



**Southern Cross  
University**

National Centre for  
Naturopathic Medicine

# National Centre for Naturopathic Medicine

Impact Statement

CRICOS Provider: 01241G

TEQSA Provider Code: PRV12043 Australian University



Since establishment in 2020

6

accredited degree programs

240

scientific peer-reviewed research publications

\$4.1m

industry funding

280

students studying naturopathic-qualifying program

14

global academic partner agreements

\$10.6m

NHMRC and MRFF grants with NCNM CIs

8

NCNM researchers in the top 1% of cited researchers globally

\$1.5m

in government support funding

18

higher degree by research students

216

collaborators in 22 countries

# A story of impact

The National Centre for Naturopathic Medicine at Southern Cross University is a world-class centre for education, research and innovation in healthcare. With a critical, evidence-based scientific approach, we are dedicated to addressing current and emerging challenges through premier academic courses, clinical programs and pioneering research.

Launched at Southern Cross University in 2020 thanks to a generous gift from the Blackmore Foundation, it is our mission to empower patients and improve health by facilitating access to the best of integrative and conventional therapies. As evidence-based natural medicine and multi-disciplined care play an increasingly critical role in healthcare, we will be at the forefront of solutions.

The National Centre for Naturopathic Medicine is a health centre that views the health of patients through a naturopathic prism, with a core focus on advancement of naturopathic research and education, as well as the naturopathic profession itself. Education, Research and Advocacy are the core pillars of the National

Centre for Naturopathic Medicine, with all pillars being of equal importance.

NCNM aims to create and advocate a strong culture of incorporating holistic principles and evidence-based science into all aspects of healthcare education and practice. From investigating pain relief for cancer patients to working with government to develop self-care policy, we will empower patients and improve health by facilitating access to the best of integrative and conventional therapies. It is our mission to contribute meaningful solutions to healthcare needs through naturopathic education, research, and advocacy, in communities throughout Australia and worldwide.



Generous donations, including a recent gift from the Blackmore Foundation to create Australia's first endowment-funded Naturopathic Professorial Chair, ensure the sustainability and leadership of the naturopathic industry and profession into the future.

## The three pillars of the National Centre for Naturopathic Medicine ecosystem



Education



Research



Advocacy

# Global leaders in naturopathic education

Courses at the National Centre for Naturopathic Medicine are designed by experienced clinicians and international leaders in their fields to ensure our graduates' qualifications are recognised by the relevant professional associations, with research components embedded in each course.



"Integrative medicine is about combining the best of all healthcare practices for the benefit of patients says. It is also about giving patients choice in the way that they approach their healthcare. For doctors to work with naturopaths we're going to be looking at the training and experience of that practitioner, and so we'll be looking at whether they have done a particular degree course. University training gives the doctor confidence to be able to refer and to work in with a naturopathic treatment."

**Professor Kerry Phelps AM** NCNM Adjunct Professor, past president of Australian Medical Association, past president Australasian Integrative Medicine Association

Based at SCU, NCNM offers opportunities for naturopathic education that are unparalleled in Australia. With access to the world-class clinical, research, and education facilities of a comprehensive research-intensive university, and the international networks, inter-professional collaboration, and placement opportunities within a multidisciplinary health faculty, students studying naturopathic medicine at SCU are provided unique opportunities not available in other institutions.

NCNM is housed at Australia's only university with a dedicated medicinal plant garden and herbarium, one of only two TGA-accredited natural products analytical chemistry laboratories, clinical research facilities focused on natural products, and state-of-the-art laboratories and teaching facilities.



NCNM is launching the Gold Coast Integrative Medicine School. An immersive and intensive professional development experience offering short courses and formal education from leading international experts.



In conjunction with global natural products leaders – including the University of Mississippi and University College London – NCNM is launching the world's first executive education, undergraduate and postgraduate programs in natural product drug discovery and development.

# Commitment to integration

NCNM is committed to integration and education of all health professions to improve health outcomes. NCNM achieves through developing innovative programs, including the following.

