

Holmesglen Centre for Applied Research and Innovation

# Research News

November-December 2025

This report from the Centre for Applied Research and Innovation ('The Centre') provides news of research projects undertaken with Building 4.0 CRC, the progress of the 'Care Economy' initiative, a continuation of research initiatives from the Faculty of Health Science, Community and Social Studies, guidelines for the submission of ethics applications, and news of forthcoming conferences.

## The Centre for Applied Research and Innovation: its role and function

The Holmesglen Centre for Applied Research and Innovation acts as an important driver of Institute applied research and works in conjunction with researchers across the Institute. It focuses on outcomes-based research and innovation in partnerships and collaborations with other research organisations, industry, government, and community. Moreover, it provides a supportive environment for Holmesglen researchers across faculties and is an important complement to our teaching and learning programme.

In 2025 the Centre seeks to strengthen the institute's research profile and to consolidate Holmesglen's position as a leader in applied research. To do this we need to challenge further what research is and what it can be, to frame and promote a clear alternative to commonly accepted understandings, and to position ourselves as part of the research 'ecosystem'; an 'ecosystem' that focuses on outcomes-based research and innovation in partnerships and collaborations with other research organisations, industry, government, and community.



**Dr Henry Pook,**  
Director, Centre for Applied Research and Innovation.

Education Methodology  
 Training Technology Theory  
**Applied** New **Researchers**  
 Practice **Research** Academic  
 Community Knowledge Problems Basic  
 Projects **Methods** Solutions  
**Organisations**



## Making impact

Holmesglen prides itself upon its approach to research. It seeks to develop a research focus that is industry orientated and has the potential to contribute to education and training to equip a workforce for an increasingly digitalised world. In this section of the report, you will find information about our research projects and our research engagement with industry and community.

### VET, Applied Research and the Care Economy

In previous editions we heralded the arrival of Holmesglen's latest research initiative, the Applied Research and Innovation Care Economy project: a multi-stakeholder approach to applied research for the care economy involving TAFE, government, industry, and community. In this issue we hear from the Care Economy project team through their latest newsletter.

#### Care Economy Project Newsletter

While May now feels like a distant memory, it marked a pivotal moment for the ARI Project - the official launch of the initiative and our first call for applications on May 16. We were met with an overwhelming wave of enthusiasm from TAFEs across Victoria.

#### Connecting and Collaborating

Getting to know our TAFE partners has been a highlight of these initial weeks. While many of our first meetings were online, a standout moment was a visit to the **Community Centre of Excellence at Kangan Institute**. We were so

impressed with the facilities and the dedication of the team there. We highly recommend a visit.

#### Building Capability, One Workshop at a Time

In June, we kicked off our capability-building series with our first "Lunch and Learn" session. This event focused on a core skill: **crafting compelling research proposals**. We were thrilled to welcome 26 participants from across the state to this online event.

Following up on that success, our second workshop on June 25th delved into the complex world of **scoping reviews and structured searching**. A big thank you to everyone who joined us and contributed to these fantastic sessions!

#### A Wave of Innovation

As the July deadline for project applications approached, we had the pleasure of meeting with numerous grant applicants to refine their proposals. We've been truly inspired by the diversity and innovation in the projects emerging from the TAFE network. The topics cover the full breadth of the care economy and reflect the creativity and commitment of every team involved.

## Meet the ARI Project Team

**Dr Sam Duncan**  
Dean of Higher Education and Applied Research at Holmesglen Institute



Sam has published research articles in ranked peer-reviewed sports media, sport management, sport and society and philosophy journals, contributed chapters in sports related books, and is the author of Footy Grounds to Grandstands and The Digital World of Sport.

Sam also has worked extensively in sports public relations and widely contributes to Australia's mainstream media as a sports media, sport business and sport and society commentator.

**Dr Henry Pook**  
Director of Holmesglen Institute's Centre for Applied Research and Innovation



He has had extensive experience in vocational education and training as a teacher, manager and as former Dean of Building Construction and Engineering. His current interest is in the development of applied research projects in collaboration with industry and community.

He specialises in the study of industrial relations institutions and employment relations in the building construction industry. His publications include studies on work, and work and technology in Australian society

**Deniz Akin**  
Project Manager for ARI



Deniz is an experienced public health researcher dedicated to leading community-responsive research with a translational impact on policy and practice.

Possessing a strong background in mental health, clinical research, and disability policy, she brings valuable experience coordinating clinical research trials and multi-site health research projects.

**Theresa Kim**  
Project Assistant for ARI



Theresa is an agile project coordinator with work experience in the for-profit and not-for-profit sector. She also has a strong background in social science research, holding a Masters's in Sociology.

