

Faculty of Medicine,
Dentistry and
Health Sciences



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

Contemplative Studies Centre

Impact Report 2024 - 2025



The Power of Partnerships



On the 150th anniversary of the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences, we celebrate the transformative partnerships that have advanced health discovery, education, and care in Australia and around the world.

As we mark this anniversary, we proudly recognise the collective power of researchers, practitioners, educators, students, alumni, partners and supporters who have contributed to our shared success. Together with our valued partners, we celebrate not only where we have been but where we are going, building upon our 150-year legacy to create a healthier and more sustainable future for all.



Our partnerships have redefined what's possible - discover the stories behind 150 years of collaboration and impact.

Scan the QR code or click on the image above to learn more.

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Owners of the unceded lands on which we work, learn and live. We pay respect to Elders past, present and future, and acknowledge the importance of Indigenous knowledge in the Academy.



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A note from the Director, Associate Professor Nicholas Van Dam

Since establishing the Contemplative Studies Centre (CSC) in 2021, it has been my great pleasure to see it become ‘the place’ for all things mindfulness, meditation and contemplative practice at the University of Melbourne. The CSC has evolved significantly in the past two years while maintaining its core values and striving to deliver on our key objectives in research, education and practice/leadership.

While it takes time to build a Centre such as ours from the ground up, the past two years reflect a great deal of success. On the research front, our core staff, research by higher degree (RHD) students and Centre affiliates published 125 peer-reviewed academic publications, with over 80 percent of our articles appearing in Q1 journals. On average, our academic works are cited 50 percent more often than is standard for the fields in which they appear, demonstrating the impact of our work.

In addition to our core philanthropic funding, we have secured an additional \$1.3M in competitive funding over the last two years. We have also seen growth of up to 12 RHD students annually, with students regularly leading and/or contributing to our academic outputs.

Our education initiatives have gained significant traction over the last two years. Our flagship first year breadth subject, the *Art and Science of Meditation* has grown from 34 students in 2023 to 145 students in 2025. Our most recent Student Evaluation Survey results, averaging a satisfaction score of 4.11/5 in 2025, demonstrate that we are leading the way with innovative education. In addition, we have offered over 250 guided practice sessions in the past two years and have launched innovative modules as part of Joining Melbourne—a requirement for all new University of Melbourne students. Additionally, we continue to advocate for the uptake of contemplative pedagogy across the entire University.

Finally, our activities have had huge influence in building communities both inside and outside the University. Our events have had over 16,200 registrations and views in the past two years, our works have regularly featured in popular media, and we have solidified partnerships with a variety of external commercial, not-for-profit and government organisations.

What began as an idea has germinated into a cornerstone establishment of the University. I eagerly anticipate all the ways in which the Contemplative Studies Centre can continue contributing to the University, Australia and the world!

Associate Professor Nicholas Van Dam



Our Vision

We envision a future where the empirically underpinned knowledge gained from contemplative wisdom, innovative research, lifelong education, and authentic dialogue and practice allows us, our society, and our world to flourish.

Our Mission Statement

Our mission is to build a truly inclusive community of novice and adept practitioners, scholars and academics, clinicians and researchers, and secular, Indigenous, religious and spiritual leaders and changemakers who are focused on understanding, investigating and sharing these profound practices to the benefit of both individuals and the entirety of human society, through greater connection and compassion. Our mission is achieved through our engagement, education, and practice programs and our foundation of research.

Our Values and Ethos

Compassion

We seek to nurture the potential of all by bringing a boundless humanity and kindness to our work.

Inclusivity

We warmly embrace diversity of thought, experience, perspective, and tradition and are committed to the principles of true accessibility.

Authenticity

We embody trustworthiness, transparency, and genuinely seek positive change for the world. We will stay true to our vision and take responsibility for our actions.

Integrity

Our values, ideals, and actions align. We are committed to honesty and accountability.

Transformational change

Our unwavering commitment to excellence in research, education and practice will help to reduce the world's suffering and improve wellbeing.