- NCNM has developed the **world's first** graduate entry naturopathic program launched in 2023, allowing medical practitioners, pharmacists, nurses and allied health practitioners to graduate and qualify as accredited naturopathic practitioners. NCNM is the first naturopathic education provider to have all naturopathic programs accredited by Australian Register of Naturopaths and Herbalists.
- NCNM has developed **Australia's first** accredited lifestyle medicine qualification launched in 2022 (the Master of Lifestyle Medicine). Developed in collaboration with the Australasian Society for Lifestyle Medicine, this multidisciplinary program allows practitioners direct entry to internationally recognised fellowships in Lifestyle Medicine, and is the only Australian qualification that meets eligibility requirements for the International Board of Lifestyle Medicine.
- NCNM has developed **Australia's first** accredited integrative medicine qualification launched in 2023 (the Master of Naturopathic Medicine). In collaboration with the international integrative health community, this program provides accredited health and medical practitioners the educational requirements for Australian and global fellowships such as the Academy of Integrative Health and Medicine (US) fellowship program, as well as offering degree pathways for integrative health and medical practitioners completing fellowships through organisations such as the Australasian College of Nutritional and Environmental Medicine.



“At the National Centre for Naturopathic Medicine, we’re changing the conversation on health. We’re opening doors for allied healthcare professionals to expand their clinical skills, and teaching conventional healthcare practitioners the benefits of integrating complementary approaches to provide the best of both worlds.”

**Professor Jon Wardle** Foundation Director  
National Centre for Naturopathic Medicine



“My lecturers were outstanding, knowledgeable, thorough, and inspiring, making the learning journey an enjoyable one. I valued the emphasis on building strong relationships with patients, working together with them as a team, and empowering them to take a more active part in their health decisions and management.”

**Dr Lauren Prictor** General Practitioner and  
Master of Lifestyle Medicine graduate

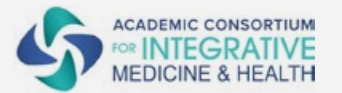
# An internationally recognised integrative medicine leader



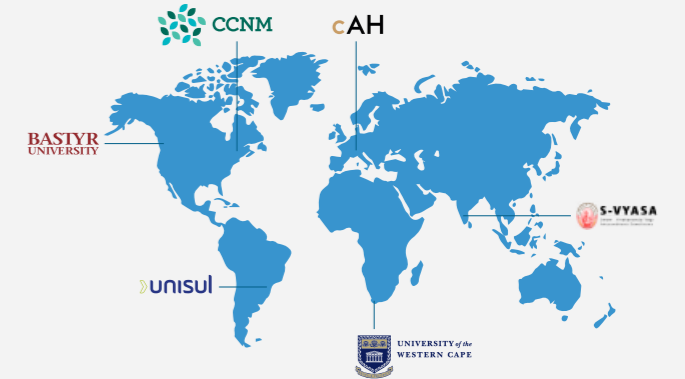
NCNM course content is being utilised to grow the naturopathic profession globally. NCNM has worked with naturopathic programs in Canada, New Zealand and Switzerland to develop degree recognition pathways for their naturopathic program offering up opportunities for naturopaths globally. NCNM is developing licensing agreements in Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Poland, Slovenia, South Korea and the United Kingdom to help grow the global naturopathic profession.



Through NCNM, SCU is one of only two Australian universities – and the only naturopathic program globally – to have been accepted into the Academic Consortium of Integrative Medicine and Health, joining prestigious members including Harvard Medical School, the University of Arizona and University of Washington. Through this partnership, NCNM has developed a partnership with the Cleveland Clinic – consistently ranked the World’s number 1 hospital – with clinician-researchers able to complete NCNM PhD while completing their clinical training at the Cleveland Clinic.



NCNM has secured \$165,000 in funding from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to allow SCU students to conduct part of their studies in government naturopathy and yoga hospitals in India – a global first.