She has expertise in co-design and gained valuable industry experience as a disability support worker

## Community of Practice

The **Applied Research and Innovation (ARI) Community of Practice** on August 14, 2025, focused on "Working with Industry and Community," featuring excellent guest speakers who shared practical insights into effective collaboration. Speakers highlighted successful models, including a mobile aged care training lab that significantly boosted traineeships and the importance of establishing both structural and trust-based foundations for successful work-integrated learning.

The event was constructive and collegial, emphasising that genuine co-design with stakeholders, particularly in disability inclusion and vocational education, is crucial for meeting real-world needs and achieving excellent outcomes.

## Join Our Next Community of Practice Session!

Missed our first meeting? Here's your chance to connect with peers, share experiences, and workshop key issues from your industry and community-engaged projects.

This is a great opportunity for invaluable peer-to-peer learning. Join us to:

- Stay across the latest developments in applied research and industry collaboration.
- Share knowledge on best practices in community engagement.
- Participate in discussions with industry experts.
- Connect with peers and enhance your network.

## Upcoming Meeting: Navigating the Ethical Landscape of Applied Research

Drawing inspiration from principles-based thinking in research ethics, our informal and intimate session will reflect on how we can ensure responsible research practice in the VET sector. We will cover:

- **Informed Consent and Confidentiality:** genuine informed consent in the face of power imbalances
- **Impact and Responsibility:** ensuring research is beneficial for both participants and communities
- **Managing Conflicts of Interest:** transparency and accountability
- **Risk Assessment and Application:** navigating ethics applications

### Event Details:

#### Navigating the Ethical Landscape of Applied Research

Date: Tuesday 11 November

Time: 11am – 12pm

Location: Online via Webex

Explore our upcoming professional development events designed to significantly boost your applied research and innovation skills. We have scheduled a high-value program of workshops, Lunch and Learns, and Community of Practice meetings, all delivered online and free of charge. These sessions are focused on learning by doing, equipping you with practical skills you can use immediately.

We are partnering with experts across applied research methodology and research software. These sessions will equip you with critical skills and proven strategies for increasing your research profile.

We look forward to seeing you there!

### Find the complete schedule of upcoming events until the end of 2025 below.

To sign up, contact us at [appliedresearch@holmesglen.edu.au](mailto:appliedresearch@holmesglen.edu.au). We look forward to your participation.

#### 1. Introduction to Systematic Reviews

This introductory session will define what a systematic review is and differentiate it from other types of literature reviews. We will guide you step by step through the key stages of a systematic review and provide you with tips on how to plan the review process effectively, so rigor and replicability are ensured.

Date: Wednesday, 12 November 2025

Time: 9:30am – 10:30am AEST

Location: Online via Webex

Guest Speaker: Dr. Ishanka Weerasekara, Lecturer in Physiotherapy at Federation University

#### 2. Introduction to Covidence

Covidence is a software designed to screen references and extract data for systematic reviews. This introductory workshop to Covidence will highlight the benefits of using this

software and give you guided tour of the platform. Special attention will be given to the collaboration features of the software.

Date: Wednesday, 12 November 2025

Time: 11am – 12pm AEST

Location: Online via Webex

Guest Speaker: Dr. Ishanka Weerasekara, Lecturer in Physiotherapy at Federation University

#### 3. Lunch and Learn: Get Noticed - Promote Your Research with Confidence

In this lunch and learn we will discuss with Ishanka why visibility as an applied researcher at TAFE is important and how you can draw more attention to your work. We will examine ways to pitch your research compellingly and reflect on effective communication strategies and ways to engage with different audiences.

Date: Monday, 17 November 2025

Time: 12pm – 1pm AEST

Location: Online via Webex

Guest Speaker: Dr. Ishanka Weerasekara, Lecturer in Physiotherapy at Federation University

#### 4. Learn to Use AI for Faster, Smarter Literature Reviews

This workshop will showcase how Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) can be utilised in conducting literature reviews. There will be a live demonstration on how to identify gaps in the literature, evaluate the reliability of the sources found and generate summaries of academic papers.

Date: Tuesday, 19 November 2025

Time: 10:30am – 12pm AEST

Location: Online via Webex

Guest Speaker: Dr. Fahri Benli, Lead Lecturer – AI and Digital Capability Program (Holmesglen)

#### 5. Lunch and Learn: The Art of Survey Writing

This Lunch and Learn will teach you the most important aspects you need to know about effective survey writing. We will cover everything from defining your survey purpose and determining your target audience to avoiding bias and distributing it through the right channels.

