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Dr Craig Duncan is on a winning streak

WHEN COMEDY TURNS TRAGIC
Do the funniest comedians really die first?

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?
A look at what some of our graduates are up to

LONDON CALLING
Aussie teachers in demand in the UK to help cope with a looming teacher recruitment crisis
VICE-CHANCELLOR’S WELCOME

IN THE MEDIA
ACU in print around the country

NEWSBITES
The latest news and announcements at ACU

RESEARCH BITES
A look at some of our latest research

THE LOWDOWN ON TEACHER EDUCATION
We took a look at the stats on the teaching industry and job prospects, and found the future is bright

LONDON CALLING
Australian teachers are in demand in the UK to help cope with a looming teacher recruitment crisis

25 YEARS FOR ACU
In 2015, Australian Catholic University will reach a special milestone

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Welcome to the first edition of ACU Alum for 2015. As an important part of our university community, I hope you will enjoy reading about ACU’s research discoveries, talented graduates, and award-winning academics.

In our last issue I shared news of the launch of our new research institutes, which have been hard at work securing impressive funding, attracting the best and the brightest in the academic world, and producing research to better our communities. This issue you can read about their individual work and impressive results.

We also take a closer look at the teaching industry, see the inspiring results of helping refugees access tertiary education, and congratulate Dr Craig Duncan on being awarded the coveted Sport Scientist of the Year award.

It is no secret that ACU graduates think internationally, and can be found in nearly every corner of the globe. In the following pages you can visit an ACU graduate studying philosophy at Cambridge University in England, teaching graduates in London, and current students looking at development in East Timor.

I am extremely proud of the links we share with our graduates. You play a vital role in our future success as ambassadors, volunteers, benefactors, and industry partners – and I am continually awestruck by your achievements.

This year we’ll be launching the inaugural ACU Alumni of the Year Awards to recognise and celebrate the many ways in which our graduates make a difference to their local and global communities. We’ll be reaching out to alumni, faculty staff and industry peers to help identify those graduates who have made an outstanding contribution to their field, in different areas of life.

The University will also reach a very special milestone this year – 25 years of people, learning, and achievements that continue to bring about real change in our communities.

The anniversary will be marked by a series of events in the week of 27 to 31 July 2015. All alumni are invited to attend, and I look forward to celebrating and reflecting on ACU’s rich history with you.

Professor Greg Craven
Vice-Chancellor

Update your details
To subscribe to ACU Alum or update your details, visit the Alumni website at acu.edu.au/alumni or email us at alumni@acu.edu.au

Contact the Alumni team
We welcome your comments and feedback, and would love to hear your story ideas.

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Website: acu.edu.au/alumni
Facebook: facebook.com/ACUalumni
NEW CHANCELLOR
Sydneycatholic.org
23 September 2014
Former NSW Premier, Chair of Sydney’s bid for the 2000 Olympics and until last year, President of the World Anti Doping Agency, John Fahey enjoys a challenge and says he is excited by the challenge offered in his new role as Chancellor of Australian Catholic University (ACU).
“I’ve still got abundant energy, and to be able to use my leadership experience and play a part in the delivery of knowledge within the Catholic tradition under which ACU operates to young Australians, will be immensely rewarding.”

COMEDY KILLS
Yahoo.com
17 December 2014
When it comes to your health, a good sense of humor may be a liability: The funniest comedians face a significantly higher risk of premature death than their more serious counterparts, according to a new study in the International Journal of Cardiology.
“Anecdotally, an early death appears to be a common phenomenon among comedians,” the researchers write. “There is no easy explanation or mechanism for what we’ve observed,” study author Simon Stewart, a professor of health sciences at Australian Catholic University, tells Yahoo Health.

THE ETHICS OF VOLUNTEERING
Sun Herald
21 December 2014
Thousands of young people have the simple desire to make a difference, even if only small, to a community in another country and volunteering abroad is a burgeoning tourism industry, worth $2.6 billion worldwide.
The industry is known as “voluntourism” and involves participants travelling overseas to work in a developing community.
Associate Fellow of the Institute for Social Justice at the Australian Catholic University, Dr Nichole Georgeou denounces the trend of “orphanages being seen as a business opportunity.”

DEFINING VIOLENT EXTREMISTS
ABC Radio, Religion and Ethics Report
29 October 2014
Foreign Minister Julie Bishop told the National Press Club that Australians are joining foreign jihadist groups in unprecedented numbers.
It comes down to temperament, environment and opportunity, as psychologist Lazar Stankov, a professor in the Institute for Positive Psychology and Education at the Australian Catholic University explains. There are three distinguishing attributes of violent extremists: nastiness, grudge and excuse.

SAFETY FIRST
ABC Radio, Health Report
1 December 2014
One of the commonest underlying causes of a stroke is atrial fibrillation, an increasingly common problem in Australia, where the person can experience palpitations, breathlessness and a highly irregular heart rhythm.
New research from the Mary MacKillop Institute for Health Research may improve the lives of Australians affected by atrial fibrillation. The researchers investigated the potential benefits of a post-discharge program of home visits and specialist care for patients admitted to hospital with atrial fibrillation. According to the research just published in The Lancet, a low tech and old fashioned approach to people with atrial fibrillation can keep them out of hospital and alive longer.

PRINCIPALS UNDER FIRE
The Age
4 December 2014
The number of principals being threatened with violence by parents has risen by a third in the past 12 months, a nationwide survey has found. A quarter of principals reported receiving threats from angry parents, up from 19 per cent in 2013, and a quarter also said they had been physically abused, mostly by children.
The Principal Health and Wellbeing Survey Report, produced by the Australian Catholic University and the Teachers Health Fund, showed a cultural shift in Australia, its author said.
“Society is changing, we don’t trust our institutions like we used to,” Associate Professor Philip Riley said.

VEGGIE BATTLES
Herald Sun
7 January 2015
Fussy- eating children could have their tiresome habits turned with Melbourne researchers to trial a no-nonsense approach to meal times. More than 100 families are being recruited as part of the 18-month project. It teaches parents to take control of what they serve at the dinner table. But youngsters decide whether they eat it.
Australian Catholic University Associate Professor Leah Brennan, overseeing the project, said while fussy or picky eating was a natural part of children’s development, problems arose when it became entrenched.
The study, involving children aged two to five, will test a US-developed approach to eating.
ACU and The Catholic University of America (CUA) are set to open a new study centre in Rome in September this year.

The two universities recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding to establish the new centre within a short distance of the Vatican. Bringing together students and academics from both universities, the new centre will offer opportunities for study and research that are grounded in a commitment to the Catholic intellectual tradition.

Situated on Janiculum Hill, just above the ancient Roman neighbourhood of Trastevere, the new centre will offer living quarters for undergraduates, a wing for postgraduate students, apartments for visiting faculty, a chapel, garden and other amenities.

As ACU’s first overseas centre, it also marks a significant milestone in the University’s 25-year history.

The joint operation of the Rome Centre will be the second collaborative venture between the two universities. Since 2009 the CUA School of Nursing has had a reciprocal student exchange with ACU’s School of Nursing, Midwifery and Paramedicine in Melbourne.

THEOLOGY ACADEMIC NAMED HUMANITIES ACADEMY FELLOW

Associate Professor David Sim from the Faculty of Theology and Philosophy has been elected as a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities – one of the highest honours available for scholars of the humanities in Australia.

Professor Wayne McKenna, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) congratulated Associate Professor Sim on his achievement.

“This award recognises both the quality of his research and the high regard in which he is held by his peers, both in Australia and overseas,” he said.

Associate Professor Sim works in the area of early Christian history and Jewish-Christian relations in the first century, and is a leading international authority on the Gospel of Matthew.

“The sole criterion for election to the Academy is acknowledged excellence in research, so I am very honoured that the Academy has chosen to recognise the quality of my research at the international level.”

STRATHFIELD CAMPUS GETS THE GO-AHEAD

The Land and Environment Court has ruled in favour of ACU’s proposed upgrade to the Strathfield Campus. Improvements will include additional on-campus parking, new library and learning spaces, and landscape upgrades.

Professor Marea Nicholson, Associate Vice-Chancellor (Sydney), thanked all those involved in the hearing process.

“As a member of the local community, ACU has an ongoing commitment to working with Strathfield Council and the local residents to provide a place of learning that reflects the history of the site and embraces the future of education in the Catholic intellectual tradition.”
THE MURAL PROJECT

When the students at Homebush Public School run out to have their lunch, they’re not just sitting in a concrete playground. They are huddled around a cozy campfire, running through a cow-filled pasture, picking mushrooms in the forest, or on the lookout for wild animals.

The colourful mural, which spans a 39-metre playground wall at the Sydney primary school, was the creation of three ACU visual arts and design students – Montana O’Neill, Sophie Tsoukalas and Rebecca Malin. They put their ideas to Acting Principal Alex Moussawer and Assistant Principal Brian Lambert, and Adventure story became a reality.

Montana, Sophie and Rebecca sketched their scenes, and 30 ACU students from various courses volunteered their time. Painting took more than 500 hours and nearly three months.

Not only does the mural contain a variety of settings, animals and plants, but letters, colours and numbers are hidden among the scenes, encouraging the children to learn and interact with the artwork.

“The mural is a stunning addition to our playground. We are thankful to the university students and coordinators for their time and effort in accomplishing this wonderful project, which students at Homebush Public School will enjoy for years to come,” Mr Moussawer said.

The mural was made possible thanks to the generous financial support of ACU, Strathfield Council, and Bunnings at Lidcombe.

REVIEWING CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN TONGA

Associate Professor Charles Burford and Dr Anne Benjamin, from ACU’s Faculty of Education and Arts, have led a review of the Catholic school system in Tonga.

The review focused on the mission and mandate of Catholic schools and systems, their future direction, the needs of teachers and parents, and financial sustainability.

“We found much to celebrate in Catholic education in Tonga,” said Associate Professor Burford. “We found a comprehensive system of schools who hold a place of esteem and respect within the country. The faith and commitment of staff was truly inspiring.

“But it isn’t easy, with schools attempting the best for their students with very few of the resources that we would take for granted.”

Dr Benjamin said the generous commitment of teachers and their leaders was moving. One of the schools she visited was St Joseph’s Community College on the island of Ha’apai. The school runs a strong vocational education strand, despite their technical workshop being without a roof, due to the force of Tropical Cyclone Ian in January 2014.

Nearly a year later, many families still live in UN tents, the presbytery has rooms without roofs and water is provided through Caritas.

“Their invitation to contribute to this review has been a most rewarding experience,” said Dr Benjamin. “The conversations we held with parents and ex-students were extremely stimulating. Not only do the communities support their schools in every conceivable way, the insights that these folk brought to our discussions were really valuable.”

The report was presented to Cardinal Soane Patita Paini Mafi and the Director of Catholic Education, Mr. Soane Vahe, in October last year.
The ups and downs of the teaching profession have sustained public policy discussion and a good deal of politicians and journalists' careers over the last few years. We took a look at some of the stats on teacher education, the industry, and job prospects, and found that the future is bright.

### The Industry

**01 Full-time Employment**

Full-time employment is the most common type of employment for both primary (73%) and secondary teachers (80.5%).

*Australian Council for Educational Research 2013 Staff in Australia's Schools Report*

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**02 Males in Demand**

81% of primary teachers and 58% of secondary teachers are female.

*Australian Council for Educational Research 2013 Staff in Australia's Schools Report*

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**03 Fill a Need**

In secondary schools, there are relatively low proportions of males teaching in English, LOTE, Special Needs, and History.

*Australian Council for Educational Research 2013 Staff in Australia's Schools Report*

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**04 Retirement Looming**

Close to one in five Australian teachers are 56 years of age or older.

*Australian Council for Educational Research 2013 Staff in Australia's Schools Report*

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**05 Job Satisfaction**

89% of primary teachers and 85% of secondary teachers report that they are, overall, "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their job.