2024 and 2025 in numbers

Our people



10

Academic staff



3

Professional staff



11

Research by higher degree students



27

Research affiliates and collaborators



238

Undergraduate students taught



7

Faculties represented in undergraduate student enrolments



23

Student countries of origin



186

Peer-reviewed publications



78

Conference presentations and engagements

2024 and 2025 in numbers

Our practice



257

Guided meditation
practice sessions
delivered



8

Traditions represented



6,300+

Participants



16,265

People engaged across
our engagement
activities



2,267

Newsletter subscribers

Emails sent 38,738

Open rate 52.2%

Click rate 9.8%



246

Media and policy
mentions



\$1,348,009

Secured in competitive grants and funding
from government, philanthropy and the
University of Melbourne

The CSC Team

L-R: Professor Graham Meadows (Senior Research Affiliate), Dr Karin Matko (Post-Doctoral Research Fellow in Mindfulness and Mental Health), Fatemeh Aghaei (PhD candidate), Prai Wattanatakulchat (PhD candidate), Associate Professor Nicholas Van Dam (Director), Associate Professor Julieta Galante (Deputy Director), Luke Hambly (Manager, Business and Operations), Dr Cate Bailey (Research Fellow – Statistics), Cathleen Benevento (Centre Administration Coordinator), Dr Lillian Ward (Research Fellow)





Education and Practice

Our commitment to education and practice encompasses all University of Melbourne students, as well as staff, who are provided with an introduction to contemplative practices and opportunities to pursue these practices towards the insight and sense of purpose that they offer.

The Art and Science of Meditation

Our undergraduate subject *The Art and Science of Meditation* draws on history, philosophy, anthropology, sociology, cognitive neuroscience and psychology to explore the traditional contexts and contemporary application of mindfulness, meditation and other contemplative practices to day-to-day life.

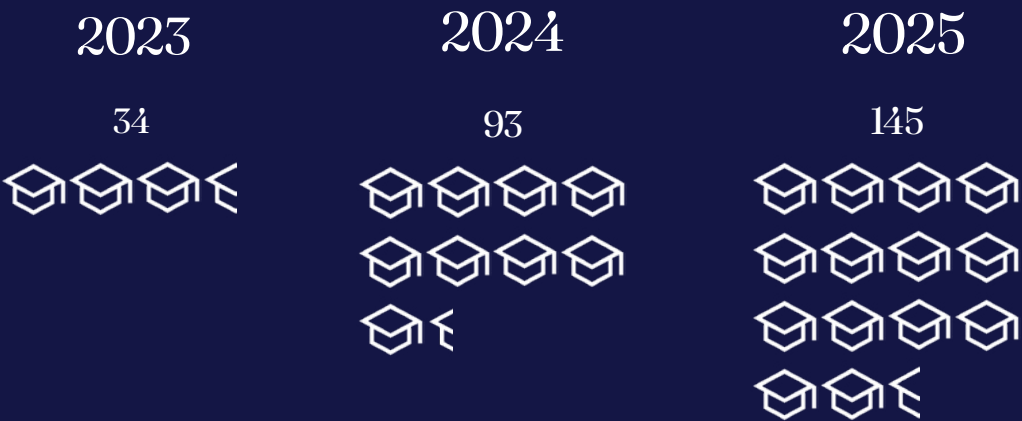
Students develop critical insight into the history and contemporary practice of meditation and what we know about certain implementations such as ritual practice, smartphone apps, online programs and healthcare-based courses.

We also raise important ethical questions about where and when such practices may or may not be appropriate and the diverse and potentially contradictory aims held by individuals, organisations and traditions in relation to them.

Partnered with direct practice in types of meditation from varying religious and secular traditions, students gain both academic and practical insight into how contemplative practices work and what they offer.

“The most helpful aspects of this subject were the combination of theoretical learning and personal experience. The subject encouraged me to reflect deeply, develop focus and understand how mindfulness can be applied in daily life. I found the balance between lectures and guided practice especially valuable, as it allowed me to connect academic ideas with real experiences. The reflective components also helped me become more self-aware, calm, and empathetic, making the subject meaningful both academically and personally.”

Student enrolments



Alongside our commitment to continuing our undergraduate subject, *the Art and Science of Meditation*, we are implementing three major initiatives in the Education & Practice space.