Date: Wednesday, 3 December 2025

Time: 12pm – 1pm AEST

Location: Online via Webex

Guest Speaker: Dr. Paramjit Tyndall, Manager, Institutional Research & Evaluation (Holmesglen)

## Industry Insights: HumanAbility's Enrolments and Completion Research

HumanAbility launched its Enrolments and Completion Research Project in September 2025 to address persistently low VET completion rates in the crucial care and support sectors, a problem that leaves many disability workers unqualified.

The initial findings of their Issues Paper strongly align with the core focus of the Applied Research and Innovation

(ARI) Project. HumanAbility's key recommendations-such as embedding foundational skills, using flexible learning pathways, and adopting a co-design approach-are precisely the solutions that the ARI Project is currently prototyping.

This synchronicity confirms that ARI is not only addressing a critical industry challenge but is also actively leading the development of innovative solutions for a more capable and resilient workforce. The project presents an excellent opportunity for the ARI team to share its on-the-ground expertise and influence HumanAbility's final recommendations.

## Thank you for joining us on the Applied Research Journey.

If you have any questions or ideas,  
we'd love to hear from you at:  
E: [appliedresearch@holmesglen.edu.au](mailto:appliedresearch@holmesglen.edu.au).

The Applied Research and Innovation Project Team

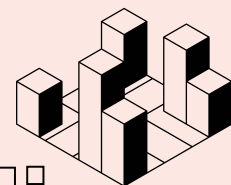
## A new dimension to industry-VET applied research.

### What it means for VET.

Participation in this research partnership enables the TAFE Institute, along with industry, government, and university research partners, to work co-operatively on the development of new technologies and training programmes to modernise the building construction sector.

Building 4.0 CRC, established in early 2020, involves a partnership between Holmesglen and an industry-university based consortium to create, through research, an innovation 'ecosystem' in building construction.

Holmesglen has been working with university researchers and its partner organisations to develop research programs that will support the development of training programs in the use of new technologies (including digital technologies); innovations to work processes; and policy and regulations improvement.



building  
4.0 crc

# Research Updates

## Project #49

### Implications of Industry 4.0 technologies on Work Practices

Work on this project continues apace. Its aim is to understand the implications of emerging technologies on work practices, workforce training and working conditions in the building and construction industry.

The project seeks to identify the benefits and challenges of emerging technologies, the impacts of these technologies on workplace practices and working conditions, the requirements for the choice and design of appropriate workplace technologies **and the requirements for future workforce training.**

The project outcomes will provide insights and guidelines to inform the choice, design and integration of technology that maximizes desirable work practices and improve productivity and working conditions in the building and construction sectors.

#### The objectives of this proposal are to:

- provide insights about the new and emerging technologies that are likely to be used in the building and construction industry and their likely impacts on future work practices and working conditions;
- use the insights to understand and plan for transition in new work practices arising from these technologies;
- **use the insights to understand impacts on skills and training, informing interventions to upskill the workforce, manage the risks of deskilling and acquiring retaining and transitioning skilled workers (my emphasis).**
- use the insights to understand impacts on working conditions and industrial relations, identifying opportunities for emerging technologies to both enhance productivity and working conditions.

## Project #55

### Financing the construction industry-smart finance and smart contracts

Exploring the use of smart contracts and blockchain to improve the construction industry's finance and transparency concerns.

#### Industry Problem to be addressed

**Finance:** Financing and contracting issues are an acute problem in the construction industry. They have led to multiple insolvencies in recent years, with a high risk of a domino effect of insolvency spreading throughout the industry.

Additionally, the construction industry is one defined by its adversarial relationships and heavy, and often ineffectual, contractual burdens. Long supply chains, large numbers of (sub) contractors and the prevalence of small and medium enterprises among these sub-contractors create a particularly critical financing problem in the construction industry. As construction projects are long in duration and the final payment for the finished product usually takes place at

delivery, construction firms require external financing during the life of the project. Small contractors, frequently employed in construction, have limited access to bank or public debt.

Common use of trade credit by the main contractors means that many small firms routinely do not get paid for their work until 45 or 60 days after issuing an invoice and often get their payment delayed well after this period. As most small firms' survival critically depends on receiving their cash flows on time, extensive use of trade credit and limits to external financing greatly contribute to the high failure rate of small and medium enterprises in the construction industry.

**Transparency:** The same long supply chains and sub-contractor issues cause flow on effects to the transparency of the systems and deliverables beyond mere finance. As supply chains grow longer and more complex, more information can become hidden or missed. The number of contractors and subcontractors, the qualifications and certification, insurance levels, correct form completion, location and nature of manufacturing—all can be obscured by the complexity of the construction industry. The data being generated at all stages of the supply chain may be better used to create a more transparent system.