**NCNM is the only Australian naturopathic program with formal exchange and articulation agreements with global naturopathic schools.**



“Naturopathic principles underpin our educational framework, which includes evidence-based practice, integrative health care, patient-centredness, clinical reasoning and clinical judgement – all of which are viewed through a naturopathic lens”

**Associate Professor Matthew Leach**  
Deputy Director (Education)

# Global leaders in integrative medicine research

Backed by SCU's high level of research excellence, NCNM is dedicated to optimising the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities in Australia and around the globe by conducting robust, innovative, and internationally significant research.

NCNM's team of internationally-recognised scholars are leaders in their fields and take a multi-disciplinary approach to delivering research with impact. SCU has state-of-the-art facilities and collaborators that provide wide-ranging opportunities for health research projects.

With access to university-owned clinical facilities and relationships with hospitals and health networks across Australia, we offer unique

opportunities for integrative clinical research and practice.

NCNM is the only provider of naturopathic medicine globally that is also ranked as a leader in its disciplinary field by national research assessments.

Since establishment of its contract research arm in mid-2021, NCNM has received more than \$4 million in industry research.

## NCNM's research focuses on four key areas

Natural Drug Discovery and Development

Integrative Models of Care

Non-pharmacological Therapies

Traditional knowledge

## Bridging Science And Tradition



"Pre-clinical research in herbal medicine needs to align with the practice of naturopathy – from more complex models to assays that can answer synergistic questions."

Dr Andrea Bugarcic is developing a practice-tradition-science nexus for pre-clinical research, which is informing US National Institutes of Health recommendations for natural products research.



"Advocating for the respectful inclusion of traditional and complementary medicines in the Australian health sector is an important part of meeting First Nations holistic health and wellbeing needs."

Dr Alana Gall – a Pakana woman – is Australia's first Indigenous scholar focusing on First Nations medicines. Dr Gall is working with the Lowitja Institute and Indigenous organisations to develop Australia's first framework for appropriate development and integration of First Nations medicines.

# Building integrative medicine research capacity

Research is embedded into every element of NCNM's work. Undergraduate and postgraduate students develop integrative medicine research skills and help build the integrative medicine evidence base.



"It made me understand how much work goes into research and publications and how valuable integrative approaches can be. I was part of the team. I felt so respected and gained such a wealth of experience."

**Tara Fritz** Occupational Therapy student and 2022 RFSP scholarship recipient.

The Research Futures Scholarship Program provides undergraduate students from across the university the opportunity to conduct a research project in integrative medicine. Projects have included mapping integrative medicine in Australian hospitals, exploring the potential of native medicinal plants, and integrative options for mental health and childhood disorders.



"After leaving the Defence Force to focus on my clinical work, it became apparent to me that research is what's going to advance the naturopathic profession in Australia."

**Alicia Donovan** Graduate Certificate of Advanced Naturopathic Medicine graduate

All NCNM Masters programs have a clinical research component. Projects have ranged from embracing telehealth opportunities for naturopathic practice, new treatments for PCOS and anxiety, and exploring the role of psychedelics in clinical practice.

After the Lismore Floods, it was clear that there was a greater role for naturopaths and integrative health practitioners to assist flood recovery efforts. A number of NCNM student-led projects have examined the role of naturopaths in flood recovery, and have helped develop protocols to better prepare and integrate naturopathic responses for communities experiencing natural disasters in the future.



Artwork by Isabel Halse



"I am working with an amazing team at NCNM - I feel so supported. When you are looking at a big goal, you need the best coaches to work out how to coach a player to be their best. I feel like I have the best coaches in my corner right now."

**Nicole Hannan, PhD candidate at the National Centre for Naturopathic Medicine**

# Research with impact



**DEPRESSION DIET**

“There are lots of reasons why scientifically we think food affects mood, for example, around 90 percent of serotonin, a chemical that helps us feel happy, is made in our gut by our gut microbes. Diet should always be considered as a treatment for mental health”

Dr Jessica Bayes, Maurice Blackmore Research Fellow, has pioneered research into the effects of nutrition on mental health outcomes in young men, including the impact of diet on reducing depression during Melbourne’s COVID lockdowns. Her work has been adopted in national guidelines.