Mindfulness & Meaning @ Melbourne

Mindfulness & Meaning @ Melbourne is a self-guided module for commencing students as part of Joining Melbourne. The module helps students develop familiarity with mindfulness and apply a mindful approach to the challenges of student life, with a strong emphasis on safety and appropriateness.

In addition to the module, the Mindfulness webpage provides a clear introduction to mindfulness, with videos demonstrating guided breathing, movement and sensory meditations that students can practise independently, alongside links to university services that support ongoing mental wellbeing.



The Contemplative Pedagogies Project

The Contemplative Pedagogies Project aims to design, embed and evaluate mindful and contemplative approaches to teaching across the University of Melbourne and beyond, supported by a University Learning and Teaching Initiative grant (2024–2026).

Through a cross-faculty network of educators, collaborative co-design and the development of a robust evaluation framework, the project is exploring how contemplative pedagogies can be implemented across diverse disciplines and the ways they have the potential to support student engagement, wellbeing and belonging, while also enhancing meaning and sustainability in educators' teaching practice.



Collaborative Practice Centre Mindfulness and Meditation Modules

The Collaborative Practice Centre (CPC) offers a foundational series of interprofessional learning activities for professional training programs within the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences. Its curriculum supports collaboration across key areas such as communication, leadership, reflective practice and systems improvement.

We have partnered with the CPC to develop short videos introducing students to mindfulness and contemplative practice, alongside a longer self-guided module that supports students to develop the skill of 'noticing'—building attention and awareness within both personal and professional practice.



We will continue to develop and lead the delivery of outstanding education and lifelong learning to encourage the pursuit of knowledge for the wellbeing and flourishing of society. We will also continue to support diverse communities to try, learn about, and sustain a meditation practice through a range of free and fee-based guided meditation sessions presented by expert teachers from varied spiritual, faith, Indigenous and secular traditions, with offerings available for beginner, intermediate and advanced meditators.

Guided Practice

Our Guided Practice sessions continued to be a highly valued offering, attracting strong participation from staff and students as well as members of the wider community. The program has fostered a dedicated community of returning participants who consistently engage across multiple series, while also welcoming new attendees who have discovered the CSC through these offerings.

Expanding beyond more traditional practices, we introduced two new online series in 2025: *Mindfulness for Chronic Pain and Illness*, and *Stoicism*, and piloted our in-person *Introduction to Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy* course.

Mindfulness for chronic pain and illness series

Participants living with chronic pain and illness gained practical, effective tools to manage their day-to-day symptoms, while also experiencing a sense of connection and reduced isolation.

Led by Georgia Cummings, a retired nurse and Buddhist chaplain, the series combined mindfulness-based stress reduction, self-compassion and Buddhist teachings to support participants in changing their relationship with discomfort. Sessions included guided breath awareness, body scan and loving-kindness (metta) practices, with resources provided to encourage reflection and daily practise.

Weekly practices and follow up resources helped attendees develop practical skills for meeting pain and illness with greater ease, insight, and compassion in daily life.

“I am very grateful for the meditation. It makes me aware of my own thought process, where I am unable to accept the changes in my life that come with chronic illness. What I could have been, was also an imagination. I could look at it as only that, instead of a sense of loss.”

Stoicism series

This series introduced Stoicism as an ancient Western philosophy focused on cultivating steadiness, clarity and a sense of flourishing amidst life's uncertainties. Led by Professor Matthew Sharpe, the sessions explored the foundational aims of Stoicism and the contemplative practices of meditation (meletê) and contemplation (theoria), including the practice of premeditating adversities to reduce stress and build resilience.

Through guided Stoic meditations and reflective activities, participants were supported to distinguish between what lies within their control and what does not, fostering greater self-awareness and emotional clarity. The course encouraged attendees to situate their experiences within a broader perspective, cultivating calmness, acceptance and a grounded sense of their place within the larger whole.

The Stoicism series was well received for its academically grounded yet accessible approach to the historical and philosophical context of Stoic practice. The deft combination of theory and practice enabled participants to apply Stoic principles to the challenges they faced in everyday life.