**The Project:** The project will explore case studied of the construction industry to determine the future of smart contracts and blockchain technology to address concerns about finance and supply chain transparency. This will involve a detailed explore the use of smart contracts to facilitate faster and more reliable payments and how a digital twin of the supply chain can allow for more transparent and trustworthy systems. It will lead to a clear report that responds to existing and emerging regulations, and a blueprint that can be used in a future phase to build the proposed technological solution.

#### Partners:

- Victorian Building Authority
- MBAV
- Holmesglen
- PT Blink
- Queensland University of Technology (QUT)

## Project #58

### B4.OCRC Shared Interest Project Programme: The Retrofit Housing Atlas: Adaptive Reuse of Housing in Australia

A Shared Interest Project (SIP) is a Building 4.0 CRC (the CRC) Research Project that focuses on an issue of collective concern to which no single industry or research partner can or should tackle single-handedly and allows the CRC to diversify its research profile with projects that fill in the gaps other research does not cover.

SIPs can be taken from inception to active project status quickly; and importantly, these projects complement traditional CRC projects by focusing upon social, cultural, regulatory, or systemic matters and complex problems that are best addressed through the collective agency of the CRC consortium.

SIPs align directly with the CRC's four meta-themes:

- 1) People, Practices and Culture
- 2) Sustainability
- 3) Digitalisation, and
- 4) Industrialisation.

### Project #58 Explained:

The Retrofit Housing Atlas project documents the typology, frequency and concentration of common Australian housing stock (1940s-2010s) and demonstrates systematic and scalar retrofit strategies for their densification, diversification and adaptation to 21st century social and environmental priorities. It includes:

1) Description of common Australian house types in 8 Australian capital cities - Adelaide, Brisbane, Canberra, Darwin, Hobart, Melbourne, Perth and Sydney - with potential for retrofitting and adaptation for measured densification and better social and environmental performance. These will be illustrated through representative case studies of each common housing type. Urban mapping of the identified house types will illustrate their concentration and frequency through maps at precinct, suburb and metropolitan scale.

2) Strategies for adaptations and retrofitting of the identified house types. These will be illustrated through design concepts.

**There is great potential for this SIP to align with work done previously on SIP#48: the Circular Economy**

### Project #80

#### Insolvency in Construction

The research explores the causes of high insolvency rates in the residential construction sector (see graph below), addressing concerns about financial risk management as well as policy and regulation impacts. The focus is on reducing the broader economic and other impacts of residential building company failures, by triangulating insolvency data, sector systems and the educational environment to identify key focal points for reform. The final report's insights and recommendations (when complete end September 2025) will provide regulators, industry and educators evidence-based guidance in designing reforms, preventative measures and educational supports to enhance the robustness of the sector and bolster its role in housing affordability.

**The B4.0 CRC Final Milestone Review has been completed and the final report has been submitted.**



### Project #90

#### Evaluation of the effectiveness of roofing work inspection using Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS)



RPAS inspecting roof at Berwick

**Aim:** evaluation of the effectiveness of remotely piloted aircraft systems and 3D mapping techniques for the inspection of roofing work to support or enhance conventional in-person inspections.

**The Problem:** non-compliant roofing work is a key contributor to water ingress in residential homes. This project, focussing on newly completed homes, aims to research the effectiveness of using emerging technologies (in this case 'drones') to strengthen on-site inspections of roofing work. Work completed to date:

**Phase 1 Information Synthesis:** assessment of advanced imaging methods and interviews with experts.

**Phase 2 RPAS for roofing work inspection is now underway:** case studies and stakeholder surveys. The first case study was undertaken at a site in Berwick (newly completed 2 storey townhouse) on 1 April: this comprised an experiment to assess 3 inspections of the same roof.

#### Completed

- Task 1.1. Assessment of advanced imaging methods
- Task 1.2. Inviting practitioners and representatives of key industry bodies to participate in an interview
- Task 2.1. Preparatory work for the use of RPAS including CASA requirements and permits
- Task 2.2. Case studies - RPAS as the eye in the sky: data capture of roofing work inspection with and without RPAS

#### In progress

- Task 2.3: Case studies - RPAS and technology-enabled roofing work inspection: data capture and visualisation of the roofing work with advanced imaging techniques
- Task 2.4. Stakeholder perspective mapping on RPAS as an eye in the sky and technology-enabled inspection
- Task 3.1. Comparative analysis of three types of roofing work inspection
- Task 3.2: Assessment of scalability and automation of the RPAS-assisted inspections of roofing work
- Task 3.4. Policy and regulatory studies

#### Upcoming

- Task 3.3: Development of guidelines for the implementation and upscaling of RPAS roof inspections

## Research Project Outcomes

Once the research has been completed, some of the outcomes will be:

- **training workshops for industry partners, practitioners, and trainers/educators to facilitate the implementation of project outcomes in practical settings.**
- **recommendations and guidelines for the development of training courses for education and training of inspectors and other relevant stakeholders including trades personnel and construction managers (diploma level or degree level programmes).**

## Another Holmesglen Research Initiative

### Project #117

### Graduate Certificate in Sustainable Building

Addressing the sustainability challenges within the building and construction industry necessitates a fundamental transformation in how buildings are conceived, designed, and constructed, spanning every step from initial planning to completion. This project directly responds to the need for a workforce equipped with essential knowledge, skills, and capabilities to navigate and build resilience in a climate-affected world through targeted education and training. The aim is to develop a Graduate Certificate in Sustainable Building. This post-graduate qualification will provide a high-level, targeted course of study, offering advanced knowledge and practical application skills crucial for accelerating Australia's transition towards low-carbon, circular, and more sustainable building practices.

#### The Program:

The proposed program will draw on research from the B4.OCRC, including projects like CRC#48: Building the Future-the Circular Economy and CRC#58: The Retrofit Housing Atlas. It will also be informed by the content areas related to subjects developed as part of CRC#66: Future of Construction Education

#### Skills, Training & Education:

A graduate certificate focused on sustainable design and construction practices would not only provide a further education and training outcome aligned with the research outputs identified in Project Building4.0 CRC#66, but it would also fill a gap in education and training for building and construction industry professionals. Such a program, by focusing on the use of digital solutions, new products, and innovative processes, aims to transform Australia's building industry towards a technologically enabled and sustainable future. Crucially, addressing these challenges also requires the development of essential knowledge, skills, and capabilities within the workforce to adapt and build resilience in a world increasingly affected by climate change, a goal achievable through targeted education and training.

### Project #111

### Modern methods of construction (MMC) and VET: a Holmesglen initiated project to meet the training challenges of the digital era

Recognising the need for a more comprehensive and integrated VET approach to support the adoption of diverse MMC practices, as revealed by the limited scope of current qualifications, this project aims to develop a purpose-driven VET qualifications system/training framework for the construction industry and supply chain, including a wide range of MMC approaches (e.g., offsite/prefab/modular construction/advanced building materials).

#### PHASE 1:

##### MMC International and national background

Phase 1 includes a targeted review of Australian built environment VET qualifications. This will be complemented by a comparative analysis of international MMC-related programs and qualifications to identify best practices and inform the project's strategic direction.

#### PHASE 2:

##### MMC Industry skills and training needs

Phase 2 will explore industry skill and training requirements through in-depth case studies of construction companies and manufacturers actively implementing MMC. In this phase, engagement with educational providers will also occur to explore emerging training demands and challenges related to current training practices. This will also gather the needs and challenges of VET trainers and educators.

#### PHASE 3:

##### MMC Competency framework development

Phase 3 will leverage the background study and experts' consultations to develop a draft competency framework. This framework will be validated through industry workshops and feedback sessions.

## Showcase

# Homes NSW MMC Program

On September 5, the Centre was invited to attend a HomesNSW-B4.0CRC Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) building initiative in Sydney. The technology displayed in this project will be reflected in the Holmesglen initiated Project #111 Modern Methods of Construction and VET.

The project has been flagged as a NSW initiative aimed at helping solve the housing crisis.

### Background

The traditional method of housing construction, largely unchanged for a century, is too slow and costly to meet this growing demand.

In response, the NSW Government has committed a historic \$6.6 billion investment aimed at constructing 8,400 new homes and repairing 30,000 existing dwellings. To maximise the impact of this investment, Homes NSW and Building 4.0 CRC have developed the Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) Program.

### What is the MMC Program?

The MMC Program is a revolutionary approach to delivering social housing. By leveraging modern manufacturing techniques and digitally enabled processes, we create standardised building components offsite. These components are then assembled rapidly onsite, fundamentally shifting the traditional 80% onsite, 20% offsite construction model.

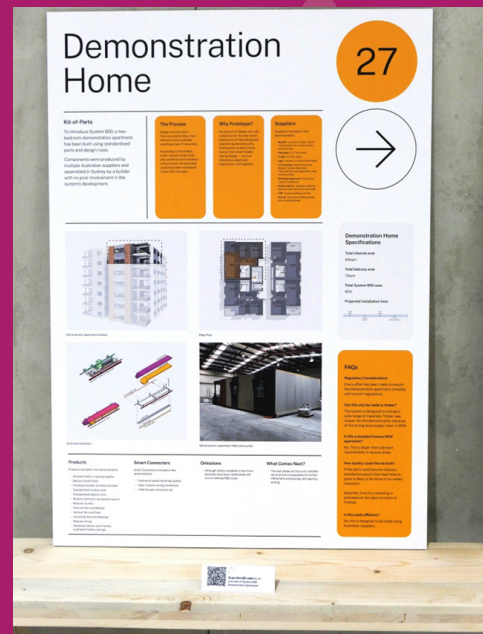
The MMC Program is not just about building faster, but also about improving tenant outcomes, reducing lifecycle costs, stimulating local manufacturing, and building homes that are durable, liveable, and future-ready. The project commenced in May 2024, with Homes NSW and Building 4.0 CRC each contributing \$2 million, in addition to in-kind contributions. We have also partnered with universities such as Monash University and the University of Melbourne for this research.