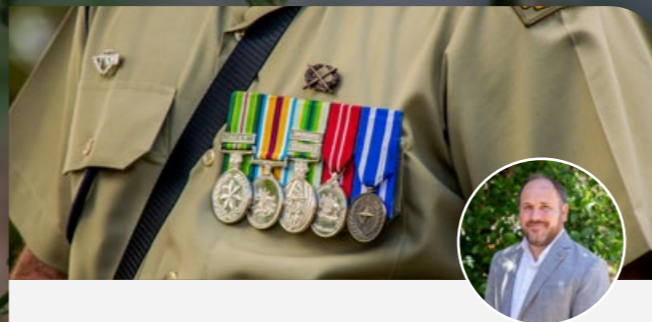
“Research is about the people themselves and how we can help make a difference to the individual. Everyone is different, so even if it works for a percentage of people, I've made a difference and that's the best feeling.”

Dr Janet Schloss is recognised as one of the world’s leaders in integrative oncology and medicinal cannabis research. Her world-first clinical trial of medicinal cannabis in brain glioblastoma has progressed access to medicinal cannabis for oncology patients.



“Conventional medicine is the main healthcare option in Sierra Leone, though for many people it is expensive and can be hard to access. Traditional medicine is popular not only because it is accessible, but also because it can be effective in complex conditions where conventional treatments often fail”

Dr Peter James completed the world’s first empirical study of the role of traditional medicine in post-viral treatment of Ebola survivors, the first global review of the role of integrative approaches in post-viral sequelae, as well as the first review of the role of traditional medicine in sub-Saharan Africa. This work became increasingly relevant during the COVID pandemic and has been integrated into national policies to ensure traditional medicines are included in long COVID and African migrant health.



“We already know the benefits of integrative medicine in managing chronic pain. NATO, the US Department of Defence and US Veteran Administration recommend integrative health options in military care on this basis. Now we are building the evidence base to help inform future policy around military and veteran care here in Australia”

In conjunction with Defence Health, Professor Jon Wardle conducted Australia’s first clinical trial on integrative options – including naturopathic medicine – for military and veteran populations. This program has now been adopted by Australia’s largest veteran clinic, is being considered by the DVA, and has led to a broader research program on integrative medicine for Australia’s uniformed services.

# Developing global integrative medicine leaders



Drawing on his experience working for medicines regulatory authorities in Botswana and Zimbabwe, Roy Chihaka is working with the World Health Organization on his doctoral project to develop a responsive and appropriate model of traditional medicine practitioner and product regulation for sub-Saharan Africa. Roy is passionate about ensuring traditional knowledge continues to guide integrative medicine use, and that regulations don’t compromise the integrity of traditional medicine in its quest to make healthcare safer and more accessible.



With a background in senior government policy roles, Kerrie Oakes understood the power and potential of transforming local communities through herbal medicine. After training as a herbalist, Kerrie developed grassroots, co-operative models of herbal medicine care through establishing Herbalists Without Borders, ensuring access these invaluable herbal medicine resources to those who need them most. Her doctoral work is focused on developing models of policy integration of community herbalism, to support communities to develop, lead and sustain their own preferred models of integrative healthcare.



Daen Medina worked at the National Prescribing Service developing national medicines evidence and policy guidelines before training as a naturopath. Seeing first-hand the potential of guidelines to inform integration of new and existing therapies into health care – evidence alone was often not enough. Daen is working with the Pan American Health Organization Evidence Mapping team to develop guidelines and frameworks to ensure integration of evidence-based natural medicines into national health systems and policies in Latin America.