*Australian Council for Educational Research 2013 Staff in Australia's Schools Report*

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**06 Young Blood Needed**

The average age for primary teachers is 43.8 years and secondary teachers 45 years.

*Australian Council for Educational Research 2013 Staff in Australia's Schools Report*

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**07 High Employment**

Employment for primary and secondary school teachers is above average.

*job outlook.gov.au*
The Federal Government’s baby bonus ran from 2002 – 2014 and stimulated a significant spike in Australia’s birth rate. The first of this cohort started school in 2009 and are currently in years 3-5 and will move to secondary school from 2016.

ACU was founded from Catholic tertiary institutions that have been training teachers and nurses since the mid-19th century.

ACU is the largest provider of education graduates in Australia.

96% of our teaching graduates secure a job within four months of graduating.

ACU is the largest provider of education graduates in Australia.

The Education and Training industry is projected to increase by 118,800 (or 13.3%) over the five years to November 2018, the second largest projected increase of any industry.

Strong growth is projected for all school teaching professions.

The Federal Government’s baby bonus ran from 2002 – 2014 and stimulated a significant spike in Australia’s birth rate. The first of this cohort started school in 2009 and are currently in years 3-5 and will move to secondary school from 2016.

Over the five years to November 2018, the number of job openings for primary and secondary school teachers is expected to be high (greater than 50,000 for each sector).

Australian teachers are in demand in the UK to help cope with a looming teacher recruitment crisis. Reports suggest that there could be a deficit of almost 27,000 teachers by 2017.

Overseas Opportunities

Australian teachers are in demand in the UK to help cope with a looming teacher recruitment crisis. Reports suggest that there could be a deficit of almost 27,000 teachers by 2017.
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR JOCE NUTTALL HAS BEEN APPOINTED TO CHAIR A NEW ZEALAND ADVISORY GROUP TO HELP CHILDREN GET THE BEST POSSIBLE START TO THEIR EARLY LEARNING AND SCHOOLING.

The Advisory Group on Early Learning will recommend practical ways to ensure children have consistent teaching and learning from birth to eight years old, including helping teachers to implement the early childhood education curriculum.

ARC SUCCESS FOR ACU RESEARCHERS

ACU researchers are celebrating after receiving seven Australian Research Council (ARC) grants – making 2014 the University’s best year for funding success.

Six of the grants were awarded to researchers from the Institute of Positive Psychology and Education (IPPE) and the Learning Sciences Institute Australia (LSIA), and include two grants to Indigenous researchers.

LSIA Program Director, Professor Joy Cumming, was awarded a Discovery Grant for her research Effective teacher-based assessments for students with disability.

Professor Morag McArthur from the Institute of Child Protection Studies, part of LSIA, was awarded a Discovery Grant for her research Involving children in social research: balancing the risks and benefits.

Associate Professor Susan Edwards was awarded a Discovery Grant for her research New play pedagogies for teaching and learning in the early years.

Associate Professor Vince Geiger was awarded a Discovery Early Career Researcher Award for his research Designing and implementing effective cross-curricular numeracy tasks.

Professor Janet Mooney was awarded an Indigenous Grant for her research Triumphing in the new Indigenous Australia: Explicating key psychosocial determinants of successful Indigenous professionals’ socio-economic wellbeing.

Dr Fabri Blacklock was awarded an Indigenous Grant for her research Keeping culture: Utilising Koori Elders wisdom and knowledge in education.

An additional grant was awarded to Professor Sandra Jones from ACU’s Centre for Health and Social Research, part of the Mary MacKillop Institute for Health Research. Professor Jones was awarded a Discovery Grant for her research Drunk on confidence, glamour, and fun: Alcohol advertising to women in Australia.

MOVE OVER MENTAL HEALTH

ACU has joined forces with the Movember Foundation on a multi-million dollar pioneer project, which aims to reduce depression and suicide rates among adolescent male athletes.

Led by the University of Wollongong in collaboration with ACU, Victoria University and Queensland University of Technology, the research involves more than 5,000 young men from a variety of sporting codes. Leading sports organisations such as the AFL, Cricket Australia, Tennis Australia, Swimming Australia, Basketball Australia and Football Federation Australia, will join mental health providers The Black Dog Institute and the Australian Drug Foundation’s Good Sports Program.

Professor Sandra Jones, Director of ACU’s Centre for Health and Social Research, will ensure that fundamental messages about male mental health issues are presented effectively in conjunction with the research partners to improve the mental health of Australian males.

“We know that almost half (48.1 per cent) of Australian men have had a mental health issue at some point in their life. Australia’s strong sporting culture provides an avenue to reach a large proportion of adolescent males, who experience disproportionately higher rates of suicide and mental health concerns,” she said.

“My role in the project is to oversee the development and implementation of the sport-based social marketing campaign. Social marketing is an invaluable tool in bringing about cultural and behaviour change, and improving health and social outcomes.”

As an expert in the motivational processes underpinning health behaviours in sport, Associate Professor Chris Lonsdale from ACU’s Institute for Positive Psychology and Education will provide expertise on the application of motivational theory to the intervention components.

The Movember Foundation raises money and public awareness for men’s health by encouraging men to seek sponsorship for growing moustaches in the month of November. Visit au.movember.com.
New research conducted by ACU’s Institute for Positive Psychology and Education reveals that Australian school principals are facing increasing burnout, abuse and bullying.

According to the 2014 Teachers Health Fund Principal Health & Wellbeing Survey Report, Australian principals and assistant principals severely lack the support to face the growing pressure of increased workloads, public accountability, aggressive parents and violent students.

The survey found that:
- Growing job complexity and lack of support means sheer quantity of work is the greatest source of stress facing Australian principals.
- Parents are the worst offenders when it comes to increasing threats of violence and bullying.
- The increasing rate of physical violence from students is seven times the rate of the general population.

Report author Associate Professor Philip Riley said the survey clearly showed that these highly dedicated school leaders were committed to running schools as effectively as possible but the personal cost was increasingly high.

“The high emotional demands these school leaders face, together with a lack of systemic support and training, means we see higher levels of burnout and stress. Worryingly, it is also taking a toll on their greatest support group: their families. Work-family conflict occurs at approximately double the rate of the general population,” he said.

The report outlines key recommendations to help support principals. For the full report go to www.principalhealth.org/au/reports.php

ACU researchers will lead a three-year community-based intervention in Western Australia to raise awareness among parents of the effects of early alcohol initiation.

The study, which will begin in mid-2015, will be led by Professor Sandra Jones, Director of ACU’s Centre for Health and Social Research, part of the Mary MacKillop Institute for Health Research.

Professor Jones said that although many parents allow their children to consume small quantities of alcohol under supervision in the belief that it may protect them from future harmful drinking, there is increasing evidence to suggest that the earlier children are introduced to alcohol, the more they drink.

“Our project will focus on the provision of ‘sips and tastes’ to children under the age of 15 years; that is the age group in which parents are likely to introduce their children to alcohol. We need to target these parents before they face the decision of whether to allow their children to ‘try’ alcohol,” she said.

The project will involve the development and implementation of a comprehensive, community-based intervention that is founded on the evidence-based principles of social marketing.

The study is funded by a prestigious West Australian Government Healthway grant and will be carried out in collaboration with Swinburne University of Technology, Curtin University and the University of Wollongong.

“My paper seriously challenges the idea of leadership and its implication for organisations,” he said. “It calls for a better understanding of how educational institutions are organised and organise themselves to assist government, systems and site level administrators to plan more successful strategies in the future.”

To read Associate Professor Eacott’s paper visit www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/full/10.1108/09513541311289846

Many parents find managing a fussy-eating child difficult but hope could be on the horizon with a new trial from ACU’s Body Image Eating and Weight Clinical Research Team (BEWT).

The Melbourne-based team is recruiting more than 100 families as part of the 18-month project which will teach parents to take control of what they serve at the dinner table.

The study, involving children aged two to five, will test a US-developed approach to eating. Parents have responsibility for what and when their child eats and, in turn, the child decides if they eat and how much.

BEWT leader, Associate Professor Leah Brennan, said while fussy or picky eating was a natural part of children’s development, it can still be a very stressful experience for parents, and problems arise when it becomes established.

“It can be a shock to parents because often they will have a child that feeds quite well and is happy to eat a variety of food and then all of a sudden they are resistant,” she said. “Part of this process is about having a variety of foods available at mealtimes and allowing children to have as little or as much as they like.

“Children can take up to 20 exposures to a food before they come to be happy to eat it. Often parents give up well before.”

Parents will also be taught how to deal with bad mealtime behaviour like nagging and tantrums, plus ways to encourage good habits.
An acute shortage of qualified teachers across Britain has forced teacher agencies to recruit heavily from countries such as Australia.

Late last year the BBC reported that for the third year in a row the British government was set to miss its target for trainee teachers across primary and secondary schools – and the ‘ghastly’ shortage was forcing schools to look overseas to fill vacancies. The report suggested that if the crisis continued, there could be a deficit of almost 27,000 teachers by 2017.

Melissa Worman, who recruits Australian teachers to work in the UK, said her agency Smart Teachers had seen a record number of Australians start work in primary, secondary, and special needs schools over the past year.

“We find that our Australian teachers are highly sought after as they can transition to the UK curriculum seamlessly, have a positive work ethic, and come so well regarded by the schools we work with,” she said.

“Yet many schools are still looking for long term teachers well after term has begun. We have so much supply work available we offer a Guaranteed Work Scheme to our day-to-day candidates. We could easily double our business if we could only encourage more Australian teachers to come across to the UK.”

Katherine Gibson from Teaching Jobs London said her agency pays to fly selected Australian teachers to England so they can interview face-to-face with a range of schools.

“UK schools are now much more open to taking Australian teachers who need sponsorship than they have previously been, which shows the shortage in their local market, and the lengths they are going to in order to staff their schools,” she said.

Victoria Galvin, 24, and Evonne Smith, 31, are teaching graduates from ACU’s Canberra Campus, who live and work in London. Both are on a two-year working visa but have started the process of being sponsored by their schools.

“Australian teachers are very sought after in London, nearly everyone I have met secured a position straight away,” Victoria said. “They have a good work ethic and can relate to both students and staff. The curriculum in London is similar to ours at home, but I think Australian teachers give a fresh and fun spin with their down-to-earth teaching style. “There is never a dull weekend in London, with a great music scene and various quirky events. Not to mention the close vicinity and easy access for traveling through Europe.

“Teaching in London has helped me develop confidence in my ability. The differences in the classrooms, teaching styles, assessments and the children – many of whom are from all over the world – make the experience a huge learning curve.”

Evonne said she had also found it easy to secure a job after arriving in London.

“Australian teachers are generally a very easy-going, pleasant and well-trained group who understand that while working hard is the basis of the job, a sense of humour is essential,” she said.

“History is my passion and living in England has been like a playground in that regard. It has everything from Roman, Medieval, Tudor, and Victorian history to Edwardian and beyond.

“I have always thought that teaching is the most demanding and rewarding job. Immersing yourself in another education system inevitably means you learn so many new things that you can use daily in your teaching practice.”
Over the past 25 years, ACU has grown to become Australia’s leading Catholic university, with more than 30,000 students from 90 countries, 1,850 highly qualified staff, seven campuses and a study centre in Rome, Italy.

We have become a global community, with 70,000+ alumni worldwide that carry out the Mission of the University through the contributions they make to a diverse range of communities, professions and industries.

This anniversary year we are celebrating our collective achievements with an exciting program of events and activities. These celebrations will bring staff, students and members of the public together to facilitate new introductions, collaborations and conversations to inspire our University’s future.

We look forward to continuing the story of ACU’s commitment to the pursuit of knowledge, the dignity of the human person and the common good.

