

MEDIA RELEASE

5 December 2024



Research projects look to foster social equity at all stages of life

The health and wellbeing of young East Timorese, residents in social housing, and aged care residents and workers will be the focus of three new Australian Catholic University research projects.

ACU experts will undertake new research through the Stakeholder Engaged Scholarship Unit (SESU) in collaboration with five community organisations.

Dr Paul Taylor and Dr Eliana Sarmiento from ACU's Faculty of Health Sciences and Associate Professor Mellita Jones from the Faculty of Education and Arts will conduct research into the education opportunities for young people in Timor-Leste.

Working in collaboration with Australian Marist Solidarity, the project will look at the existing resources in youth development and outline opportunities for improvement.

In Victoria, allied health experts from ACU's Faculty of Health Sciences will look to co-design a student-led allied health service in collaboration with cohealth, North Richmond Community Health and Access Health and Community who all seek to provide high quality primary and preventative community health care for residents of the City of Yarra, most importantly including those in social housing.

The project will be led by Associate Professor Stephen Guinea, Associate Professor Sharon Croxford, Carly Trajkovski and Dr Michelle Smith-Tamaray, with the hopes of launching a pilot student-led service based on their research findings.

The final project will evaluate an innovative person-centred care program rolled out by St Vincents Care (SVC).

Gerontology expert Professor Laurie Buys will lead a team of researchers including Dr Heidi Olsen, Associate Professor Erin Conway, Dr Kieran Flannagan, Dr Helen (Badge) Hawke and Dr Haydn Aarons to establish the efficacy of the SVC **Heartprint** model of care.

All three projects will provide recommendations to ensure the partnering communities could flourish and thrive well into the future.

SESU Advisory Group chair Br David Hall fms said the three new projects aligned with ACU's commitment to enable flourishing lives and foster thriving communities to enhance the common good.

"ACU is excited to partner with the Australian Marist Solidarity, cohealth and St Vincents Care to ensure the ongoing support of the people in their duty of care," Br Hall said.

"All our commencing research projects are dedicated to improving the quality of life for varying groups within society – from youth to adults and families experiencing marginalisation, as well as ageing members of our communities.

"Our experts will engage in vital research that will ensure these important organisations have the capacity to continue their life-changing work."