



Monthly overview

This month, Manna Institute will join with HMRI Healthy Minds Research Program in Newcastle on **Thursday 29 June** for the Inaugural Healthy Minds Research Summit, where the theme is 'Building Connections'. This is open to all Manna E-MCRs and promises opportunities to build new research partnerships, take part in panel discussions about the role mentoring can play in your career and to pitch your new ideas. Manna Institute E-MCRs are actively engaging in the Virtual Learning Teams (VLT) and working with their CIs on their 5-year research plans.

On **June 13–14** our CIs are meeting face-to-face in Sydney. A key focus of the agenda is working towards Manna Institute 2.0 and discussing ways to ensure the institute is sustainable.

A reminder that all abstracts for the Rural Mental Health Conference in Albury are due by **Friday 2 June**.

Chief Investigator check-in

**Manna Institute Deputy Director,
Associate Professor Christian Swann, Southern Cross University**



My role within Manna Institute focuses on Strategic Grant Planning, Development and Support activities – with an eye to the future and making sure that we are sustainable beyond our initial 3-year funding. Initially, my focus has been on:

- (i) developing a process for identifying and supporting 'Manna-led' projects, such as strategic grant applications and position papers relating to our core areas of focus;
- (ii) distributing the remaining Activity 2 funds to support Manna-led projects that work towards our sustainability; and
- (iii) how best to develop oversight of grant applications within the Institute, including processes that support 'slow cooked' and well developed grant applications that have the most chance of success.

Please reach out to me or the Project Office mannainstitute@une.edu.au if you are interested in discussing or assisting with any of these tasks. Otherwise, I look forward to circulating more updates and opportunities soon, and welcoming you all to SCU in August for our planning days.



New collaborations



Collaboration is at the very heart of Manna Institute's efforts to improve mental health throughout rural and regional Australia. For the past two years we have been bringing researchers, industry and community representatives together to tackle some of the nation's most vexed issues.

By joining forces, we are fostering partnerships and innovation that will potentially have far-reaching future impact.

The research team led by Professor Sonja March from the Centre for Health Research at the University of Southern Queensland (UniSQ) is a wonderful case in point. Also comprising Dr Govind Krishnamoorthy, Dr Arlen Rowe and Dr Kirsty Zieschank (from UniSQ), Professor Caroline Donovan from Griffith University and Professor Alison Calear from the Australian National University, this team is working to deliver much-needed digital mental health support to regional young people.

While several of the more senior researchers have worked together in the past, the team's membership of Manna Institute has afforded all new opportunities.

[READ MORE](#)

Regional Research Collaboration (RRC) Program update

Manna Institute's Project Progress Report was approved by the Program Leadership Group (PLG) and submitted to DESE on Tuesday 2 May. The report has been accepted by the DESE Project Delegate and the department processed the third grant payment of \$1,055,878 for the project. The payment was delivered to the University of New England on Thursday 18 May, 2023. All Manna Institute RUN partners and Foundation Partners have received their purchase orders for the 2023 distribution of funds.

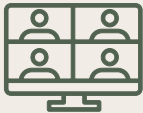
The next steps, per the contracts, are as follows:

- Full report (Annual and Financial) October 2023, which will include FAIT report card and updated external evaluation, bringing us back into line with October annual reports.



RUN senior researchers invited to join Manna

Recently, our RUN CIs have circulated an EOI to senior researchers within their universities to join Manna Institute. A list of these EOIs will be provided to the Project Management Group (PMG) for approval during the June meeting. Included within Manna Institute's major reporting milestones is the active participation of senior researchers. Senior researchers have expressed interest to many of our CIs to join our institute. This will assist Manna to source specific skills and knowledge sets for training and mentoring. EOIs are due to the Project Office by Friday 2 June.



Virtual Learning Teams (VLT) update



The Virtual Learning Teams (VLT) have kicked off under the guidance of CSU Chief Investigator, Professor Russell Roberts. There are three VLT teams that comprise a mix of E-MCRs and CIs. The groups have a webinar each month and exercises to complete on topics relating to developing rural researcher capacity, growing rural research leaders and inter-university collaboration.