In 2015, there is much to celebrate. We invite you to join us.

www.acu.edu.au/25years
WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Our graduates are our proudest achievement, and we would love to know what you have been up to since you left ACU. To share your story, go to www.acu.edu.au/share-your-story.
EOIN QUINN  
Bachelor of Physiotherapy  
Graduate physiotherapist, Mater Health Services

ANTHONY RYAN  
Graduate Diploma in Education (Secondary)  
CEO, Edmund Rice Foundation (Australia)

ALEX LEHOURS  
Bachelor of Visual Arts and Design  
Freelance designer, illustrator and painter

JAMES AJAKA  
Bachelor of Business  
CEO, Nudie

JOSE DA COSTA  
Bachelor of Arts  
Actor

CHRISTIAN MARCHEGIANI  
Bachelor of Exercise and Sports Science  
Boxing and conditioning coach, Sydney Swans, Founder, Thump Boxing

LACHLAN WILMOT  
Bachelor of Exercise and Sports Science  
Lead Strength and Power Coach, GWS Giants AFL Team

BRONWYN SHEEHAN  
Bachelor of Nursing  
Founder & Executive Director, The Pyjama Foundation

PAUL FIELD  
Diploma of Teaching  
Managing Director, The Wiggles

KATE SHUTTLEWORTH  
Master of Educational Leadership  
Founder, SeeBeyondBorders

HAYDEN PIERCY  
Bachelor of Nursing / Bachelor of Paramedicine  
Cadet, St John Ambulance

TONI ALEXANDROW  
Bachelor of Education  
Leading Aviation Fire Fighter, Airservices Australia

SARAH O’BRIEN  
Bachelor of Environmental Science  
Acting Senior Waste Officer, Manly Council

HON MARTIN DIXON  
Diploma of Teaching  
State Member for Nepean

TRACEY MORTON  
Bachelor of Occupational Therapy  
Personal trainer and intern, Cerebral Palsy Alliance (CPA)

STELLA CONROY  
Master of Human Services  
Deputy CEO, Families Australia

PIPPA HALLAS  
Bachelor of Business (Marketing)  
CEO, Ella Bache

JAMES AJAKA  
Bachelor of Business  
CEO, Nudie

DANIEL HERMAN  
Bachelor of Psychological Science  
Drug and Alcohol Counsellor, St Vincent’s Hospital

ANTHONY RYAN  
Graduate Diploma in Education (Secondary)  
CEO, Edmund Rice Foundation (Australia)
Regular Coke
Coca-Cola Life
Diet Coke
Coke Zero

Sugar (g)
0
22
0
139
89

Calories
1.5
1.1

All sugar & calorie amounts are taken from 375ml cans.
Coca-Cola has announced it will launch its newest soft drink in the Australian market in April 2015. Strongly promoted as ‘healthy’ Coke elsewhere, Coca-Cola Life may do more to improve the company’s finances than the health of its consumers.

The product was piloted in parts of South America, and launched in the United Kingdom and the United States in September. An analysis of social media conversations in the UK reported the jury is out on whether consumers like the taste of the new product.

**GREEN GOODNESS**

Like its forthcoming competitor Pepsi True, Coca-Cola Life is packaged in a green can. Both adults and children are known to perceive food with green packaging, or green nutrition labels, as being healthier than identical food packaged in other colours.

While many are surprised by The Coca-Cola Company’s move away from its iconic red labelling, there may be an even more subtle reason for it than the (marketing) goodness of green. A recent European study found people drink less soft drink from a red-labelled cup than a blue-labelled cup. At a subconscious level, the colour red operates as a stop signal.

The new product is said to contain considerably less sugar than regular Coke (because it’s sweetened with a plant extract), but doesn’t compare favourably with the two existing products in the company’s line-up. A can of Coca-Cola Life contains 22 grams of sugar – compared to 35 grams in regular Coke and none in the two ‘diet’ offerings.

It has 89 calories per can – compared to 139 for regular Coke – but substantially more than either of the low-calorie offerings. Diet Coke, introduced in Australia in 1983, contains a calorie and a half. Coke Zero, introduced in Australia in 2006, contains only 1.1 calories per can.

**SWEET STUFF**

Diet Coke and Coke Zero are sweetened with a combination of aspartame potassium (food code 950), a calorie-free sweetener that’s 200 times sweeter than sugar, and aspartame (food code 951), also calorie free and 200 times sweeter than sugar.

While Coca-Cola’s website assures customers these sugar alternatives are both completely safe to consume, and existing dietary standards support these claims, the company is clearly responding to consumer concerns about the use of artificial sweeteners with this new product.

Coca-Cola Life is sweetened with a combination of sugar and stevia – a natural sweetener – and is clearly targeted at people with concerns about the effects of artificial sweeteners. Coke’s UK marketing director, Bobby Brittain, has been quoted as saying:

“We know exactly who our Coke Life will appeal to. It’s 20 and 30-somethings who have begun to realise they’re not completely immortal and that they do have a sense of responsibility about what they consume.”

**NATURAL SWEETENER**

Stevia is an extract of the plant species *Stevia rebaudiana*. The shrub is native to Paraguay and South American tribes have used it as a sweetener for centuries. It has been used in Japan since the 1970s, when a method for producing the commercial product stevioside was developed.

As well as being between 250 and 300 times sweeter than sugar, stevioside (like the stevia leaf itself) contains no calories and doesn’t raise blood sugar, so it can also be consumed by diabetics.

While stevia is safe to consume, nutritionists have noted that simply removing some sugar and replacing it with stevia doesn’t make a drink (or food) healthy. Coca-Cola Life still contains colouring, caffeine, phosphoric acid and 19 per cent of our recommended daily sugar intake.

In fact, a cola drink with a few less calories may be part of the problem rather than the answer to reducing our waistlines. People tend to consume greater quantities of foods they believe to be healthy, and seeing a food promoted as healthy can lead people to eat more calories.

**GOOD CITIZENSHIP**

This latest move by The Coca Cola Company follows its introduction of ‘portion control’ options – smaller cans of their full-sugar beverages – and reflects a commitment made by a group of American companies to reduce calories from soft drinks by introducing and promoting lower-calorie beverages.

But, ultimately, many of these decisions are likely being made to increase the health of the companies’ profits rather than the health of their customers. A look at The Coca Cola Company’s 2013 financial results shows profits from regular soft drinks are declining and sales of ‘healthier’ options are increasing.

The two existing diet colas combined account for 32 per cent of cola sales, and sales of mini-cans grew 70 per cent in 2013. Reflecting the increasing health consciousness of consumers, in the same period sales of Mount Franklin water grew by nine per cent and Pump water by 10 per cent.

Perhaps the most genuine option for this and other such companies would be to cut back on the production and marketing of sweetened soft drinks and focus on selling products that are actually good for consumers.

Dr Sandra Jones is Director of the Centre for Health and Social Research at Australian Catholic University.
Madeleine Whitby knows exactly how lucky she is.

“Poverty is a game of roulette, and by any other spin of the wheel, I could have been born into a brothel in India, a slum in the Philippines, or a refugee camp in Somalia,” the 23-year-old said. “It’s all a game of chance. No one deserves to be born into a life of poverty.”

After finishing Year 12 Madeleine took a gap year and traveled to Africa.

“Before that trip I knew the definition of poverty, but I had never really seen or felt it. I realised just how lucky I am, and also how unfair the global economic system is.

Madeleine enrolled in ACU’s Bachelor of International Development Studies. As part of the degree she completed an immersion experience in East Timor. Hooked on development work, she now volunteers at Palms International, Caitlin Ganter writes.

The main highlight for me was the two homestays we did – the first in Dili and the second in Atabae. The families were so generous, kind and loving, it was extremely hard to say goodbye, and I shed more than a few tears.

Back in Australia, Madeleine applied for an internship with Palms, and got the job.

“I really believe in what Palms does. Every volunteer commits to between one and three years in their placement, and they all have qualifications and at least five years’ experience in their area. There is also compulsory pre-departure training for all volunteers which covers topics such as living and working cross-culturally, the importance of engaging respectfully with local partners and working in solidarity with all those involved.

“Good development needs local voices. We as outsiders do not know the real needs, desires, issues or problems of a community. Engaging with that community is pivotal in creating just, sustainable development.”
Fourteen MBA (Executive) students headed to New York City recently for the School of Business’ inaugural International Study Tour. Led by Professor Donald Ross, the students were hosted by Fordham University and conducted field research on business management in the USA – focusing on comparative financial, marketing and human resource management practices.

For many business students, international study tours are becoming an important part of the university experience – reflecting an increasing demand for managers who understand how business works in other cultures. Alisse Grafitti spoke to second year MBA (Executive) student Blake Sinclair.

I saw the study tour as an amazing opportunity to see New York from a different angle. I was really keen to see the city and understand how the culture and business world differed from my experience as an Australian manager.

I thought it would be a great practical learning experience and a lot of fun. As well as a great way to get to know my fellow students better, and a networking opportunity which will potentially assist me in working in the USA in the future.

The study tour was split up into three groups who covered different topics on marketing, human resource management and finance. My group’s area of focus was finance, with visits to five different organisations in New York City. Interviews were conducted at Citigroup, JP Morgan, Sidley Austin, Gamco Investments and Austrade – the Australian Trade Commission.

We then put together a report detailing the differences in culture between Australia and the USA, and how these cultural differences should be considered when undertaking business between the two countries.

I visited Gamco Investments where I interviewed some very senior business people. We also met the founder Mario Gabelli. It’s not every day you get to meet a billionaire.

While in New York we were hosted by Fordham University, which we used as a base to discuss our findings. We were also extremely fortunate to be given a lecture by Bill Catucci, former President and CEO of AT&T Canada, and now Professor of Management at Fordham and a Palladium Fellow.

I believe international study tours are extremely important for business students, as it’s a great chance to learn new practical skills, develop networks, and open your horizons.

I hope that one day if I decide to work in the US I will be able to talk to future employers about my time in New York City and the valuable lessons I learnt from these business meetings.

Despite a busy workload we were also able to have a lot of fun at night and during unscheduled time. One night a group of us went to a Broadway show and ended up in a piano bar where all the barmen and waitresses were aspiring Broadway singers who serve drinks while being backup singers to the piano man.

On the final night we all got together to have a celebratory drink and night out in SoHo, which was a great way to cap off a successful, enjoyable and beneficial week.”
In 2003, I was the Catholic Education Office (CEO) Sydney’s University/School Liaison Officer. My job was to arrange teaching scholarships for Year 12 students, help critique new teacher training programs, and mentor graduate teachers.

Late in that year, a senior colleague at the CEO rang me with a request. Could I help to connect some South Sudanese refugees who were trained teachers in their home country, with a university – so they could upskill sufficiently to qualify as teachers in a Catholic school?

At that time, I knew nothing about Sudan, other than it was somewhere in the middle of Africa. I had never met anyone from Sudan. I knew nothing of what I know now – that a devastating civil war had raged there for 40 years and killed hundreds of thousands of innocent people. I didn’t know that in the previous four years, our local Catholic schools had gone from having no Sudanese students to enrolling more than 300, some profoundly traumatised after witnessing acts of unimaginable cruelty. I didn’t know that the teachers in our schools, even the most experienced, were struggling to cope with children who would scream and hide under their desk when they heard the sound of a whistle, or freeze at the sight of a person in uniform.

I knew none of these things but I did know ACU’s Associate Professor Jude Butcher, the Head of the School of Education, and Maya Cranitch, ESL/literacy lecturer. I knew both were passionately committed to supporting those disadvantaged by poverty, injustice or just circumstance. So I called Jude and told him of the request.

Jude listened intently and after I had finished, he told me that bridging courses were not an appropriate option, but he would see what else might be possible. I expected that this would be the end of the matter, but Jude called me back three days later with an alternative. ACU would provide opportunities for 25 students from refugee backgrounds to study full-time at the University. They could commence the following year, which was less than three months away.

I organised a meeting with Maya and Jude, and spoke to Warren Hopley, the principal of St Joachim’s Primary School in Lidcombe. Warren had more than 30 children from South Sudan in his school at the time and had quickly become the go-to person for other educators on all things Sudanese.

