ECU researchers are internationally recognised for their scholarship in the areas of health and wellness, their research into early detection of disease, their progress on intervention strategies and rehabilitation, and their development of preventative and public health policy and practice.

Our researchers have specific expertise in Alzheimer’s disease, and have made groundbreaking discoveries about its onset and causes, while researching new treatment and support mechanisms for patients and those at most risk. We have multidisciplinary teams in clinical exercise science, sports science, nutrition and psychology who are developing new wellness approaches to chronic disease management. We also have centres exploring research with practical application in the areas of health systems, palliative cancer care, nursing, midwifery, Indigenous health, and child and adolescent health.

Our Health and Wellness Institute and Research Centres include:

**ECU Institute**
- ECU Health and Wellness Institute

**ECU Research Centres**
- Australian Indigenous Health InfoNet
- Centre for Exercise and Sports Science Research
- Centre of Excellence for Alzheimer’s Disease Research and Care
- Child Health Promotion Research Centre
- Clinical Nursing and Midwifery Research Centre
- Cognition Research Group
- Cooperative Research Centre for Mental Health
- eHealth Research Group
- ECU Health Simulation Centre
- Lifespan Resilience Research Group
- Occupational Health Research Group
- Parkinson’s Centre (ParkC)
- Population Health Research Group
- Psychopathology Research Group
- Systems and Intervention Research Centre for Health
- Western Australian Centre for Cancer and Palliative Care
Our people making a difference: Donna Cross

Donna Cross is a Professor of Child and Adolescent Health at ECU’s Child Health Promotion Research Centre and an internationally recognised researcher in her field. With numerous awards, including being named Western Australian, Australian of the Year in 2012 for her research, Professor Cross has secured more than $12 million in school-based research funding to address school health-related issues such as mental health promotion (youth bullying, cyber bullying, depression), drug use (smoking cessation, marijuana use), injury control (pedestrian injury, general road safety and bicycle safety), and nutrition education. Her most significant research outcomes relate to her work addressing aggression and bullying among young people, particularly her invited contribution to the four-year European Collaboration of Science and Technology (COST) Action, involving 28 European countries addressing ways to reduce cyber bullying among youth. She has also conducted research in Australia, the USA, South Africa, Canada, Eastern Europe, Japan and Israel, with organisations such as the WHO, UNICEF and the American Health Foundation. Professor Cross is one of the leading contributors to ECU’s health and wellness research focus.

Our people making a difference: Ralph Martins

Professor Ralph Martins, the inaugural Chair in Ageing & Alzheimer’s at Edith Cowan University, is a leading expert in Alzheimer’s disease, with a career spanning 27 years and resulting in more than 200 publications in international journals. Professor Martins was the first researcher to propose and demonstrate that the Alzheimer brain was under oxidative stress – a position now widely recognised by the Alzheimer research community. His research has led to the identification of three novel drug candidates, attracting Federal funding and the interest of key commercial partners. Professor Martins, the 2010 Australian of the Year for Western Australia and the 2011 WA Citizen of the Year (Professions), is active in driving research in this critical area of health and he is a board or committee member of three research foundations and several national research organisations.

Our partnerships making a difference: Using simulation to develop healthcare skills

ECU’s Health Simulation Centre is a unique centre designed to address the learning needs of the health workforce and related professions. The centre allows healthcare professionals to enhance their skills through the use of high-fidelity mannequins and trained actors and volunteers, who simulate real-life situations by playing the various roles of patient, medical practitioner and visitor. In 2011 the centre, which has observation facilities and specialised simulation equipment, was awarded the contract to provide High Fidelity Simulation Training to the Department of Health in WA and now offers training programs simulating anaesthetic crisis and advanced or complex medical emergencies. The training is run in conjunction with the Australia & New Zealand College of Anaesthetists and the Australasian College of Emergency Medicine.
Our results making a difference: Combining disciplines for better health outcomes

The ECU Health and Wellness Institute is producing groundbreaking knowledge into illness prevention, wellness and disease management. This includes management of cancer treatment related toxicities; improving the health of children who are overweight or obese, improving structure and function of the elderly and maintaining quality of life for people with Parkinson’s disease and spinal cord injury. Nationally, the Institute has co-authored the Position Statement on Exercise and Cancer by Exercise and Sports Science Australia and internationally the Clinical Guidelines by the American College of Sports Medicine on exercise prescription for cancer survivors. The research program has attracted competitive funding from several national and state schemes including the National Health and Medical Research Council, the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia, Cancer Australia, Healthway and the Cancer Council of Western Australia, allowing the Institute to work with communities otherwise limited in their ability to benefit from leading-edge expertise.

The Institute is the home of the Vario Wellness Clinic which provides a range of allied health services to people with chronic diseases in the areas of: Exercise Physiology, Dietetics Clinical Psychology and Physiotherapy with 25,000 patient contacts per year attending a variety of health and wellness programs on campus. The Institute also houses the Survey Research Centre that delivers research support services across education, medical and health sectors and some our external clients/partners include; Western Australian Department of Health, Healthway and National Heart Foundation.

Our partnerships making a difference: Understanding the role of heat on offshore workers

When workers operate on offshore oil and gas facilities or in remote regions in Western Australia, they are often working in very hot environments. Now researchers from ECU’s School of Exercise and Health Sciences are testing heat stress interventions in operational conditions after securing a research grant from the Australia China Natural Gas Technology Partnership Fund. The research will look at workers as ‘occupational athletes’, analysing how they perform their work in hot environments and will include fieldwork on both offshore facilities and land-based projects. It is an exciting project that will give the researchers unique access to operational environments as they begin to unravel what the impact of working on offshore facilities can be on a person’s health.

Our results making a difference: Sharing Indigenous knowledge

ECU’s Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet is making an important contribution to closing the gap in health between Indigenous and other Australians by informing policy and practice across Australia. Its work in the area of translational research with a population health focus – in which the HealthInfoNet is a world leader – makes research and other information available in a form that has immediate, practical utility for practitioners and policy-makers. The HealthInfoNet also enables people working in the area to share their knowledge and experiences through its support of yarning places (electronic networks). Led by ECU’s Professor Neil Thomson, with support of a national advisory board, a number of topic-specific reference groups and an extensive Australia-wide network of honorary consultants, the HealthInfoNet team’s innovative work was recognised recently as winner of the ‘diversity’ category in the 2011 Australian and New Zealand Internet Awards and as a finalist in the 2012 National Alcohol and Drug Awards.
FURTHER INFORMATION
For more information on our Health and Wellness research and researchers, to partner with our research centres or to support our endeavours, contact: (61 8) 6304 2721, email: research@ecu.edu.au, web: www.ecu.edu.au