Research Centre: Carers and Consumers (DCRC:CC), which has been in operation at the Kelvin Grove campus since 2006.

The DCRC:CC recently received a further \$4.1 million (January 2010 to June 2013) in Australian Government funding under the

Dementia Initiative to continue its research designed to enhance the care of people with dementia and their families.

QLD DTSC Director Professor Helen Edwards said that, through the Dementia Initiative, the Australian Government aimed to strengthen the capacity of the health and aged care sectors to provide appropriate evidence-based prevention and early intervention, assessment, treatment and care for people with dementia.

QLD DTSC Centre Manager Tracey Dutton said the QLD DTSC would target tertiary qualified health professionals and students seeking tertiary-level qualifications in health-related disciplines to promote career opportunities and professional development within the dementia sector.

She said other key priorities were to facilitate dementia education and training in regional, rural and remote Queensland, as well as the development of innovative learning materials to support dementia education across the state.

'The QLD DTSC will also work very closely with QUT's DCRC:CC and other projects funded under the Dementia Initiative to further the translation of dementia knowledge, as well as provide a strategic approach to the integration of research into evidence-based best practice,' she said.

'By enhancing the education and resources available, and by targeting health professionals to encourage interest in dementia studies, we aim to improve the level of dementia care provided throughout the acute, community and residential care settings.'

The DCRC:CC is one of three dementia research centres funded as a collaboration by DOHA. Together the centres aim to undertake dementia-related research and to translate the outcomes of that research into evidence-based care and clinical practice.

DCRC:CC Director Professor Elizabeth Beattie said research across the three DCRCs was broad, spanning the three critical areas in a comprehensive dementia strategy, being diagnostic and preventative research, treatment and health delivery research and quality of care-focused research, often including both the person with dementia and their family.

'The three DCRCs each have multiple collaborators comprising many of the top dementia researchers in Australia, community groups and service providers, as well as strong networks with international colleagues,' Professor Beattie said.

Both the QLD DTSC and DCRC:CC are part of the School of Nursing and Midwifery and are located at QUT's Kelvin Grove campus.

For further information regarding the Dementia Initiative, visit [www.health.gov.au/dementia](http://www.health.gov.au/dementia)

For further information about the QLD DTSC, contact Tracey Dutton on 07 3138 5943 or [t.dutton@qut.edu.au](mailto:t.dutton@qut.edu.au)

For further information about the DCRC:CC, visit [www.dementiaresearch.org.au](http://www.dementiaresearch.org.au) or contact Susi Wise on 07 3138 5772 or [s.wise@qut.edu.au](mailto:s.wise@qut.edu.au)



# QUT SECURES E

An evaluation of a government initiative designed to reduce the demand in emergency departments by the elderly has secured QUT's first research grant through the Queensland Emergency Medicine Research Foundation (QEMRF).

The three-year project has secured \$297,846 in funding and will examine the Hospital in the Nursing Homes (HINH) program in Queensland, to determine the program's success in reducing the number of elderly patients presented to emergency departments across three hospitals in Queensland.

This is the first time the QEMRF has funded a QUT research project, largely due to the strong industry linkages secured by Dr Janet Hou, Senior Lecturer in the School of Public Health. Dr Hou also works as

a Research Fellow in the Department of Emergency Medicine at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital.

Dr Hou is a key member of the project research team that will be led by Dr William Lukin, Medical Director of the HINH program at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital's Department of Emergency Medicine.

Dr Hou said the project would examine the effectiveness of the HINH program, which was developed in response to the increasing demand placed on Queensland's

emergency departments and the increasing number of elderly patients as a result of Australia's ageing population.

The program commenced at the Gold Coast Hospital in 2003, the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital in 2006 and is planned for future implementation at Logan Hospital.

'A significant proportion of elderly patients attending emergency departments are from nursing homes where medical support is limited,' Dr Hou said.

'HINH involves sending clinical staff to

## Research encourages those to design community services

For QUT's Dr Phil Crane, engaging study participants within the research process leads to the real-world application of theory into practice.

A Senior Lecturer in Social Work and Human Services, Dr Crane has used action research to generate positive social outcomes across a number of challenging community issues; the success of which has led to QUT's upcoming involvement in the Youth Connections program.

Dr Crane has received \$64,000 to lead the QUT component of the two-year Youth Connections project, which will utilise participatory action research (PAR) to enable services to be better tailored for young people in Brisbane at risk of disengaging from education.

The project follows on from the success of Dr Crane's long-term involvement with the Australian Government's youth homelessness program, Reconnect, where action research has been successfully used to develop effective early intervention strategies across Australia. As a result, action research was recognised in the 2008 White Paper on homelessness The Road Home, as important for improving policy and sharing best practice.