Warren is a man of action. The four of us came up with a very rough plan.

Fast forward to May 2014. James Mayol, proud Dinka man, stands his full height of 185cm, smiling broadly, flanked by his wife and four children. He is in his academic gown and holds his graduation certificate – a Bachelor of Social Work – so tightly it is as if he is afraid that it might be taken back.

From 2006 to 2014, 22 people who had arrived in Australia from South Sudan as humanitarian refugees graduated from ACU after being supported by what became the Community Futures Australia Program.

It is hard to recall every stage of the journey, but I clearly remember the milestone events. I remember the first time we invited members of the community to a meeting at St Joachim’s, to tell them about the program and invite them to apply. We identified two community leaders and asked them to spread the word. With only three days notice, 158 people turned up.

Not long after that initial meeting, Professor Marea Nicholson became Head of School. Like Jude, Marea gave the program her unqualified support. Her advocacy and problem-solving skills were critical to the program’s success.

I remember us organising interviews with applicants at what was then the Catholic Intensive English Centre at Lewisham, an inner-western suburb of Sydney. Maya Cranitch led this process with great skill. She was and is indefatigable. There were literacy assessments, validation of academic transcripts, reference checks, counselling sessions (including a couple for me), career advice and calls to successful and
unsuccessful candidates. Others contributed in very meaningful ways but Maya’s drive, expertise and unquenchable commitment made it all happen.

We interviewed more than 70 applicants, and made offers of a HECS place at ACU to 25. I recall the joy on the faces of those who were successful but remember even more vividly the grace and dignity of those who missed out. While heartbroken, each left the room thanking us for the opportunity to be there.

We had 25 students, the university semester would start in about five weeks, but none of them had any of the resources they would need to undertake their course. Some of the students revealed to us that they would struggle to meet the cost of even getting to and from the campus. Everyone required a computer or printer. Most were unfamiliar with how the university system worked.

The immense goodwill and compassion of the ACU staff came to the fore. Under Maya’s leadership and with Marea’s support, university staff provided induction sessions for students, which included tours of the campus, technology lessons, orientation classes, explanations about what was available through student services and offers of academic support.

Requests for financial help to Br Kelvin Canavan and Dr Anne Benjamin, the Executive Directors of the Catholic Education Offices of Sydney and Parramatta, were generously supported. The Independent Education Union gave money. Private citizens began hearing about the program and started calling with offers of financial help. And then, one day, I had a chance encounter with someone who promised to set up a meeting with a private foundation who supported programs like ours. He was true to his word. The foundation board invited us to submit an application for assistance, which we did. None of us had ever written to a foundation to ask for money, and had no idea how much to ask for. In the end we asked for $100,000. They gave it to us.*

With the money raised, each student received a computer and a printer. Funds paid for textbooks and study resources. They met the cost of additional courses and specialist clothing, as well as the cost of getting to and from university. They were used to pay for graduation expenses.

While the original idea was just to provide places in education, the program expanded to include nursing, business, social work and inclusive education. We supported a student studying law at the University of NSW. We were even able to help a young man named Majok Tulba complete a filmmaking course. Majok went on to write the highly acclaimed novel *Beneath the Darkening Sky*—which won the Premier’s Literary Award in 2011. The novel is set to be made into a movie, and Majok will be the contributing director.

Not all students made it to the end of their course. Taking on tertiary study is a challenge for anyone, particularly those recently arrived in the country, unfamiliar with our education culture and with varying degrees of English language proficiency. We took on a second smaller cohort the following year. In the end, there were 22 graduates – teachers, nurses, an accountant, social workers, a lawyer and a filmmaker. Four now have additional degrees and one is still studying.

More than $200,000 was raised to run the program and after careful consideration, a decision was made to donate what was left of the funds to the building of a girls’ secondary school in Aweil, a town in South Sudan. The school is due to open this year. One of the graduates is considering going back to teach there once he has finished his masters degree. He attended that first meeting at St Joachim’s back in 2003, after arriving in Australia the week before. He had spent the previous 10 years in Kenya’s Kakuma Refugee Camp.

I now know a lot more about Sudan and its people. In learning about the community, I became part of it. Many of us did. I also know a lot more about myself. An unexpected conversation can definitely change everything.

*While I would love to publicly acknowledge the extraordinary generosity of this foundation, its charter insists that it remains anonymous.
Look closely at some of the greatest grand finals in sport of the last few years, and you’ll see Dr Craig Duncan on the sideline. Alisse Grafitti caught up with the sport scientist and ACU lecturer fresh from Australia’s Asian Cup win.
W
hen the Socceroos won their first ever Asian Cup title in January this year, Football Federation Australia (FFA) chief executive David Gallop reserved special praise for an overhaul of the team’s sports science – and the addition of Dr Craig Duncan.

The sport scientist and ACU exercise science lecturer had been working with the Socceroos since November, to maximise the performance of each and every player. When the team clashed with Korea in the final, in front of more than 70,000 supporters at Stadium Australia – he was right there on the sideline watching weeks of careful planning come to fruition.

It’s not the first time Dr Duncan has been on the winning side. He was with Sydney FC when they took out the A-League Championship, with the Western Sydney Wanderers when they became the first Australian side to win the Asian Champions League, and with the NSW State of Origin team for their drought-breaking series win last year.

He was also named ‘Sport Scientist of the Year’ by Exercise and Sport Science Australia in 2014.

“I was an athlete myself and I think that’s how a lot of us started out, but I always had an interest in coaching, and I started coaching my first soccer team when I was 12 or 13.

“Getting into the performance side of things became an interest, and while it wasn’t always a linear path to get to where I am now, it’s certainly been a most enjoyable one.”

Dr Duncan’s role can involve overseeing the sports science, the rehabilitation, the sports medicine, the strength and conditioning, and even the game analysis for the team.

“My priority is to maximise the performance of every player we work with,” he said. “Effective management involves careful monitoring of training loads and markers of fatigue to ensure athletes are adequately prepared for competition.

“We need to balance fitness and fatigue in order to prevent injury. Preventing problems before they arise is much easier than solving them after they’ve happened.”

A strong advocate of athlete monitoring, Dr Duncan said there was an increasing avalanche of new technology in the industry, but keeping it simple and understanding the human body got the best results.

“Part of my work usually involves implementing a player monitoring system, where we gather an extensive amount of data even before training starts. So from right after waking up the players would be entering data such as how they slept, their muscle soreness, their psychological wellbeing as well as objective measurements like heart rate variability. I can watch that data come in and see if there are any red flags that might show a player is struggling.

“I’ve been using GPS for a number of years now and it’s a very valuable tool to really know what’s happening to the player in training. It shows the players acceleration, deceleration, total distance they run, distance at high speed etc. Over the years I’ve been able to work out which ones are important to performance and to decreasing the risk of injury.

“But it’s not rocket science, it’s the basic fundamentals such as sleep and nutrition which are the most important for our players.”

While sports science is playing an increasingly important role in professional sport, Dr Duncan said communicating its benefits to coaches who are not quite convinced can be frustrating.

“We need to have the sound technical knowledge but that’s only step one. If we can’t get the coaches to listen to what we’re doing and we haven’t established that rapport then we have no chance of being able to do our job correctly. While we might think we have the answer to a lot of the problems that a team is having, the fact is that the coach is the boss, and if they don’t want to adopt our strategies then we’re in strife.

“Just as important is our relationship with the athletes. Players are not interested in how much you know unless they know how much you care.”

In the high profile world of professional sport, the pressure to perform, the huge amounts of money at stake, and the intense media scrutiny can take a heavy toll – and not just on the players. When Dr Duncan suffered a heart attack four years ago, he realised something had to give.

“I had no risk factors, my cholesterol was normal, my blood pressure normal, I was active and exercised most days of the week. I’m a vegetarian and I had no family history – I couldn’t believe it.

“But in professional sport there is significant pressure, and the days are long and can sometimes be difficult. I was under enormous stress and I had been for a long, long time. A lot of it was self-imposed and just rushing around at a million miles an hour.

“When I actually did realise that my health was at risk, I thought about my family and the chance of not seeing my kids grow up, and that was very, very, frightening.”

The 47-year-old made a few changes. He began to consult to sports clubs rather than bear the brunt of season-long pressure, he took up meditation, and he realised that it was impossible to control the results of every game.

“To be successful you have to learn to manage yourself effectively otherwise burnout is a real possibility. If you don’t have your mind in some sort of balance, it doesn’t matter how healthy your body is.”
INSTITUTES UNVEILED

A key part of ACU’s research intensification program has been the establishment of seven new research institutes. Amy Ripley takes a look at six of them, and some of the ambitious projects already underway.

Name: The Mary MacKillop Institute for Health Research
Director: Professor Simon Stewart
Aim: To deliver quality health research which makes a difference to people’s lives, especially those affected by inequality and disadvantage

THE MARY MACKILLOP INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH RESEARCH

A sad event in Professor Simon Stewart’s childhood led him to devote his career to health research.

“My father spent a lot of time in hospitals and, unfortunately, died at an early age. This experience ultimately inspired me to try to make a difference to other people’s lives. I wanted to help people stay out of hospital, live longer, and die with dignity.”

Professor Stewart is Director of the Mary MacKillop Institute for Health Research. Established in April 2014 and based in Melbourne, the institute is committed to research which promotes health and wellbeing for all Australians.

“We aim to be Australia’s premier research institute focused on health services research,” he said. “Our research programs aim to make a difference to people’s lives, especially those in our society who are affected by inequality and disadvantage.”

Born and brought up in England, Professor Stewart moved to Australia when he was 16, with his mother and brothers. In Australia, he first trained as a primary school teacher, before switching to nursing, where he said he found his niche.

“During my time as a nurse, I won a number of awards in hospital-based training programs and this encouraged me to undertake advanced training in intensive care and coronary care. This led to a position as a Nurse Educator and then research around chronic disease management, based on adult learning theory.”

Professor Stewart was particularly interested in health services which focused on how best to help people with chronic disease (particularly heart failure) avoid repeat hospitalisations and live longer.

He went on to complete a PhD at the University of Adelaide, where he was supported by the National Heart Foundation of Australia Scholarship and then awarded the Foundation’s prestigious Ralph Reader Overseas Post-Doctoral Fellowship. The latter supported him to receive advanced training in epidemiology and public health with a world-renowned group at the University of Glasgow in Scotland.

The Mary MacKillop Institute for Health Research is comprised of four semi-autonomous centres, each reflecting a different theme within the University’s priority research area of health.

The NHMRC Centre of Research Excellence to Reduce Inequality in Heart Disease, led by Professor Stewart, focuses on improving the heart health and outcomes of groups and communities including regional Australians, Indigenous Australians, and low to middle income countries such as South Africa and Mozambique.

The Centre for the Heart and Mind, led by Professor David Thompson, focuses on the psychological aspects of heart disease and how patients and their carers cope accordingly.

The Centre for Primary Care and Prevention is led by Associate Professor Melinda Carrington. It focuses on the role of innovative primary care and regional strategies (eg nurse-led clinics) in delivering cost-effective healthcare to prevent cardiovascular disease.

The Centre for Health and Social Research is led by Professor Sandra Jones. It focuses on the role of social marketing techniques to promote health from childhood to adulthood and across a range of risk factors and health conditions.

The institute will also work to develop the potential of early career researchers and higher degree research students.

“We want to attract the very best talent and are committed to nurturing our students and staff. Our vision is to develop teams of researchers who are capable of working within a multidisciplinary environment and can use excellent research skills to develop cost-effective health services,” said Professor Stewart.

“ACU already has a significant health sciences research presence in the form of many hospital and community-based collaborations and affiliations. Our relationship with St Vincent’s Hospital and the University of Melbourne at the Cardiovascular Research Centre is an excellent example of this. We will continue to work closely with our current partners, as well as building and developing new relationships.”

Professor Stewart said he was thrilled that the institute had a home at ACU.