Rather than think about building site by site or project by project, our research primarily aims to develop a systematic program for housing delivery. This approach encompasses a 360° view of housing: from design and development, through to construction, maintenance, and repair.

Starting with medium-density homes (4-6-storey buildings) and using the standardised kit-of-parts manufactured offsite (i.e., bathrooms, kitchens, balconies), these parts will be assembled onsite, employing systems and processes to meet tenant needs, speed up delivery, and unlock economic efficiencies.

### The 'Kit-of-Parts' Approach A Modular System for Scalable Impact

The Homes NSW MMC Program uses a Kit-of-Parts methodology: a pre-defined suite of movable building components (e.g., bathrooms, kitchens, balconies, etc.) manufactured offsite and assembled onsite. This system allows for flexibility in design while improving build speed, quality, and cost-efficiency. Not every part is made offsite; the system provides for around 20% of building works to enable every building to be 'fitted' to the specifics of its location. In the other 80%, every part is designed to fit together within a standardised assembly framework, forming homes that are adaptable yet easily repeatable.



The Home



Model of 4-6 storey incorporating a number of medium density homes

For further information: Showcase - Homes NSW MMC Program — Building 4.0 CRC

## How it works:

- Homes are designed using a set of movable, interchangeable parts e.g., Clip-on balconies, double-glazed windows, preset wall dimensions etc.
- These parts are manufactured by multiple suppliers across the state using the same materials and processes, and from the same specifications.
- Standardisation ensures compatibility, interoperability, and scalability.
- Parts are delivered to the building site and assembled according to the specific site conditions, environment, and client design preferences.

### Benefits of the Kit-of-Parts Approach:

- **Scalability & Efficiency**  
Repeatable components manufactured in bulk enable faster build times and significant cost reductions
- **Workforce Readiness**  
Attracts a more diverse, skilled, and inclusive workforce to construction by simplifying complex onsite tasks
- **Quality & Safety**  
Controlled offsite fabrication improves quality control, waste reduction, and safety conditions
- **Design Flexibility**  
While components are standard, homes can still be tailored to site conditions, climate needs, and community preferences
- **Lifecycle Consideration**  
Products are designed for long-term maintenance, ease of replacement, and improved tenant experience

(Extracts: B4.OCRC)



Child's bedroom



Kitchen/lounge area



Master bedroom



Bathroom



Photos: H Pook



Toilet

# Research Initiatives

## Faculty of Health Science, Community and Social Studies

The Faculty of Health Science, Community and Social Studies have a range of innovative projects focused around improving teaching and learning. The faculty is excited to share these projects and look forward to expanding their application.

### Using educational escape rooms to develop transferrable skills

Kim Kenwell, Harrison Burgin

- **Background:** This project shows that the use of escape rooms in education can engage students, and provide **highly memorable and interactive** learning experiences. The series of puzzles can be designed concurrently, or sequentially to maximise student engagement, depending on the goals of the escape room. The findings from this research project are currently being written up, with the aim of publishing soon.
- **Result:** Escape rooms are highly valuable ways of engaging learners, and can lead to the development of transferable skills such as communication, time management and problem solving.
- **Dissemination:** We also presented these at the Australasian Simulation Congress 2025 in Adelaide and many new connections were made from this experience.



Harrison Burgin presents his research on escape rooms to the Australasian Simulation Congress 2025.

### Sustainable practices in healthcare: reuse, repurpose and recycling in healthcare

Michelle McAlister, Janet Connor, Rachael Allen, Mika Musgrave-Takeda, Harrison Burgin

- **Background:** The sustainability forum is an introduction for student nurses from the Bachelor of Nursing (Third Year) and Diploma of Nursing (Stage 4) programs to explore and implement sustainable practices within clinical healthcare environments.
- **Aim:** This one-day forum aimed to educate student nurses on sustainability practices, including how they can integrate sustainable principles into their professional environments. The aim of this initiative is to equip future nursing professionals with the knowledge, skills, and commitment to integrate sustainability into healthcare settings. This research seeks to understand if a sustainability forum improves student nurses' awareness of sustainability principles and practices in healthcare.