Similarly, the Youth Connections program will work with young people who have disengaged, or are at risk of disengaging,

from education, training work, family and community and aims to support them back into participation.

'PAR is a collaborative systematic approach to inquiry which aims to simultaneously develop understandings about practice and implement improvements to practice,' Dr Crane said.

'In social programs, PAR is undertaken by individuals and agencies who collaboratively develop the 'what will it take to ... ?' questions around key shared objectives.'

# MERGENCY MEDICINE

## RESEARCH FOUNDATION GRANT

nursing home facilities to provide acute medical care for residents and provides support and education for nursing staff in nursing homes.

'The main objective of HINH is to avoid emergency department presentation from nursing homes, decrease the length of stay at emergency departments and in-patient units by residents of nursing homes, and provide better transitional care for these elderly patients.'

Dr Hou said residents from nursing homes formed a significant proportion of the population presenting to emergency departments, who usually arrived by ambulance and often with relatively minor and recurring health problems.

At its implementation, the program was anticipated to have multiple benefits, including reduction of emergency

department presentations, reduced length of hospitalisation for elderly patients presenting to emergency departments, higher job satisfaction among clinical staff in nursing homes and better transitional care for residents between nursing homes and emergency departments.

She said it was vital to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the HINH program in Queensland prior to its implementation in hospitals across the State.

'The outcomes of this research project will assist in the establishment of a comprehensive HINH model for hospital emergency departments across Australia,' she said.

'While we are a long way from formalising our findings, we anticipate that the program is an effective approach to reducing the emergency department burden from patients in nursing homes and has

improved the quality of transitional care of elderly patients suffering a range of health emergencies in nursing homes.

'The research project will provide the first scientific evidence for whether the HINH program is effective, and identify further improvement measures, which will have significant practical implications for Queensland Health's current efforts at identifying successful models of hospitalisation substitution.'

Dr Hou said it was hoped the research would indicate that hospital avoidance could be achieved without comprising the quality of care for residents of nursing homes.

To complete the study, the team will undertake a cross-sectional observational study, utilising both qualitative and quantitative research methods.

## at the front line

Funded by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, the Youth Connections research will target youth in North Brisbane and West Brisbane.

Dr Crane said this type of research was fundamental to promoting positive social outcomes and change, through engagement of the individuals who belonged to the identified community sector being targeted through the research.

'In dealing with today's challenging community issues, governments and community organisations cannot simply employ preconceived approaches to engagement and intervention; they need to enquire and engage with the actual people they are attempting to target to determine the best model of delivery,' Dr Crane said.

'It's about more joined-up, client-centred, outcomes-oriented intervention.'

PAR has been utilised in a variety of health promotion and youth service contexts over the years due to its capacity to engage networks, front line services, practitioners and clients in the process of establishing what is successful, unsuccessful and what should be done differently in their particular practice context.

Image: Dr Phil Crane



# QUT resource enhances dietitians' understanding of MENTAL HEALTH



Future dietetics graduates will be given appropriate training and materials to gain a greater understanding of mental health issues through a joint research initiative funded by the Department of Health and Ageing.

QUT has partnered with the Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA) and the Department of Health and Ageing to undertake the Mental Health Curricula for Dietitians Project, which forms part of the Commonwealth's component of the Council of Australian Government's National Plan on Mental Health 2006-2011, securing a total of \$250,000 in funding.

Associate Professor Susan Ash, the project leader of the research team and coordinator of the Nutrition and Dietetics course at QUT's School of Public Health, said the project was completed in two stages. The first resulted in the mapping of competencies and gaps regarding dietetic competencies in relation to mental health.

She said the revised DAA National Competency Standards for entry-level dietitians while purposely general for application across a wide range of practice settings had been strengthened by the addition of specific knowledge and skills in dealing with mental health issues.

The second phase of the project resulted in a resource package for use by universities to enhance and support entry-level dietetic training in mental health issues.

'Phase Two involved developing tools to assist universities to address the revised mental health requirements of the DAA accreditation standards and building the capacity of dietetic educators to provide practical training and assessment for dietetic students working with clients with mental health issues,' she said.

'The project also focused on developing and trialling tools to build capacity to provide positive learning and assessment experiences regarding mental health during dietetic practicum.

'Activities included consultation with all universities teaching dietetics and a national roadshow of workshops to demonstrate how to integrate the teaching and assessment tools into the curriculum.'

Associate Professor Ash said dietitians worked with mental health issues across a variety of settings, including specific mental health illnesses such as anorexia nervosa and broader conditions such as depression related to chronic diseases and obesity.