“It is an exciting time to be here, given the University’s current research intensification agenda. ACU’s mission reflects our own vision – undertaking quality health research to improve the life chances of all Australians.”

Photography: Ben Macmahon / Macmahons Images
societies succeed,” said Professor Turner. “As well as Islam, Professor Turner said he is interested in researching all religions, particularly in areas such as globalisation, religious conflict and the modern state, religious authority and electronic information, religious consumerism and youth cultures, and human rights and religion.

“All religions are now in the public domain and are creating new political climates that can be threatening but they also create new opportunities for the development of civil society,” he said.

The IRPS brings together world-renowned scholars—including Professor Jose Casanova, Professor Oscar Salemink and Associate Professor Irfan Ahmed—and emerging researchers.

“International scholarly authorities on religion also sit on our advisory board, providing global insight and a strong network for the institute,” said Professor Turner.

The institute has five main research streams: Religion and Law, Cities and Successful Societies, Asian Societies and their Religions, Global Catholicism, and Religion and Medicine.

Led by Dr Joshua Roose, Religion and Law studies the intersection of law and society, including issues of legal pluralism.

Led by Professor Turner and Dr Roose, Cities and Successful Societies examines how social and economic changes make an impact on people’s happiness and wellbeing.

Led by Associate Professor Ahmad, Asian Societies and their Religions considers the relation of religion to resources, scarcity and economic development in Asian societies.

Led by Professor Casanova, Global Catholicism explores the historical role of Jesus in developing the Catholic Church as a global religious movement. It will examine the development of a ‘global consciousness’ through these endeavours and their lasting consequences for the Church and for secular society.

Professor Turner will also lead the Religion and Medicine stream which is currently being developed.

Prior to joining ACU, Professor Turner was Director of the Religion and Society Research Centre and Presidential Professor of Sociology at The Graduate Center at the City University of New York, USA.

He also taught at the University of Aberdeen, Flinders University, University of Utrecht, Deakin University, Cambridge University and the National University of Singapore.

“With our growing network with American Universities (Harvard, Wayne State and City University of New York), in Latin America (Diego Portales University in Chile), Germany (Potsdam University), Denmark (University of Copenhagen) and Britain (University of Cambridge), we can offer students a cosmopolitan environment and opportunities to work and study abroad,” he said.

1962 was a big year on the world stage—the Cold War was in full swing and the Cuban Missile Crisis nearly tipped the world into a full-scale nuclear war.

For 18-year-old Bryan Turner, travelling in Russia and Eastern Europe before university, these seismic events had a profound influence on his life and career—one which still resonates today.

Professor Turner is now one of the world’s leading sociologists of religion and is Director of ACU’s new Institute for Religion, Politics and Society (IRPS). He is based in New York and travels regularly to the University’s Melbourne Campus, where the institute is based.

Established in January 2015, the IRPS brings together leading researchers from around the world to consider the role of religion through a variety of lenses.

“We examine the nature of religion as a public institution. By looking at the interplay between religion and major social structures—including the economy, politics and law—worldwide, we explore the broader question of what makes societies succeed,” said Professor Turner.

Born in Birmingham, England, in 1945, Professor Turner was educated at the University of Leeds, where he took first class honours in sociology in 1966 and was awarded his doctorate in 1970.

“My father wanted me to become a lawyer but I chose politics and sociology after experiencing ‘actual’ communism in Russia and Eastern Europe during my gap year. I was, like most of my peers, very left-wing, but later became very critical of communism. During this time, I was also influenced by issues such as the Vietnam War, apartheid and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.”

Professor Turner said that along with politics, religion has had a major impact on his life and academic career.

“When I was 18, I converted to Christianity through the Methodist Church, later migrating to High Anglicanism. I became deeply influenced by the British Buddhist scholar, Trevor Ling, Professor of Comparative Religion at Manchester University, and through his influence, later wrote my first book, Weber and Islam in 1974.”

According to Professor Turner, despite movements such as Solidarity, liberation theology and the Christian Right, religion did not play a particularly prominent role in world politics in the late 20th century until one thing changed everything—9/11.

“It was one of those occasions when the expression ‘nothing was the same afterwards’ is actually true. I found my interest in the sociology of Islam was suddenly in great demand.”

INSTITUTE FOR RELIGION, POLITICS AND SOCIETY

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“It was one of those occasions when the expression ‘nothing was the same afterwards’
When people ask Professor James McLaren why he chooses to dedicate his career to research, his answer is simple. “A fundamental principle of the function of a University is the pursuit of learning, simply for its own sake. I often explain to people that I like working at ACU because it is a place where my passion for research is readily accepted as part of my job description.”

As Acting Director of the Institute for Religion and Critical Inquiry, Professor McLaren is immersed in learning and scholarship on a daily basis.

Based in Melbourne, the Institute was established in January 2014 and is an integral part of the Faculty of Theology and Philosophy. Professor McLaren said that the institute was a clear example of ACU’s commitment to research in the priority areas of theology and philosophy.

“We aim to promote interdisciplinary and collaborative research in philosophy and theology and also in other disciplines,” he said. “We want our research to enrich and extend the traditional forms of philosophy and theology.”

Professor McLaren was educated at the University of Melbourne and University of Oxford. His own research interests include biblical studies and ancient history and he is passionate about bringing the past to life.

“I try to engage directly with the voices from the past, to try to place myself in their shoes. I believe that to explore the past is to understand who we are today and what we might be able to achieve and aspire to in the future.”

There are four focus areas of research in the institute – Biblical and Early Christian Studies; Catholic Thought and Practice, including Inter-religious Dialogue; Moral Philosophy and Applied Ethics; and Philosophy and Phenomenology of Religion.

The institute is currently undertaking seven varied funded research projects in these areas.

These include Professor Francis Moloney FAHA and his team investigating the origin, purpose and reception of New Testament writings.

“The project will provide the first comprehensive study of how the Jewish and Roman worldviews interacted in order to generate the self-identity of Christianity,” Professor McLaren said.

Professor Pauline Allen FAHA is heading up a team investigating how leading bishops in East and West between 400 and 700, in employing correspondence to address conflict between themselves on theological and organisational issues, asserted their power and position within the church, in order to model new ways of dealing with current religious conflict.

And Professor Neil Ormerod is leading a team investigating the possibility of a Christian philosophy.

“The team will examine the ways in which the three major Catholic thinkers, Etienne Gilson, Bernard Lonergan and Joseph Ratzinger – who is, of course, Pope Benedict XVI – have appropriated their thoughts to contribute to the development of Catholic thought in the 20th century.”

“It’s a rich mix of subjects and a real privilege to work alongside such talented and dedicated scholars,” said Professor McLaren.

The institute is already off to a flying start. Last year historical theologian, Dr Bronwen Neil FAHA, was awarded a prestigious ARC Futures Fellowship for her project Dreams, Prophecy and Violence from Early Christianity to the Rise of Islam.

Dr Neil’s four-year project began in September 2014 and is focused on the ARC-targeted research area of Understanding Culture and Communities.

The project will uncover the common themes in dream literature from pagan and Jewish antiquity to early Christianity and early Islam, aiming to show how dreams and prophecy have been used to increase religious control, and to justify violence since the period of Late Antiquity.

Professor McLaren said the institute was keen to attract new talent to its doors and that it had a lot to offer researchers interested in theology, philosophy and the place of religion in society.

“We are a vibrant community of scholars, committed to bringing together key international leaders in theology and philosophy, providing opportunities for early career researchers and higher degree research students, and offering sustained support for a wide variety of research projects.”
As Director of the Institute for Positive Psychology and Education (IPPE), Professor Rhonda Craven has a lot to smile about. The institute, established in February 2014, recently scooped up a cool $1.2 million in funding for three ARC Linkage Projects.

“We have a great deal of expertise within the institute,” Professor Craven said. “Our researchers have a common focus on finding out what helps people, communities, and organisations thrive and then using this information to help people be all they can be.”

The IPPE’s recent ARC funding success was the strongest performance in psychology from any university in Australia.

The three projects that IPPE researchers are currently working on are May the Force Be With You: Furthering Fresh Futures for NSW Police Psychological Strengths, Wellbeing and Retention; Cultivating Capability: Explicating Critical Psychosocial Drivers of Educational Outcomes and Wellbeing for High-Ability Aboriginal Students; and The Helmsman Project: Giving at-risk adolescents skills to navigate life’s journey and make a difference.

May the Force Be With You is a landmark project which will assist the NSW Police Force in developing fresh solutions to help officers become more resilient, and support those suffering from stress-related illness.

Professor Craven is heading the study that brings together representatives from the NSW Police Force and researchers from ACU, the University of Western Sydney, and three international universities. The group has a diverse range of expertise including psychology, management, policing and criminology.

They will survey more than 20,000 serving police officers and conduct further study to develop, for the first time, an information-based scientific analysis of the NSW Police Force.

Professor Craven said the project will investigate police commands in NSW to determine how to maintain an officer’s wellbeing in the face of adversity. Findings of the study will be used to further develop psychological tools to help the entire workforce deal with stress and trauma.

“Every day the NSW Police Force puts their lives on the line to protect and serve all Australians. They are unsung Australian heroes. We aim to find out what factors protect and enhance the health and wellbeing of our officers. This will enable research-derived strategies to cultivate the capability of and further futures for the police force.

“By emphasising a scientific understanding of what makes police officers fit and well, the aim of the project is to develop a new approach driven by positive psychology, which will help to stop our police from becoming ill from mental health problems.”

Professor Craven said the institute was incredibly busy but staff were very much looking forward to working with their new colleagues at ACU.
Professor Nikolas Kompridis came late to academia’s ivory towers. Originally from Canada, he studied music at the University of Toronto and Yale. He worked as a percussionist, artistic director and composer for Sound Pressure, one of Canada’s leading contemporary music ensembles, before he was drawn into academia by an invitation to the University of Frankfurt from Jürgen Habermas – Germany’s most important philosopher.

“My transition from music to academia is hard to explain, even now, but much of it had something to do with the pull of certain intellectual questions to which I could not respond so long as I remained in music,” he said.

Today, Professor Kompridis is based in North Sydney, where he is Director of the Institute for Social Justice.

The ISJ, which was established at ACU in April 2014, focuses on researching social justice issues in the broadest possible sense to have maximum impact on matters that concern all human beings.

“The 21st century faces challenges that are both fundamentally different from and at the same time far more urgent than those faced by the preceding century,” Professor Kompridis said. “This requires rethinking our highest social ideals – justice, freedom, equality, democracy, public goods and the very meaning of our humanity.

“At the ISJ, we will be working to address these concerns and seeking practical solutions through partnerships with both local and international academic colleagues and with government, industry, civil society, and political and environmental organisations.”

Staff at the ISJ are involved in researching social justice issues under two broad themes – Rethinking Social Ideals and Addressing Social Issues.

Rethinking Social Ideals will examine the issues of Rights and Justice, Struggles for Freedom, Human – Nonhuman Relationships in the Anthropocene and Economic Justice, Care, and Well-being.

Addressing Social Issues will focus on Secularism and Religious Diversity, Democratic Processes of Public Reflection and Action, Migration, Indigeneity and Indigenous Governance and Gender, Race and Class.

Professor Kompridis said that an important part of the institute’s work would be collaborations with other researchers.

“We will be working with some of the most prominent national and international scholars working in the fields of political philosophy, human rights, social sciences and law, and will be collaborating with important research centres around the world.”

The ISJ plans to establish a four-year PhD program in social and political thought to attract the very best doctoral candidates.

“This program will provide a level of research training unavailable in research-only PhD programs, and also a very strong sense of community among the institute’s PhD candidates and ISJ academic staff. We will start with a year of extremely challenging seminars conducted by ISJ staff, including our international professorial fellows.”

The institute is also planning an ambitious events program for 2015-16.