Feedback across both years highlighted the well-structured teaching that helped attendees engage deeply with complex contemplative practices and ideas, and marked improvements in focus, calm, perspective and resilience.

New in-person offerings continued to support wellbeing across the University community, engaging staff and students through a range of activities. Staff and graduate students attended weekly lunchtime meditation sessions in our dedicated meditation space, led by an experienced teacher.

With funding from a Health Promotion Project grant, we also delivered a semester-long program of weekly yoga and mindfulness meditation sessions for undergraduate students, designed to support stress management during the exam period.

In addition, student and community groups – including the Melbourne University Buddhist Society and Wake Up Melbourne – used the meditation space for their own mindfulness-based activities.

“These types of talks and meditations are very important in the middle of life's craziness. They remind us that there is something else available with other values and views.”

2024



67

Online
Sessions



31

In-Person
Sessions

2,395
Participants

2025



41

Online
Sessions



118

In-Person
Sessions

3,964
Participants

Research

During 2024 and 2025, we continued to advance our core research agenda, supporting interdisciplinary, evidence informed research focused on contemplative practice and methodology. This work involved the thoughtful examination of optimal approaches for learning, practising and comprehending contemplative concepts and ideas.

State of meditation

Associate Professor Nicholas Van Dam, Associate Professor Julieta Galante, Dr Jonathan Davies, Dr Cate Bailey and Dr Karin Matko.

This research program maps how meditation is understood, taken up and experienced in Australia and beyond, exploring who engages with meditation, who does not, and how patterns of practice change over time. The work aims to identify opportunities to make contemplative practices more accessible, effective and responsive, informing future investment by governments, educators, health providers and meditation organisations.

For more information, including links to publications from this research, please visit: <https://go.unimelb.edu.au/nhh2>

Leveraging contemplative practices to promote community mental health and resilience

Associate Professor Julieta Galante, Dr Cullan Joyce, Stephanie Campbell, Kathryn Williams, Associate Professor Nicholas Van Dam, Dr Penny Jones and Dr Larissa Bartlett.

This pilot initiative explored the potential of community designed contemplative practice programs to support mental health and resilience, particularly in regional settings. Working in partnership with University of Tasmania researchers and the Huon Valley community, the study tested a co-design approach to understanding local needs, developing an accessible contemplative intervention and assessing its acceptability and relevance as a foundation for future, larger-scale preventive mental health programs.

Data collection is complete, and the preliminary results were presented at the International Conference on Mindfulness Asia Pacific (ICM-AP) 2025 and at the 3rd World Congress on Traditional, Complementary and Integrative Medicine (WCTCIM 2025).

For more information please visit: <https://go.unimelb.edu.au/6hh2>

Tracking meditation: A longitudinal study

Associate Professor Julieta Galante, Dr Cate Bailey, Dr Lillian Ward, Dr Cullan Joyce, Associate Professor Nicholas Van Dam, Dr Ben Stone, Dr Deanna Kaplan and Santiago Arconada.

In collaboration with Emory University, this study explores the potential of sustained meditation practice to support health and wellbeing by following practitioners from multiple secular and Buddhist traditions over a two-year period. By combining self-reported measures with innovative methods such as voice diaries, the work seeks to better understand how regular practice may shape perception, empathy and lived experience, and to inform teachers, practitioners and policymakers about the longer-term impacts of meditation.

As of June 2026 the study has recruited over 270 active participants from Australia, New Zealand, the UK, and the United States. Canadian meditators are now eligible to take part. For more information please visit: <https://go.unimelb.edu.au/pen2>

World Meditation Survey

Associate Professor Nicholas Van Dam and Dr Karin Matko.

This study examines how meditation practice, motivation and individual characteristics vary across different contemplative traditions and cultural contexts. Drawing on a large international survey of meditators, the research explores how personal values, motives and traits relate to meditation choices and experiences, and how these relationships may shift over time.

The study's dataset currently includes 2,429 completed surveys across three different waves (1,602 at baseline), with participants still enrolling into the study and completing follow-up surveys. Additionally, the first results from this study will be presented at the International Congress of the International Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology in Leuven, Belgium in July 2026: <https://iaccp2026.com/>.