'Approximately 80 per cent of dietitians surveyed as part of the study said they encountered depression in their practice either frequently or very frequently,' she said.

'Other issues encountered frequently or very frequently included disordered eating, obesity with mental health co-morbidity and anxiety disorders.

'For dietitians who graduated within the past 10 years, 85 per cent reported gaps in their entry-level training with regard to mental illness and mental health related issues. Gaps identified included knowledge and treatment of common mental illnesses and where to find resources and support for clients with these illnesses.'

Associate Professor Ash said the resource package was designed to combat these identified gaps in the education of dietetics students.

The resource package includes 10 case studies supported by detailed educational resources, including video and audio clips, website with links to resources and support groups, mental health and wellbeing decision tree and a reflection tool.

She said the resource had been sent on DVD and USB to all universities teaching dietetics across Australia. The resource is currently being evaluated for its introduction into the QUT dietetics curriculum as part of Smart State scholar Kerryn Dowding's PhD.

'Inclusion of this resource into the teaching curriculum will hopefully allow graduates to feel more prepared and be equipped with more resources about mental health,' she said.

'It is also hoped the resource will assist in reducing the stigma associated with mental health illnesses by health professionals, a major aim of the National Plan on Mental Health.'

# INNOVATION AND STUDENT-FOCUS SUCCESS of new Master of Social Work

The combination of real-world practice delivered by industry experts, flexible learning options and innovative use of technology to enhance the educational experience, has secured the popularity of QUT's new Master of Social Work.

The two-year full-time program was launched at the Kelvin Grove campus earlier this year and is fast proving to be a popular postgraduate pathway for students wanting to further their career in social work.

Professor Bob Lonne, Head of Social Work and Human Services, said the introduction of the new Master of Social Work in 2010 had been very successful, attracting large numbers of interested candidates and subsequent student enrolments.

'Students are excited by the innovative, contemporary approach QUT has taken in implementing the new Masters program,' he said.

'We recognise the enormous competing demands that arise from balancing work, family and study, and we designed the program to be highly flexible to meet a range of people's needs.

'Strategic use of time on campus is supported by a range of virtual learning technologies,' Professor Lonne added.

'This includes intensive periods of teaching, coupled with use of web-based technologies, to support the education experience and allow students to access the information they want, when they want it.'

Podcasts, virtual forums and Skype are among the innovative learning tools utilised by students and staff within the program.

While students are not required to attend on-campus lectures every week, they must participate in various virtual activities as part of their educational program.

Professor Lonne said another critical feature of the new program was the commitment to provide individual mentoring to each student.

In first semester, staff engage with the new students to identify their specific aims, expectations and career aspirations from the Master of Social Work, and then work collaboratively with the students throughout their program to structure their learning around these aspirations.

Later in the program, students undertake practical placements in agencies targeted at their career goals, to provide them direct practice learning within areas in which they have a specific interest.

Professor Lonne said the program provided a high level qualification for social work practice, and reflected a deep commitment to assisting, respecting and empowering the neglected, vulnerable, marginalised and disadvantaged.

'The program is designed to build graduate skills to genuinely enhance the quality of life and human potential of each individual, family, group and community within our society,' Professor Lonne said.

'It also provides eligibility for direct entry into the profession as a social worker in Australia and internationally.

'Social work is an exciting, challenging and rewarding profession, and one which certainly offers graduates a broad range of career opportunities, both now and in the future.

'If people really want to learn the 'doing' part of social work, then QUT is the place for them.'

Application to the Master of Social Work is direct to QUT. For more information, visit [www.hlth.qut.edu.au/swhs](http://www.hlth.qut.edu.au/swhs)

## health's elite athletes receive SCHOLARSHIPS

QUT has been recognised as an Elite Athlete Friendly University by both the Australian Institute of Sport and the Australian Sports Commission. Over 40 per cent of the University's registered elite athletes are studying in the Faculty of Health and during March a number of these students received scholarships for high sporting and academic achievements.

### We congratulate:

**Cameron Carr**  
Wheelchair Rugby

**Amy Chapman**  
Soccer

**Marguerita Corfios**  
Judo

**Peta Eddington**  
Rowing

**Melissa Gorman**  
Swimming

**Samantha Hoschke-Edwards**  
Swimming

**Jordan Mowen**  
Volleyball

**Kyle Richardson**  
Swimming

# Faculty a popular choice for higher degree research students

The Faculty of Health has recently enrolled its 300th higher degree research student, proving QUT is a popular choice for students wishing to further their education and research capabilities in the burgeoning health sector.

The positive impact of these research projects is often recognised by industry, with many students securing support and assistance through a variety of organisations within the health sector.