“We are developing events which will draw on the intellectual resources of our staff, including our international professorial fellows who are based at universities such as Columbia, Harvard, Birkbeck College, the University of Toronto, and the Centre for Study of Developing Societies in Delhi.

“These events will include an annual summer school for advanced studies in critical theory, an international conference on rethinking the relation between human and non-human life, and another international conference looking at secularism, religion, and democracy.”

Professor Kompridis said he was delighted that the institute had become a part of ACU and looked forward to working with colleagues across the University.

“The members of ISJ are very excited and grateful to be joining ACU at a point in time when it is taking such bold and innovative steps towards becoming an outstanding research and teaching university. Our commitment to social justice reflects that of ACU’s own mission and this is very important to us.”

Professor Kompridis said that although he occasionally misses his life in music, his training as a composer has prepared him well for his career in academia.

“My musical training helps me to think about how things fit, or fail to fit together conceptually, and about the way I write – especially how I phrase sentences so that there is some kind of musical and rhythmic flow to my words. I have no regrets about choosing this path, although I do sometimes miss the intensity of musical life.”

Name: Institute for Social Justice
Director: Professor Nikolas Kompridis
Aim: To focus on social justice issues in the broadest possible sense to have maximum impact on matters that concern all human beings
LEARNING SCIENCES
INSTITUTE AUSTRALIA

According to Professor Claire Wyatt-Smith, research is not about sitting in a dusty library, surrounded by piles of books. “Research is generative, alive and organic. Essentially, it is about the generation and use of new knowledge and using new research-informed practices for social change.”

Professor Wyatt-Smith is Director of the Learning Sciences Institute Australia (LSIA). Established in January 2014 and based in Brisbane, the LSIA focuses on research which aims to improve the learning outcomes, wellbeing and life chances of children and young people.

“We're a community of scholars who share a passion,” said Professor Wyatt-Smith. “Our work attempts to identify, examine and remove the barriers to learning and life chances that some young people experience and to make a difference to their futures.”

Professor Wyatt-Smith was previously Executive Dean of the Faculty of Education and Arts. Educated at the University of Queensland, she has a distinguished scholarly background in educational assessment and literacy, and has acted as a policy adviser to state, federal and international governments.

Professor Wyatt-Smith began her career as a teacher, quickly becoming a department head at a large school, where she was responsible for curriculum innovation and student assessment. She said it was this experience that sparked her interest in research.

“Education is not a standalone discipline. I’m interested in interdisciplinary and multitheoretical research. This includes working with areas such as law, health, social work and psychology to design interventions, systems and processes to bring about positive change in society and to support young people, both in and out of schools.”

The LSIA is comprised of eight research programs, spread over two domains – education and schooling and child and youth studies. The programs cover three broad themes.

“Firstly, our programs aim to advance and create new knowledge and understanding, which has implications for practice, policy and further research. Secondly, we aim to develop evidence on interventions. Finally, our research seeks to strengthen systems that support positive education outcomes, children, young people and their families.”

Professor Wyatt-Smith said the programs seek to address some of the challenges that Australian society currently faces, such as reported declining educational standards, young people dropping out of school, bullying, and the impact of technology on children’s learning.

The eight programs are directed by institute-based chief investigators, all world-renowned experts in their fields.

Program one is Assessment, Evaluation and Student Learning, led by Professor Joy Cumming.

Program two examines Enhancing Literacy and Engagement for Overcoming Disadvantage, led by Associate Professor Joce Nuttall.

Program three is Mathematics Futures for All, led by Professor Carmel Diezmann.

Program four is Early Childhood Futures, led by Professor Clare Rossini.

Program five is Enhancing Children’s Safety and Life Chances, led by Professor Morag McArthur who also heads the Institute of Child Protection Studies.

Program six is Promoting Healthy Development and Inclusion in Families, Schools and Communities, led by Professor Sheryl Hemphill.

Program seven is Transitions and Youth at Risk, led by Professor Brendan Bartlett.

Program eight is Educational Semiotics in English and Literacy Pedagogy, led by Professor Len Unsworth.

Professor Wyatt-Smith said the programs were unique and interdisciplinary, bringing together the very best research talent to encourage social change and have a positive impact on young lives.

“Young people’s lives are not lived in schools, although they can have a profound effect. We’re interested in other contexts that might shape the lives of children and young people – their families and their communities.”

The LSIA has an enviable list of partnerships and is currently working on large-scale projects funded by the Australian Research Council, the National Health and Medical Research Council, the governments of the Australian Capital Territory and Queensland, the Criminology Research Council, and the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation.

Professor Wyatt-Smith said that there were a multitude of opportunities for higher degree research students and early career researchers within the institute.

“We offer talented students and emerging researchers the chance to collaborate with and be mentored by leading ACU researchers and international visiting scholars. It is a unique opportunity for aspiring researchers to develop their research skills.”
ACU lecturer Rachael Jacobs' simple offer to walk with a Muslim woman in the wake of the Martin Place siege sparked a social media campaign under the hashtag #illridewithyou. The hashtag trended globally on Twitter as people took a stand against anti-Muslim sentiment.

As news of the siege unfolded, I scrolled through updates on my phone, searching for the latest information. My brother works in the city of Sydney. My husband's office is a government building near Martin Place. I knew all were safe and sound, but I wanted to know more.

At this point I saw a woman on the train start to fiddle with her headscarf.

Confession time. In my Facebook status, I editorialised. She wasn't sitting next to me. She was a bit away, towards the other end of the carriage. Like most people she had been looking at her phone, then slowly started to unpin her scarf.

Tears sprang to my eyes and I was struck by assumptions about a complete stranger and for belonging to a culture where racism was part of her everyday experience.

But none of those words came out, and our near silent encounter was over in a moment.

My second status was written as a heartbreak postscript to my first. While the woman appeared to appreciate my gesture, we had both left defeated and deflated. What good is one small action against an avalanche of ignorance?

Hours later, social media showed me good intentions. And perhaps we needed it more for ourselves as a reminder that there are reasoned and tolerant people that walk among us, publicly disempowering the trolls.

One of the most common questions I've been asked is "Do you have a message for the Muslim community?"

In truth, I don't. They are a strong community with their own articulate leaders, able to speak for themselves if they choose to do so. I am, however, the daughter of Indian migrants, and having lived all of my 37 years in Australia, I feel I've seen the best and the worst this country has to offer. I'd rather deliver a message to racists, bigots and anyone who dares to derive a message of hate from this tragedy – it is you who are unwelcome here. Your values have no place in civilised society, and if you spread intolerance, there's an avalanche of kindness ready to take you down.

If you spread intolerance, there's an avalanche of kindness ready to take you down.

Rachael Jacobs is a lecturer in education at ACU's Brisbane Campus.

This story first appeared in the Brisbane Times.
#ill ride with you


**SAFETY FIRST**

Professor Simon Stewart and his SAFETY Intervention are set to improve the lives of tens of thousands of Australians discharged from hospital with a common heart problem.

**PROFESSOR SIMON STEWART**

Director, Mary MacKillop Institute for Health Research, ACU

“They say the brightest stars burn out the fastest, but Betty Snowden is an exception to this cosmic phenomena. She is a stellar example to all of us that even at age 90 life is far from over.

As we get older and survive the slings and arrows of life we are more likely to develop chronic diseases. Betty Snowden's cross to bear is atrial fibrillation – an often silent but potentially deadly condition that causes the heart to beat in a rapid and irregular manner.

Atrial fibrillation is a modern epidemic. We predicted it more than 25 years ago and now it has hit, big time. One in five Australians over the age of 80 are affected – and without appropriate management, atrial fibrillation is often linked to deadly strokes, a high risk of repeated hospital admissions and premature death.

Betty Snowden participated in our world-first study (SAFETY), which examined the potential benefits of a post discharge program of home visits and specialist care for those admitted to hospital with atrial fibrillation.

ACU's newly established Mary MacKillop Institute for Health Research now has world-first evidence to show that we can improve the lives of an estimated 800,000 Australians affected by atrial fibrillation.

I initially volunteered to take part in the SAFETY trial because I believed in its higher purpose, which was to assist people with atrial fibrillation to manage their condition at home, stay out of hospital, and get on with their lives.

Professor Stewart is passionate about his work, which is important. It's no good having someone who is half-hearted. He believes the intervention can improve the quality of life of thousands of people so I wanted to support his endeavour. He just seemed like such a young man to me – but of course everyone seems young when you're my age.

Being a former nurse, I already had a good grasp of my condition. Atrial fibrillation causes a disturbance in the heart's electrical system, which causes the chambers of the heart to quiver rather than beat normally. Even with the knowledge and understanding, it can still be tricky to manage the condition on your own as the symptoms are not always obvious. I found SAFETY beneficial as the nurses would come to my home and check my blood pressure, which helped me get to know when to rest and when to be active.

I like to stay active as I have a rich and full life. I have three daughters, six grand children and eight great grandchildren so they keep me busy. I try to get out and walk daily and I live in a residential community so my social life is second to none. I play cards (Mahjong and 500), enjoy painting watercolours, and I even borrow my friends' husbands for a dance or two at the local Jazz club. I love my politics and staying on top of current affairs but all of these things are difficult to manage from a hospital bed. Lucky I'm not in one.”

**BETTY SNOWDEN**

SAFETY Intervention participant

“I have travel goals but my bank says don't do them. We'll see. I like the sound of South America. My main goal is to be able to live independently and to keep my marbles – so far, so good.

I was diagnosed with atrial fibrillation 17 years ago and have been in and out of hospital with the condition – but the SAFETY Intervention put a stop to all that. I haven't been to hospital for three years now so that speaks for itself.

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If being a new student at Cambridge University wasn’t daunting enough already, Nathan Lyons now also eats his meals under the stern gaze of some of history's greatest minds.

“There is a palpable sense of age, tradition, and intellectual inquiry here at Cambridge,” he said. “It’s a rich context to do one’s research. In the dining hall at my college there are paintings of significant alumni on the walls – it’s a strange experience to eat under the scrutiny of Milton and Darwin.”

The 26-year-old is completing a PhD in Philosophy of Religion after securing a much-coveted spot in the Faculty of Divinity and a scholarship to cover the costs of the three-year program.

“You need about $100,000 for the university fees, which meant months of waiting to hear back from countless scholarship applications,” Nathan said. “Those were some very uncertain months. My wife Kate and I had no idea what the next year would look like.

“I finally got an email from Cambridge late one night offering me a studentship with enough funding to cover the fees. I was very excited, but it was the middle of the night and Kate was asleep, so I printed the email out and stuck it on the mirror in our bathroom for her to find when she got up early for work. I was woken at 5am by her whooping and dancing around.”

Nathan’s research is looking at the philosophy of nature, particularly the relationship between the ‘human’ realm and the ‘natural’ realm.

“A lot of modern philosophy sees a strict division between those two realms, as though we are really disembodied minds who just happen to possess bodies. But I find that profoundly dissatisfying. We are not angels, we are animals, even if we are a peculiar kind of rational animal.

“I’m taking up the old theological idea that we are made from dust (‘dust thou art,’ Adam is told in Genesis) as a way of thinking about how humanity and culture can be understood as a natural phenomena.

“I’m interested in the question: what kind of thing must nature be if it has produced persons?”

Nathan arrived in Cambridge last September, after completing a Master of Philosophy at ACU’s Strathfield Campus.

“We left a Sydney winter and arrived to an English winter – adjusting to the weather is still very much a work-in-progress,” he said.

“Cambridge doesn’t really have a campus as such. Each student is a member of a college and your college is a very significant part of social and scholarly life. I’m lucky to be part of an excellent, very old college in the centre of town – Christ’s College.

“Like everyone else in Cambridge I get around on a bike. It’s a much more effective way to get around the little winding streets of a medieval town. But it’s always grim in the morning when it has been raining—everyone arrives at the faculty with soaked shoes and trousers.”

Surrounded by the best minds in the world, Nathan spends the majority of his time independently researching, along with regular seminars and thesis supervision meetings.