Sophia Gerontakos completed her naturopathic training and became concerned that naturopathic care was inaccessible to many. After working with Integrative Medicine for the Underserved in the US, Sophia discovered the group visit and shared medical appointment model of integrative health care. Seeing opportunities for the naturopathic profession to reach new populations, as part of her doctorate Sophia conducted a world-first clinical trial of naturopathic group visits for women with endometriosis. Her endometriosis program is already being implemented by naturopaths in Australia, Canada and the US, and group visits have become part of the naturopathic clinical curriculum in those countries.

“It is a priority of mine to nurture the next generation of researchers to support and enable the opportunities to progress their career and succeed in research, and to give patients the best access to integrative health options.”

Associate Professor Romy Lauche Deputy Director (Research)



"The best thing about being a naturopath is helping people and seeing people get better. There is a global burden of chronic disease that is on the rise, and healthcare is looking for the answer of how to fill that gap and I really feel that naturopaths meet that demand. It is all about educating and empowering the patient."

**Isabel Halse** Master of Advanced Naturopathic Medicine graduate





# Advocacy for a larger role for integrative health

NCNM actively promotes and advocates for a greater role for the naturopathic profession and integrative health.

In 2022 NCNM commissioned a survey of 1,509 Australians to better understand public perceptions and preferences of naturopathic medicine. This information was used to identify priority public support for integration, as well as to identify areas of focus to improve the public's support for naturopathic medicine. As part of broader government efforts, every Australian parliamentarian and senior government official has been provided numerous resources supporting naturopathic medicine, and a 750-page detailed evidence guide highlighting the benefits of integrating naturopathic care was launched at Parliament House, Canberra. NCNM remains active in Australia and internationally in supporting a bigger future for naturopathic medicine and integrative health.



NCNM partners with a number of groups including the ADC Forum, World Health Organisation (WHO), and the World Federation of Public Health (WFPHA), on initiatives that bring together the nation's foremost decision-makers and thought leaders across all sectors to focus on the issues that are critical to future prosperity. This will include sessions focusing on the role of integrative health and health innovation to address future health challenges.

In 2022 NCNM hosted the first annual Natural Products Futures Forum. Sector leaders from government, industry, research and academia came together to set priorities for the growth and development of the Australian natural products sector. This annual event will be held every October.



NCNM has received \$1.2m from the NSW government to design a natural products hub based on NCNM and the SCU Lismore campus.

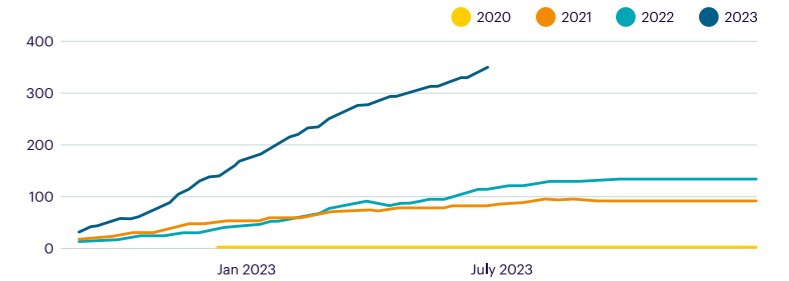
# A solid foundation to build on

## Growing demand for courses

Established in mid-2020, NCNM focus courses were developed and established with first enrolments commencing in mid-2021 (for the Master of Advanced Naturopathic Medicine and Graduate Certificate of Naturopathic Medicine). The naturopathic clinical education qualifications and Master of Lifestyle Medicine had their first intake in late 2022.