- **Results:** This sustainability forum was delivered in August and was very well attended by final year Nursing students. While there was strong interest in the concepts presented and discussed, there was little change in perceptions from the event. Students attributed this to already high perceptions of the value of sustainability, and concerns about their ability to make changes to policy upon entering the work force as junior workers.
- **Conclusion:** Educating students on the importance of sustainability and ways in which they can incorporate sustainability into clinical practices is recognised as important, however empowering and motivating students to lead change in this area remains difficult.

### Using forum theatres to foster empathy and improve communication

Kim Kenwell, Ian Balducci, Gabby Koutoukidis, Harrison Burgin

- **Background:** A forum theatre is an acting based teaching method in which 'worst case' scenarios are played out by actors, and lets students re-write the script for the scenario, line-by-line, until a perfect scenario is reached. These forum theatres have been shown to improve empathy and communication in healthcare settings internationally.
- **Result:** This project shows that this learning method is highly valued by students, improving their empathy and understanding of all the complex factors that contribute to patient interactions. Students enjoy this type of learning and hope for more of it in future.

### Expanding the Integrated Practical Placement (IPP) Model

**Grant funding: The Australian Government: \$650,000**

- **Holmesglen:** Dr Harrison Burgin, Jan Hooper, Alyssa Forbes-Nicholson, Dr. Gabrielle Koutoukidis
- **Partners:** Melbourne Polytechnic, Chisholm Institute, Bendigo Kangan, Sunraysia Institute of TAFE, Wodonga TAFE

This project evaluates the outcomes of an expansion of the Integrated Practical Placement (IPP) model across five TAFEs in Victoria. The research looks at the experience of students, TAFE staff and employers in improving access to study and employment for people with a disability.

- **Results:** Findings show 70-100% of students enrolled in an IPP program that delivered a sustained and integrated model of work placement either gained employment or entered further study, and that 100% of businesses and employees who participated in hosting a student for placement return to the program again and are open to employing people with disability.
- **Conclusion:** This highlighted how new education models can improve learning for people with intellectual disability and should be utilised broadly.
- **Dissemination:** This article is currently under review for publication, and we look forward to sharing the full findings with the world.

# Focus on the researcher

**In previous reports we have emphasised the need to broaden participation in research to include students, teachers, and 'early researchers', as an important step in strengthening research and embedding it into the very fabric of education and training at Holmesglen.**

This section of the report focuses on a recent conference presentation by Student wellbeing counsellor, Sakshi Kaushal to the Australia and New Zealand Student Services Association's (ANZSSA) conference in Auckland, New Zealand. She presented on the topic "More than just counselling; Evolving mental health support in higher education" and shared the work being done by the teams within student wellbeing to support diverse students at Holmesglen.



Sakshi discussed a current initiative being undertaken by the student wellbeing team to support neurodiverse students at Holmesglen, as part of the Disability Inclusion Working group. The group is currently working on a student survey that will help ground the initiative in student experience and ensure it is neuro-affirming.

The presentation also focussed on the need for counselling teams in higher education to work from a 'whole of institution approach' to support diverse student cohorts and emphasised the importance of mental health and student wellbeing for higher completion rates and positive learning outcomes.

An article about the presentation will soon be available to read through the Journal of Australia and New Zealand Student Services Association (JANZSSA).



## Diary dates 2025-26

### CONFERENCES

**Note: Staff should consult with their department head/co-ordinator prior to registering for conferences.**

**Please note that the Centre for Applied Research and Innovation does not fund registrations.**

#### **ASCILITE 2025 Educating in an Era of Continuous Change**

**30 November – 3 December 2025  
Adelaide**

This year's theme explores the dynamic landscape of education, emphasising adaptability, innovation, sustainability, and forward-thinking approaches to prepare learners and educators for an ever-evolving digital world.

**Sub-themes:**

Collaborative Futures; Adaptable Learners; Inclusive Futures  
AI and Human Synergy; Your Journey.

**For more information:** <https://ascilite.org/about-ascilite/E>

#### **TDA Convention 2026 Power of TAFE**

**5 – 7 May 2026  
Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre.**

The TDA Convention 2026 – Power of TAFE, is a significant national conference celebrating the strength, innovation and impact of TAFE in Australia's education and training landscape.

#### **AVETRA Conference 23-24 April 2026**

**Call for abstracts for papers and presentations  
Closing Date 9th January**

The Australian Vocational Education and Training Research Association (AVETRA) invites abstract submissions for its 2026 Annual Conference, to be held in Brisbane, Queensland on 23-24 April 2026. This international conference provides a premier forum for researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and industry partners to engage with critical questions facing vocational education and training (VET) in an era of unprecedented transformation.