“The breadth of expertise among my friends and acquaintances here in Cambridge is remarkable,” he said. “It certainly can be daunting trying to keep up in a conversation between a quantum physicist and a neurobiologist over drinks. But I have been struck by a deep respect for the work of those in other disciplines here, and the sense of friendly collegiality.

“One indication of the unique Cambridge study experience is the email lists of events we receive. We get these very dull, plain text emails, and buried in the text with absolutely no fanfare are notices of stunning lectures and seminars from the world’s best scholars—it’s just part for the course here. The best piece of advice I’ve received so far is that in Cambridge you can never do everything – if you go to everything you’ll get nothing done.

“Plato famously said that philosophy begins in wonder—our wonder at the beauty and strangeness of existence. Often you forget this when you’re actually doing academic philosophy at the desk – trying to get a paper finished by the due date, chasing the footnotes, getting frustrated with writer’s block.

“But I think Plato was right. Philosophy aims at the richest and most rewarding questions, questions that aim at our highest desires and deepest curiosities. It is full of wonder. I think that’s why I enjoy it.”
THE LAST
DEFENDER
Commonwealth Games, and winning competitions. Competing at two "It's exhilarating competing in major strangers continues to astound me. and support shown to me by complete a real impact on my life, and the kindness the beautiful fans I've met. They have had but the most touching have been some of Freeman and other professional athletes, a few celebrities like the royal family, Cathy "I have met some amazing people along the way. I've been lucky to meet quite a few celebrities like the royal family, Cathy Freeman and other professional athletes, but the most touching have been some of the beautiful fans I've met. They have had a real impact on my life, and the kindness and support shown to me by complete strangers continues to astound me. "It's exhilarating competing in major competitions. Competing at two Commonwealth Games, and winning gold in penalties in both, is definitely a highlight. I also loved playing in front of 15,000 screaming fans in Holland at the World Cup… the experiences have been so memorable and hockey has provided me with amazing opportunities. However, I am yet to go to the Olympics, so the 2016 Olympics is my main goal at the moment.” Rachael began playing hockey in primary school, and by Year 11 was training with the Victorian Institute of Sport.

"I debuted for Australia in 2006, and I have since played 116 games for Australia including two Commonwealth Games, two World Cups, five Champions Trophy Tournaments, and a World League. I was nominated for World Goalkeeper of the Year 2014, which was a real honour. Besides my passion for the sport, I have also been able to travel all over the world… I absolutely love it.” While a fighter on the field, off it she turns her interests to helping others, juggling her hockey career with working as a nurse at the Perth Royal Hospital.

“As an athlete I am a firm believer in having balance in my life. Elite sport requires a huge commitment of time, energy, and mental focus, but I still think it’s important to have a career outside of sport, and growing up my parents always taught me the importance of having a well-rounded life. “In Year 12 I decided to study human movement, but during my first semester I did some volunteer work in a nursing home and loved it. So I applied at ACU and haven’t looked back.

"I started nursing at ACU the same year I debuted for Australia. Life was hectic, but somehow I managed to study full-time, work a casual job, train 10 times a week and regularly compete for Australia internationally.

“In 2008 I was required to take the year off uni because we were training full time for the Olympics so I had to move to Perth. But in 2009 I went back to ACU and finished my degree.

“I loved studying at ACU. At the start of each year I’d meet with staff, plan out my schedule and discuss any challenges I may have. The staff willingly assisted me every step of the way, and would even change exam times and adjust my placement dates to suit my hockey travel schedule. I would not have graduated without their support.

“I completed my graduate year at Royal Perth Hospital in neurological rehabilitation. I got accepted into a second year program working in trauma, but after loving rehabilitation so much I decided I would head back there. I have been in rehabilitation for four years now and love it. The staff are amazing – we work as a team, support each other and everyone shares their knowledge freely with the new staff. I was always made to feel welcome and supported.” Rachael said one of the most difficult things for her had been finding a balance between her work and sport.

“The hardest thing I found initially was the exhaustion I felt training 10 times a week plus working full-time. Eventually I dropped my hours down to a level that allowed me to do both comfortably.

“As hockey is a team sport and we’re at an elite level, there is no flexibility with our training schedule. You must be there every session. Thankfully my boss is really understanding and flexible. I’ve found communication is the key to managing everything, and I always plan ahead so I can be rostered off if I’m going to be away.

“Since working at the hospital I have met some wonderful people. Being rehabilitation patients they often stay for a long time, which is perfect because it lets me build up a relationship. Whenever a big event like the Commonwealth Games or Olympics comes around, I try and organise an activity day for the patients. They seem to love it, and having a few of the Hockeyroos come down to meet everyone always creates a bit of a buzz.

“l look forward to going to work each shift, I enjoy it so much that I’m happy to spend any free day I have helping my patients. While I believe work is a necessity, it’s also about doing something you love – not just about earning an income.”

Rachael Lynch never takes her eye off the goal. She’s travelled the world as an elite athlete, met Queen Elizabeth and Prince Harry, and built a career as a nurse. Caitlin Ganter caught up with the hockey player and ACU graduate. Few can stand their ground like Rachael Lynch. As goalkeeper for the Hockeyroos, she’s the last defender on the field, and no stranger to diving in front of balls travelling at speeds of up to 100 kilometres an hour. Throw in a gruelling training schedule, career, and international commitments, and it’s easy to see just how hard this 28-year-old works.

“Playing hockey at the elite level is a real privilege,” she said. “I get to travel the world with my friends while representing my country doing what I love.

“I have met some amazing people along the way. I’ve been lucky to meet quite a few celebrities like the royal family, Cathy Freeman and other professional athletes, but the most touching have been some of the beautiful fans I’ve met. They have had a real impact on my life, and the kindness and support shown to me by complete strangers continues to astound me.

“It’s exhilarating competing in major competitions. Competing at two Commonwealth Games, and winning gold in penalties in both, is definitely a...
CU graduate Rachel Westaway is passionate about freedom of information because it underpins democracy. She has just been appointed Assistant Freedom of Information (FOI) Commissioner, Office of the Freedom of Information Commissioner, Victoria.

"Information is empowering," said Ms Westaway. "I love the fact I have the ability to work on diverse and complex matters."

Rachel plays an important role in promoting the operation of the Freedom of Information Act 1982 – by reviewing FOI decisions, monitoring compliance with the Act and providing advice, education and guidance to the public and agencies in relation to the Commissioner’s functions and any professional standards set by the Minister.

"I am blessed to be in an independent decision-making role where I can frequently make a difference to people’s lives. I am working with very interesting bright people, I get to work with legislation, and I get to interpret it. It’s a very satisfying job."

Anyone has the right to request information from a Victorian Government agency under the FOI Act. However, there are exemptions that prevent certain information from being released. The Victorian FOI Commissioner is an external independent mechanism, which was set up to review decisions made by government agencies on FOI requests.

In many of the diverse roles that Rachel has held, freedom of information has been at the forefront of her mind.

Despite starting her working life in the recession when job prospects were dim, she has excelled in a broad range of careers. Her first job was working in the marketing department at Cadbury Schweppes.

Since then she has held management and community liaison roles with the National Trust of Australia, The Age and SBS. She was executive director for seven years at Country Press NSW and served as a member for the Migration Review Tribunal, where she reviewed more than 1500 matters that directly affected the lives of many individuals and their families.

"Regardless of the degree you study and the employment prospects of the day, staying positive, working hard, and being multi-skilled is the key to attracting great jobs," she said.

Rachel attributes the development of her management, communication and leadership skills to her postgraduate studies in education at ACU.

"I have drawn heavily on the skills I was taught at ACU in many of my roles. Teaching provides you with skills that are applicable to a wide range of professions. You learn how to manage people, how to get the best out of people, and how to think on your feet."

"We are all children at heart – motivated by reward, encouragement, and by being treated with kindness and respect. The principles and values embedded in my course at ACU have stood me in good stead."
Last Christmas was the best that Felix Machiridza can remember for a long, long time. The human rights activist who fled from the Mugabe regime in Zimbabwe was reunited with his three children at Canberra Airport after more than four years apart.

“I have never cried like I did on seeing them at the airport,” Felix said. “I had to wait anxiously for nearly 20 minutes after the plane had landed before they emerged. I just could not hold back.

“I was so amazed at how much they had grown. When I left the youngest was three and half years old and seeing her as an eight-year-old was beyond words.”

Felix sought refuge in Canberra in 2010 with the assistance of the Movement for Democratic Change. As a journalist and vocal opponent of the Zimbabwean government he had survived abduction, torture, and several attempts on his life.

“I saw whole communities being turned against each other,” Felix said. “Many people were killed in cold blood. Members of my own family were not spared. I witnessed a lot of callous brutality being visited upon innocent civilians.

“I wrote stories which were critical of the oppressive regime that presided over us. I publicly denounced the sheer lack of concern for the majority of the people. I did undercover journalism with a small team of colleagues and we would send stories to the international media about what was going on in Zimbabwe.

“This did not go down well with the authorities. My colleagues and I were harassed and beaten up. There came a time when I knew I would definitely be killed if I stayed longer so I took the opportunity to get as far away as possible.”

Felix completed a social work degree at ACU’s Canberra Campus and began working for the Australian Red Cross in the Migration Support Program, but could not afford the visa and travel expenses needed to reunite his own family.

“I was constantly worried that they would harmed by the same people who had been after me,” he said. “For as long as they remained in Zimbabwe, they were my weakest point. I had to watch what I said and avoided talking about them even to close friends.

“I missed watching them grow and all the music that we played together. Hearing their voices on the phone and not being able to see them would tear my heart apart.”

Finally last October, after holding concerts with his band to raise funds, and assisted by Canberra Refugee Support, Felix was reunited with Christabel, 14, Clarence, 13, and Clarice, 8.

“It has been the greatest and most wonderful time for me, our first Christmas together in six years. We went on a road trip to Dubbo and celebrated Christmas with friends in Bathurst. From there we went to the Jenolan Caves and then Batemans Bay. It was a marvel to watch the children’s excitement as they saw the open ocean for the first time ever.

“They like Australia and they have already made friends. They like their schools and they have settled into the education system here.

“They have given me the opportunity to take on so many responsibilities as their dad, mum, cook, cleaner, judge, social worker, counsellor, teacher, and driver.

“Their future is made here. I made the decision to become an Australian citizen for their sake. Their outcomes will definitely be a lot better than if they had remained in Zimbabwe.”
Australian Catholic University’s graduates are an impressive bunch.

This year we’ll be launching the inaugural ACU Alumni of the Year Awards to recognise and celebrate the many ways in which our graduates make a difference to their local and global communities.

We’ll be reaching out to alumni, faculty staff and industry peers to help identify those graduates who have made an outstanding contribution to their field, in different areas of life.

For more information on the awards, application dates and conditions, grab the next issue of ACU Alum.
It’s no secret that some of the funniest people are also the saddest. Robin Williams was just one of the many comedians who made us laugh while at the same time struggling with addiction and despair. As he once said himself, “comedy is acting out optimism”.

Researchers from ACU’s Mary MacKillop Institute for Health Research set out to test the assumption, and discovered that the funniest comedians are indeed more at risk of premature death and reduced longevity than their less funny counterparts.

Researchers Professor Simon Stewart and Professor David Thompson examined 53 male British and Irish comedians born between 1900 and 1954 – both individuals and those in comedy partnerships such as Morecambe and Wise or Monty Python. They concentrated their research on the ‘funniest’ comedians and of the 23, found that 78 per cent had suffered a premature death compared to a more favourable survival profile in their less funny counterparts. Those in comedy partnerships such as Morecambe and Wise or Monty Python. Researchers Professor Simon Stewart and Professor David Thompson examined 53 male British and Irish comedians born between 1900 and 1954 – both individuals and those in comedy partnerships such as Morecambe and Wise or Monty Python. They concentrated their research on the ‘funniest’ comedians and of the 23, found that 78 per cent had suffered a premature death compared to a more favourable survival profile in their less funny counterparts. The average age of death for these ‘elite comedians’ was 63 years old.