Researcher spotlight: Belinda Cash

**Senior Lecturer and Postdoctoral Fellow,
School of Social Work and Arts,
Charles Sturt University**

Belinda is a social worker with clinical and academic expertise in mental health and social gerontology.

Her work primarily focuses on understanding and addressing psychosocial and systemic issues impacting the health and wellbeing of older adults and their caregivers in rural Australia.

Belinda is a Senior Lecturer in Social Work and Gerontology at Charles Sturt University, Chair of the Charles Sturt Ageing Well Research Group, and co-lead of the Ageing Well in Rural and Regional Australia research program. She also oversees research governance for Equally Well, a national consortium working to improve the physical health of people living with mental illness.

These roles all support Belinda's primary objective of working with likeminded people who are passionate about improving access and opportunities for better health and wellbeing for rural Australians.

Belinda is a Distinguished Member of the Australian Association of Gerontology, awarded for her extensive contributions to supporting student and early career researchers. She is an active supervisor of research students across multiple programs, has led several international programs exploring social welfare and wellbeing, and continues to support students completing field-based learning in social work.

During COVID lockdowns Belinda decided to finally turn her dream of writing a novel into a reality. It's a rural crime novel, so she spends her spare time learning how to kill people and not get caught!



FN Academy and ATC update

All Manna Institute First Nations Scholarships have been advertised, and will continue to be advertised until filled. Due to the reduction in HDR students enrolling across the sector, recruiting First Nations students is challenging.

To assist with recruitment we are:

- Working with the Aboriginal Education Centres at each RUN university to identify potential HDR students from undergraduate health courses who can be mentored into these scholarships;
- Connecting with the new National Centre for Reconciliation, Truth and Justice at Federation University;
- Discussing, among those universities with First Nations Scholarships contributed to by Manna, ways to increase top-up scholarships to be more attractive and competitive, given the very high contribution Go8 universities are making to First Nations students; and
- Discussing with industry partners the potential to identify First Nations employees who may enter HDR studies and continue their employment in projects that are mutually beneficial.

A small working group consisting of Vicki Pascoe (ECR/CQU), Ashley Holzapfel (FN rep) and Shay-Lee Coulsen (FN rep) met with Amanda Burdon (UNE Media content writer) and have come up with Manna Institute's Acknowledgement of Country (ATC). This has been reviewed and endorsed by Manna Institute PLG members Professor Joe Fraser and Professor Faye McMillian.

Manna Institute's Acknowledgement of Country

Manna Institute respectfully acknowledges the First Nations peoples as the continuing custodians of this continent and pays respect to Elders past, present and emerging. The institute honours their rich cultural heritage, beliefs and enduring relationship to the lands and communities in which we all live, learn and work.

Federal budget response

Mental health innovations hidden in budget. [READ MORE](#)

Strategic Planning – what does a future Manna entity look like?

The Manna Institute Strategic Planning Days are fast approaching! Whether you are new to Manna Institute, or sit on our highest level of governance, we will be asking you to dig deep and consider what a sustainable Manna Institute in 5-10 years might look like. What impact is it having and what big regional, rural and remote mental health challenges is it resolving?

Opportunities for E-MCRs

The Inaugural Healthy Minds Summit @ HMRI
'Building Connections'

Thursday 29 June, 2023



Manna Institute has partnered with Healthy Minds/HMRI to host an emerging researchers Summit on Thursday 29 June. The theme of the conference is 'Building Connections'.

The opportunity to present at this conference will provide valuable practice for those emerging researchers who plan to attend national or international conferences in the near future. Welcome Address Speaker: Professor Frances Kay-Lambkin, HMRI Institute Director.

**Manna
Institute is
providing
the following
sponsorship
for the SMHR
Conference in
Perth 2023:**

Early to mid-career researcher event sponsor \$2,500 (inc GST)

Travel scholarships for early career SMHR researchers \$1,500 (inc GST) x2 \$3,000

Keep an eye out for more details!