The conference theme, "Schisms and Continuums: Understanding Sustainability, Change and Identity in Vocational Education," invites examination of the tensions, contradictions, and connections that characterise contemporary VET systems globally. As vocational education

navigates between tradition and innovation, local needs and global pressures, economic imperatives and social justice commitments, this conference seeks to illuminate both the fractures and mendings that define our field.

The conference is organised around three interconnected dimensions that collectively frame the contemporary VET landscape:

Sustainability examines how vocational education and training contributes to—and is shaped by—the imperative for sustainable futures. This encompasses not only environmental sustainability and green skills development, but also the sustainability of VET systems themselves, pedagogical practices, funding models, and career pathways. We seek contributions that interrogate how VET can foster resilient systems and communities while responding to climate change, resource constraints, and the transition to sustainable economies.

Change explores the multifaceted drivers and consequences of transformation within vocational education. From artificial intelligence (AI) and automation to demographic shifts and evolving labour markets, VET systems worldwide are experiencing profound disruption. This dimension invites analysis of how change is conceptualised, managed, resisted, and leveraged within VET contexts, including examination of policy reforms, institutional restructuring, curriculum innovation, and pedagogical transformation.

Identity investigates the evolving constructions of self, role, and purpose within vocational education ecosystems. As traditional boundaries between academic and vocational education blur, and as the nature of work itself transforms, questions of identity become increasingly salient. Who are VET learners, teachers, and institutions becoming? How do marginalised voices claim space within VET discourse? What values and purposes animate contemporary vocational education?

Abstract submissions are required for all presentation types, including papers and interactive sessions. Submit your abstract today through our website: <https://avetra.org.au/2026conference/>

All presenters must register as delegates for the conference and present in person.

**For further information and to lodge an abstract go to the link on the website. The following are dates relating to abstracts and papers:**

- Last date for submissions of abstracts:  
Friday 9th January 2026
- Notification of abstracts accepted:  
Friday 6th February 2026

## Research Support

### **APPLIED RESEARCH AND INNOVATION: a call to researchers, both old and new**

**What is applied research? Where do I start with a research project? How do I define a research project: topic, question, problem? What sources are needed? Where do I find them?**

The Holmesglen Centre for Applied Research and Innovation is on hand to provide some preliminary advice with your research and assist with an exploration of the issues surrounding questions such as these.

If you are keen to know more, please contact: The Centre for Applied Research and Innovation

**E: [appliedresearch@holmesglen.edu.au](mailto:appliedresearch@holmesglen.edu.au)**

## Research ethics and compliance: Information for researchers

- When is ethics approval needed?
- Is ethics approval always needed?
- How do I obtain ethics approval?
- Where do I obtain human ethics application forms?
- Preparing a human research ethics application: general pointers

**See webpage for answers to these questions:  
[Information for researchers](#)**

### **Panel Dates For 2025**

Researchers are encouraged to submit applications two weeks prior to the meeting dates scheduled below:

1. **Thursday 27 February 2025, 2-3:30pm**
2. **Thursday 17 April 2025, 2-3:30pm**
3. **Thursday 12 June 2025, 2-3:30pm**
4. **Thursday 14 August 2025, 2-3:30pm**
5. **Thursday 9 October 2025, 2-3:30pm**
6. **Thursday 4 December 2025, 2-3:30pm**

**If you are keen to know more, please contact:**  
The Centre for Applied Research and Innovation  
E: [appliedresearch@holmesglen.edu.au](mailto:appliedresearch@holmesglen.edu.au)



## Contact us

For business and the community sector we are on hand to examine the potential benefits of partnering with Holmesglen and to evaluate how this would assist in improving the competitiveness, productivity, efficiencies, and/or commercial outcomes of your company or organisation.

If you are keen to know more about Holmesglen research and how it can help your business, education provider or community organisation please contact:

**Dr Henry Pook, Director**  
**E: [henry.pook@holmesglen.edu.au](mailto:henry.pook@holmesglen.edu.au)**

**The Holmesglen Centre for Applied Research  
and Innovation**  
**Building 7, Room 2.05,**  
**Chadstone Campus, Holmesglen Institute**

**E: [appliedresearch@holmesglen.edu.au](mailto:appliedresearch@holmesglen.edu.au)**  
**T: 61 3 9564 1886**  
**W: [holmesglen.edu.au/About-Us/Applied-Research-and-Innovation](https://holmesglen.edu.au/About-Us/Applied-Research-and-Innovation)**

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In the spirit of reconciliation, Holmesglen recognises and celebrates the Traditional Owners of the lands throughout Victoria and beyond on which we educate and train. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and acknowledge our emerging leaders.