“IT’S AN INTRIGUING ISSUE, BUT THERE DOES SEEM TO BE A STRONG LINK BETWEEN BEING EXTREMELY FUNNY, THE TYPE OF PERSONALITIES THAT DRIVE THAT HUMOUR, AND THE IMPACT ON MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH,” SAID PROFESSOR STEWART. “THERE NEEDS TO BE A BALANCE IN LIFE AND IT’S DIFFICULT TO HAVE THOSE INCREDIBLE HIGHS WITHOUT THE LOWS.”

Early death is a common phenomenon among well-known comedians – from Peter Sellers, to Rik Mayall and Tony Hancock. Others, Professor Stewart pointed out, have publicly admitted to struggling with despair, addiction, or both.

“This is the tension of comedy,” he said. “We may see the best of these comedians in their public façade but in private many of them are battling things like depression, psychosis, and a host of other mental health issues.”

Comedians working in duos were also designated for the research as either the ‘funny’ or ‘straight’ man of the team – with results showing the ‘funny’ man was three times more likely to die prematurely than his partner.

“Comedy duos are especially important for this research as they were generally from the same background and of the same age,” said Professor Stewart.

“Take for example the 1970s British team of Morecambe and Wise, the ‘straight’ guy Ernie Wise lived to 73, while his funnier partner, Eric Morecambe, died aged 58. The gap in longevity between the funny guy and the stooge is quite amazing.”

Professor Stewart said the research team had been surprised by the strength of their findings, which were published in the International Journal of Cardiology late last year.

“IT’S SOBERING TO THINK THAT MANY OF THE PEOPLE WHO MAKE US LAUGH THE MOST ARE VULNERABLE TO EMOTIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS THAT LEAVES THEM AT RISK OF A PREMATURE DEATH.”

“MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES SUCH AS MANIA AND DEPRESSION, AND DISTINCT PERSONALITY TRAITS THAT HELP SHAPE THE TALENTS OF THESE ELITE COMEDIANS MAY WELL ALSO EXPLAIN THEIR REDUCED LONGEVITY.”


Professor Stewart said that the study’s findings could help identify the risk factors for early death and help alleviate the likelihood of premature death for comedians.

“This striking data might also have relevance to comedians in other countries and cultures as well as provide further insights into the mental health and longevity of the general population – particularly those who share the same characteristics as our elite comedians.”

“ULTIMATELY, OUR COMEDIANS MAY WELL PAY A HIGH INDIVIDUAL PRICE FOR MAKING US LAUGH.”
ROCKING DAN, teaching man

Primary school teacher Dan Colquhoun’s songs are inspiring a generation of children to embrace learning through music, writes Jen Rosenberg.

With an international following for his successful musical lessons, it comes as some surprise that the YouTube star known as Rocking Dan Teaching Man had a learning disorder and struggled in the classroom as a child.

Dan Colquhoun said he would hate for primary school children to have the same problems he did processing numbers and letters, which was one of his motivations for writing songs to help the children in his classes learn basic numeracy and literacy skills.

“I struggled at school because I’m mildly dyslexic, which meant I had trouble processing sounds and symbols,” Dan said. Writing songs to provide a different approach to those sounds and symbols seemed an obvious way to find an alternative for those kids who are challenged when learning the building blocks that the rest of their schooling is based on.

“It’s about finding a different approach. Being creative is a great outlet, and music really helps oral language development, rhyming words and listening to them. I struggled to read and write so I tried to find a way to help all children with reading and writing and to help with concepts they might have difficulty understanding.”

By catering to differing learning styles and abilities, Dan is trying to motivate children through the use of music and movement in a fun interactive way. “I want to help foster the creative, intellectual, and emotional development of the children I teach through the use of music and collaboration across the curriculum.”

As well as developing his unique teaching methods, Dan is also involved in an aspiring leaders program run by the Eastern Region Catholic Education Office (CEO) and is involved in the Early Years Project, a learning philosophy that has been formulated by the Sydney CEO.

Not only do his small charges at St Declan’s Catholic Primary School in the Sydney suburb of Penshurst love his musical creations, but so do their parents, other teachers, and a swathe of Google + and YouTube followers around the world.

“Being able to share my songs through my YouTube channel and the Google + network is a wonderful way to help children with their learning from around the world,” he said.

Most of the hits for the 30 songs he has written and recorded come from Australia, Britain and the United States. The YouTube channel has had more than 490,000 hits and when he did his first animation, it was seen in more than 100 countries.

It was also seen by his peers and employers.

“Everyone at school has been really positive, and my principal Maria Ross is very supportive. The Director of Teaching and Learning for the CEO Sydney, Michael Bezzina, wrote to me congratulating me for being awarded ACU’s Frater Scholarship,” he said.
While completing a postgraduate certificate in education, early childhood lecturer Dr Cathie Harrison encouraged Dan to research the benefits of integrating music across the curriculum, an activity that ultimately led to the Rocking Dan Teaching Man YouTube channel.

Putting his classwork to music was a successful exercise and songs like *What makes a good friend*, *Come on and meet the shapes*, and *The friends of 10* (a maths song for first graders) have taken off and are regularly used in his classes, and are also available as downloadable classroom materials for others to use.

Dan was an outstanding student with a distinction average when studying for his Bachelor of Education (Primary) and postgraduate certificate at ACU’s Strathfield Campus. Both his strong academic results and his efforts to carve a distinctive swathe in his career made him a prime candidate for the Bob and Margaret Frater Travel Scholarship, worth $10,000, which he won in late 2013.

Established by Bob and Margaret Frater, the scholarship recognises and rewards teachers within Catholic primary schools who display leadership qualities and commitment and who will contribute to the continuing development and enhancement of the school system through participation in an international experience.

Dan used his prize to attend an international conference for kindergarten teachers in Las Vegas in 2014.

The conference exceeded his expectations and he had the chance to meet some of the educators he had been following and exchange tips. One of the speakers even used an image of Dan in his presentation, much to his delight.

“It was such a great opportunity to be there with some of the big names of primary education, like Harry Kindergarten – a guy called Pete Harry. Pete had asked me if he could use my picture in his presentation but it was still a bit of a shock to see it up there on the big screen. He showed a big picture of me and talked about my YouTube channel in his workshop called ‘Teaching with YouTube’. Deanna Jump showed *The big bad wolf description song* in her workshop about early literacy and said it was a great way to help children with their development of descriptive language.

“It was a brilliant experience to see and hear what others had to say and to meet them in person, share ideas, and talk about the work we are doing. Everyone was so generous with their time and sharing their knowledge.”

Dan said he was keen to pay tribute to those who had invested in him and his work.

“I’d particularly like to thank Bob and Margaret Frater for making that possible. If it wasn’t for the scholarship I wouldn’t have had made it to the conference. I learned so much and it has just given me so many ideas and so much material to work with. What an incredible experience.”

Read more about Dan Colquhoun on his blog at www.rockingdan.blogspot.com.au
NEW APPOINTMENTS

FACULTY OF LAW AND BUSINESS

PROFESSOR THERESE (TERRI) JOINER
EXECUTIVE DEAN

Prior to commencing at ACU, Professor Terri Joiner was Executive Dean in the Faculty of Business at Federation University Australia, and has held a number of senior management positions at Monash University and La Trobe University.

Throughout her career, Professor Joiner has received invitations to consult to industry and has held a number of visiting teaching and research fellowships both in Australia and abroad. She has published widely, and held prestigious Australian Research Council and Industry Grants.

Professor Joiner completed a Bachelor of Economics at La Trobe University, graduating with first class honours and the University Medal. She completed her doctoral thesis in international management also at La Trobe University.

PROFESSOR THOMAS LANGE
ASSOCIATE DEAN OF RESEARCH

A German-born economist and applied statistician by training, Professor Thomas Lange commenced at ACU in October 2014. He also holds a tenured professorial Chair in Economics and International Management at Middlesex University Business School, London, UK.

Professor Lange’s previous roles include Research Dean, Executive Dean and Pro Vice-Chancellor in the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Australia. A leading research authority with numerous world-class publications to his credit, he is enthusiastic about the faculty’s research strengths, which explore organisational justice, wellbeing at work, and business sustainability through the lens of cultural, social and ethical enquiry.

Professor Joiner’s academic background includes 30 years teaching English and cultural studies at La Trobe and RMIT universities. She is widely published in these areas and is currently a Chief Investigator in an ARC Linkage Grant. She has also been lead applicant in two major ALTC projects.

Professor Souter’s previous roles include Director, Learning Environments, Research and Evaluation at Deakin University, and Associate Dean Academic in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at La Trobe University.

FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND ARTS

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR LAUREN STEPHENSON
DEPUTY HEAD, SCHOOL OF EDUCATION NSW/ACT

Associate Professor Lauren Stephenson holds a PhD in educational leadership and is an experienced educator with a background in teacher education, educational leadership and English language learning and teaching.

She has an extensive record of scholarly activities at national and international levels and has published in the areas of educational leadership, teacher education and professional learning, EAL, action research, autoethnography and narrative inquiry.

For more than 20 years Associate Professor Stephenson lived and worked in the Middle East, before returning to Sydney to join ACU.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR MICHAEL ONDATJE
NATIONAL HEAD, SCHOOL OF ARTS

Associate Professor Michael Ondaatje is National Head of ACU’s School of Arts, and a Research Associate at the United States Studies Centre at the University of Sydney.

He was awarded his PhD with Distinction from the University of Western Australia in 2008, and his thesis on African-American conservatism was recognised with the Robert Street Prize for the most outstanding PhD.

In 2010 Associate Professor Ondaatje’s prize-winning first book, Black Conservative Intellectuals in Modern America, was a top 20 bestseller in American history. He has been a Senior Visiting Research Fellow at Oxford University, and in 2012 the Australian Academy of the Humanities awarded him the Max Crawford Medal.

Associate Professor Ondaatje is also a multi-award-winning teacher who has supervised 20 honours and PhD theses to completion. He is a regular commentator on American history and politics in the Australian and international media.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR ROMINA JAMIESEN-PROCTOR
STATE HEAD OF EDUCATION QLD

Professor Romina Jamieson-Proctor is the Queensland State Head of the School of Education and Adjunct Professor in the School of Teacher Education at USQ.

Throughout her academic career, Professor Jamieson-Proctor’s teaching and research interests and endeavours have focused on the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) to enhance and transform learning and teaching to meet the needs of 21st century learners.

She has published extensively in more than 70 refereed publications since 2001, including the book Transforming learning with ICT: Making IT Happen which is used in teacher education programs in several Australian universities.

PROFESSOR GERALDINE CASTLETON
DEPUTY DEAN

Professor Geraldine Castleton was formerly Dean and Head of School of Education at the University of South Australia, and Head of School of Education at the University of Tasmania.

She spent 20 years as a primary teacher working in three Australian states before moving into the tertiary sector. Professor Castleton’s research interests are in literacy policy and practice in education contexts ranging from schooling to workplaces.

She has more than 80 publications and has been a co or sole-investigator on research and consultancy projects totalling more than $1 million.
DO SOMETHING YOU LOVE

Explore postgraduate study options at ACU.

“My degree had a huge impact on my philosophy of education. Relationships are integral in the school environment, and completing my masters gave me a strong theoretical base.”

CLAIRE MANTON, STUDENT WELLBEING LEADER
MASTER OF EDUCATION (WELLBEING IN INCLUSIVE SCHOOLING) GRADUATE AND PHD CANDIDATE

life-less-ordinary.acu.edu.au/postgraduate
More than 30 ACU visual arts and design students spent 500 hours painting a 39 metre-long mural at Homebush Public School in Sydney. Not only does the mural contain a variety of settings, animals and plants, but letters, colours and numbers are hidden among the scenes, encouraging the children to learn and interact with the artwork. Photography: Anna Zhu