One such student is PhD candidate Raymond Chan, who has recently received scholarship funding for his research from the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital Foundation, the Queensland Nursing Council and the Royal College of Nursing Australia.

With a clinical background in cancer and palliative care nursing, Mr Chan's research focuses on self management in patients with advanced cancer.

He said the model of self management had been increasingly utilised in managing other chronic conditions however, little was known about its use in patients with advanced cancer.

'Although we suggest patients use self-management strategies, we do not know much about the effectiveness of self management and the factors that influence these strategies,' he said.

'I hope that my research can provide greater knowledge to inform more effective interventions in this area.'

'Indeed, looking after patients with advanced cancer is my passion, especially in supporting them through their journey until the end of life.'

Mr Chan said he was delighted to have received the scholarships, and applauded the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital Foundation, Queensland Nursing Council and Royal College of Nursing Australia for supporting PhD students in their research journey.

He said he plans to pursue a research career in the hospital setting and thanked the Faculty of Health for allowing him to follow his future goals.

'I completed my undergraduate and master degrees at QUT and have had very positive learning experiences at QUT for the past nine years,' he said.

'QUT's School of Nursing and Midwifery is the most established nursing school, compared to others in Queensland.'

'Further, QUT has well recognised nursing academics, who have high professional esteem and clinical impact on an international basis.'

'I could not ask for a better foundation on which to build my future research career.'

Students with enquiries regarding higher degree research within the Faculty of Health can contact the Research Services Team on 07 3138 8290 or email [health.research@qut.edu.au](mailto:health.research@qut.edu.au)