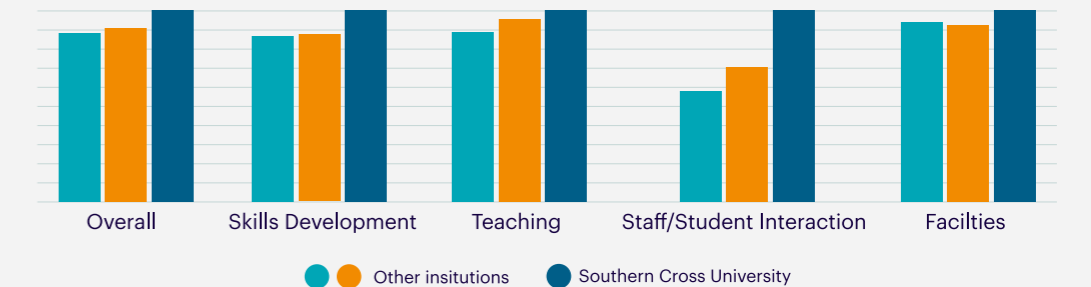
All courses are above target, ensuring a sustainable pipeline.

Course applications, enrolments and student loads in NCNM programs are more than 250% ABOVE target.



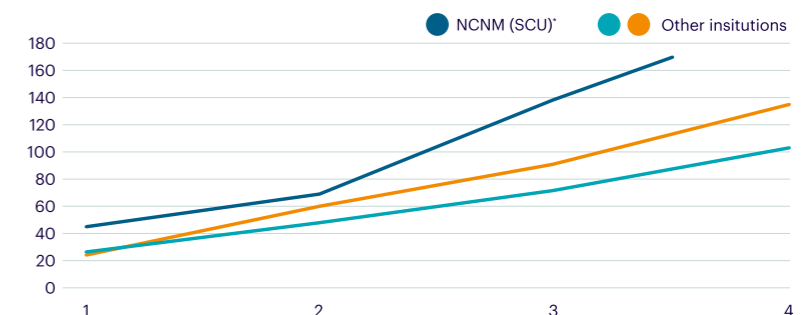
## A superior student experience

NCNM students report receiving a superior experience compared to other providers of naturopathic education, with Australian government Student Experience Survey data showing SCU naturopathic student reporting better satisfaction with their experience than other providers.



## Strong research leadership

NCNM's current research publication trajectory in its first three years exceeds that of other comparable Australian research centres focused on complementary and integrative medicine in their first four.



\*Data for NCNM is for 3.25 years rather than 4 as it was established in mid-2020.

# Creating a legacy: future-proofing naturopathic medicine

Backed by SCU's high level of research excellence, NCNM is dedicated to optimising the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities in Australia and around the globe by conducting robust, innovative, and internationally significant research.

## > Build

A one-off donation can build a lasting infrastructure legacy that supports the naturopathic profession. Whether its laboratories to help advance the development of a natural products research and development innovation hub, or establishing innovative healthcare facilities like Australia's first naturopathic hospital or integrative medicine department, an infrastructure gift can make meaningful and long-lasting impact. Such gifts can also be leveraged for further co-funding from government and non-government organisations to maximise their impact.

All donations are tax deductible for Australian and US participants/donors.

[fundraise.scu.edu.au/event/ncnmgivingday/](https://fundraise.scu.edu.au/event/ncnmgivingday/)

## > Amplify

Since 2020 the NCNM has built a solid foundation of education and research activity, with a pathway to financial sustainability allowing for continued naturopathic activity. A transformational gift could level-up and amplify naturopathic medicine. A generous gift can change the trajectory of an organisation to make exponential impact possible, and can be directed to specific initiatives that are most important to you, or we can help to identify priority areas where this support is needed the most. By providing further innovative support for strategic projects and initiatives NCNM can elevate and amplify the naturopathic profession.

## > Solidify

A named endowment can fund a university naturopathic presence in perpetuity, while growing year to year and serving as a vehicle for others to support the growth of the naturopathic profession. An endowment works by using income generated from an endowment investment, while preserving the principle to support activities indefinitely. A significant gift (\$5m+) can fund the Centre and its leadership in perpetuity, allowing for a strategic appointment above and beyond. A named endowment can be used for any purpose, but may only be used for the nominated purpose and not transferred to other purposes by the University, ensuring a lasting legacy that benefits the naturopathic profession.





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To find out more about the  
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Medicine, please visit

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