RAW and ROAM studies

Manna Postdoctoral Fellow Dr Dan Wadsworth and Manna PhD scholarship student Danna Lee joined colleagues to visit the rural QLD town of Kilkivan to plan approaches for the RAW and ROAM studies with the Kilkivan District Community Care Association. Data collection will begin shortly.

Creating research projects from the information gathered by community-led organisations can help build a body a research about regional and rural life.

This can guide future research and evidence-based policy changes, led by an understanding of the unique mental health challenges facing regional and rural communities. [READ MORE](#)

NEW ECR



Manna Institute warmly welcomes new doctoral research affiliate Laura Grattidge.

[VIEW PROFILE](#)

Congratulations to RUN University Manna Institute scholarship holders – and welcome aboard:

Mr David Duncan, University of the Sunshine Coast

Ms Danna Lee, University of the Sunshine Coast

Mr Jesse Baker, University of the Sunshine Coast

Ms Alexandra Potter, University of New England

Mr Darren Wagner, University of New England

Ms Sonia Diab, Charles Sturt University

Ms Stacey Whitelaw, Federation University

Ms Sandra Hyde, Central Queensland University

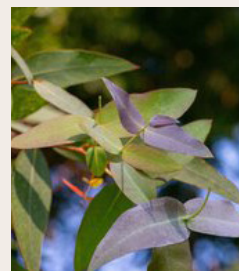
Manna Institute Prospectus



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In the news



Suicide bereavement – when and how to help

Navigating the emotional turmoil and grief that follows the death of a loved one to suicide is extremely challenging. [READ MORE](#)

“Helping the bereaved to connect back into their own community helps address the feelings of loneliness and distress that can lead to subsequent mental ill-health. The findings of this study, along with a co-design process with people who have experienced suicide bereavement, informed a brief contact intervention that used psychosocial text messages. The results of this trial were promising. Sending text messages to normalise the big, complex emotions experienced following a suicide death is a low-cost, easy to implement intervention that can help link people into existing support systems early.”

– Manna Institute Director, Professor Myf Maple



Peddalling a positive message

Manna Institute Lived Experience representative and PhD researcher Darren Wagner recently participated in the Wellways Break the Cycle Ride. [READ MORE](#)



Manna's Online Impact

Engagement overview

Average engagement time [🔗] **1m 19s** Engaged sessions per user [🔗] **0.82** Average engagement time per session **0m 50s**



Views **6.5K** Event count **20K**



Event count by Event name

EVENT NAME	EVENT COUNT
page_view	6.5K
user_engagement	4.7K
session_start	3.5K
first_visit	2.2K
scroll	1.9K
click	329
video_progress	127

Manna Institute website engagement peaks each time we send out our Manna Briefing enews.



Important dates

June

Thursday 29 June Healthy Minds Summit @ HMRI 'Building Connections'.

Open to all ECRs and MCRs.

August

Manna Institute PLG meeting and F2F Strategic Planning Days Monday 28–Wednesday 30 August, SCU Coolangatta Campus.
Monday 28 August (evening event), Tuesday 29 August (PLG) and Wednesday 30 August (Planning Day).

November

Manna Institute pre-workshop Tuesday 7 November, Albury, NSW.

Rural and Remote Mental Health Symposium 2023, Wednesday 8–Friday 10 November, Albury, NSW.

December

Society of Mental Health Research (SMHR) 43rd Annual Conference.

We want to hear from you!

Please share your news of Manna achievements and opportunities via mannainstitute@une.edu.au

Support

Manna Institute is dedicated to addressing the mental health needs of Australians sensitively and respectfully. We appreciate that times of change can be especially challenging.

For support, contact:

Lifeline

13 11 14

www.lifeline.org.au

Beyond Blue

1300 22 46 36

www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support

13YARN

13 92 76

Guyaa Dhuwi

www.gayaadhuwi.org.au/if-you-need-help/