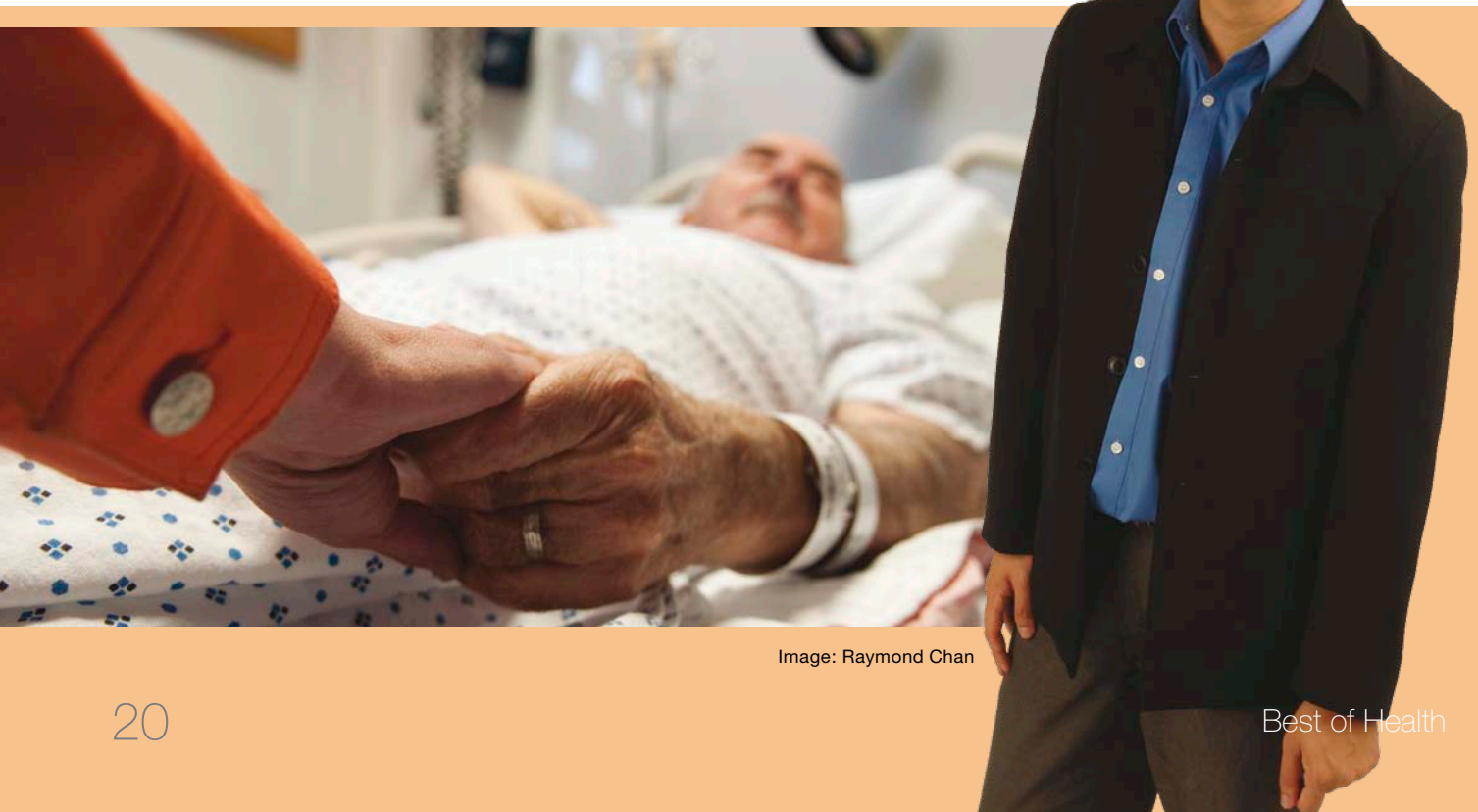


Image: Raymond Chan

# higher degree

## HIGHLIGHTS

### **Shin Chen**

#### **PhD (Psychology and Counselling)**

Mining patterns and factors contributing to crash severity on road curves.

### **Byoung Chu**

#### **PhD (Optometry)**

The impact of presbyopic spectacles and contact lenses on driving performances.

### **Maxine Dahl**

#### **PhD (Nursing and Midwifery)**

Air evacuation in the war: The role of RAAF nurses undertaking air evacuation of casualties between 1943-1953.

### **Arathy Ganga Kartha**

#### **PhD (Optometry)**

The effect of prolonged reading on visual functions and reading performance in students with low vision.

### **Hui-Ying Kuo**

#### **PhD (Optometry)**

Comparison of temporal processing and motion perception in emmetropes and myopes.

### **James Le Lievre**

#### **PhD (Psychology and Counselling)**

The experience of emotional expressions in the context of social relations for people diagnosed with schizophrenia: A phenomenological explication.

### **William Olds**

#### **PhD (Public Health)**

Elucidating the links between UV radiation and Vitamin D synthesis: Using an in vitro model.

### **Sonya Osborne**

#### **PhD (Nursing and Midwifery)**

Testing the effectiveness of a practice development intervention on changing the culture of evidence-based practice in an acute care environment.

### **Marita Pentti**

#### **Doctor of Health Science (Public Health)**

Quality issues for the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program (NBCSP).

### **Elizabeth Petriwskyj**

#### **PhD (Psychology and Counselling)**

Transition to school of diverse learners.

### **Joanne Ramsbotham**

#### **PhD (Nursing and Midwifery)**

The development and evaluation of an innovative nursing practice model to improve undergraduate nursing students' competence in paediatric physical assessment.

### **Marguerite Sendall**

#### **PhD (Public Health)**

Conceptions of school based youth health nursing: A phenomenographic model.

### **Nisha Singh**

#### **PhD (Optometry)**

Variation of the Stiles-Crawford effect with accommodation and myopia.

### **Yunxian Zhou**

#### **PhD (Nursing and Midwifery)**

The experience of China-educated nurses working in Australia: A symbolic interactionist perspective.

## **2009 Outstanding Doctoral Thesis Award (ODTA) recipients:**

### **Kate Halton**

#### **PhD (Public Health)**

Setting hospital infection control policy: A decision-making framework incorporating health economics and healthcare epidemiology.

### **Alyra Shaw**

#### **PhD (Optometry)**

Eyelid pressure on the cornea.

### **Contact us**

The Faculty of Health is committed to providing innovative courses, significant research and innovation, and improving the quality of life for all Australians. Contact us for more information on the Faculty's research programs, course developments and community initiatives; or to become involved in supporting the Faculty's future projects.

### **Research**

Information about the Faculty's research facilities, current projects, and postgraduate research courses can be found at [www.hlth.qut.edu.au/research](http://www.hlth.qut.edu.au/research)

### **Courses**

Information on course developments including new degrees, course structures, undergraduate and postgraduate offerings can be found at [www.hlth.qut.edu.au](http://www.hlth.qut.edu.au)

### **Clinics**

Information on the services provided by the QUT Health Clinics can be found at [www.hlth.qut.edu.au/clinics](http://www.hlth.qut.edu.au/clinics)

### **Your support**

Donations from QUT staff and alumni as well as charitable gifts from other members of the community are making a real difference to students and researchers in the Faculty of Health. Our Health friends and donors often choose to support a cause close to their hearts. Research on vision problems such as myopia, skin cancer prevention and awareness programs, mental health studies and nursing education have all received philanthropic gifts over the past years. These gifts make a real difference.

For further information about opportunities to support the Faculty of Health and its important programs please phone the Alumni Office on 07 3138 1843.

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