For more information please visit: <https://go.unimelb.edu.au/89o2>



Research Impact in Focus

State of meditation

Associate Professor Nicholas Van Dam, Associate Professor Julieta Galante, Dr Jonathan Davies, Dr Cate Bailey and Dr Karin Matko.

We surveyed 2,640 people across Australia and New Zealand to understand how contemplative practices - forms of mental training that build self-awareness, self-regulation and self-inquiry - fit into everyday life.

The findings reveal these practices are remarkably popular: 70% of our nationally representative sample reported using meditation, yoga, breathing techniques or relaxation in the past year, rates notably higher than in countries like the USA, Germany or India. People turn to these practices primarily to improve health and wellbeing, often as an accessible, low-cost way to manage mental health alongside or instead of formal treatment.



Interestingly, those using contemplative practices reported greater psychological distress and higher mental health service use than non-practitioners—yet when we accounted for sociodemographic differences and existing mental healthcare, much of this association disappeared. This suggests that people facing multiple challenges are more likely to seek out these practices to help manage their situation and that yoga and relaxation may work best as part of a broader care approach. However, breathing practices remained associated with distress even after accounting for these factors, pointing to potential gaps in how or when they are used.

With psychologists and GPs increasingly recommending these practices to patients, our funder-supported research highlights an important need: clearer guidance on which practices work best for whom, under what conditions and how they should be delivered and integrated into mental healthcare. Stakeholders, providers and the public deserve transparency about what constitutes safe, effective, evidence-based practice.

Publications

Davies, J. N., Bailey, C., Galante, J., & Van Dam, N. T. (2025). Prevalence and predictors of meditation use in Australia and New Zealand: Results from a nationally representative survey. *BMC Complementary Medicine and Therapies*, 26(1), 11. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12906-025-05183-4>

Bailey, C., Van Dam, N. T., Davies, J. N., Schilling, C. & Galante, J. (2026). Quality of Life, Healthcare Use and Cost of Practice From a Nationally-Representative Australian Survey to Inform Future Economic Evaluations of Contemplative Practices. *Mindfulness*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-026-02788-9>

Matko, K., Bailey, C., Galante, J., Davies, J., & Van Dam, N. T. (in press). Contemplative practices as complementary mental health strategies: Insights from a nationally representative sample in Australia and New Zealand. *Scientific Reports*. Preprint on https://osf.io/c7e54_v1

Dose-response effects for mindfulness meditation

Nicholas Bowles, Dr Jonathan Davies and Associate Professor Nicholas Van Dam

Our funder-supported research program has tackled one of the most pressing questions in meditation science: how much practice is actually needed to see real benefits? We approached this from three complementary angles.

Our analysis of lifetime practice histories revealed that around 160 hours of accumulated meditation experience were associated with clinically meaningful improvements in psychological distress and life satisfaction. However, this raised important new questions: how do practice patterns affect outcomes, and how do individual differences shape benefits?

To address these gaps, we conducted a longitudinal study tracking 1,053 self-directed practitioners with varied experience levels over two months and beyond, examining how practice dose, frequency, personality traits and practice goals influenced wellbeing, mental health and life satisfaction. Across this diverse sample, meaningful improvements required 35 to 65 minutes daily for wellbeing and 50 to 80 minutes for mental health outcomes—yet practice frequency proved a stronger predictor of benefit than session duration alone. Importantly, benefits were sustained over 2 to 4 years, and effects were moderated by lifetime practice experience, personality traits and individual practice goals. Practitioners with varied backgrounds, experience levels, motivations and personality profiles all benefited, suggesting meditation's effects are robust across diverse populations.

Next, we conducted one of the largest and most rigorous trials ever undertaken to answer whether more meditation means better results in beginners as well. Over 28 days, 716 adults with no prior meditation experience were randomly assigned to practise for just 4, 10, 20 or 30 minutes daily through an online program.



The results were striking: everyone improved—across wellbeing, mental health and mindfulness skills—regardless of how long they meditated. Surprisingly, those assigned to 30 minutes gained no more benefit than those practising for just 4 minutes. Even more revealing, the amount people actually practised (frequency and total duration) made little difference to their outcomes. What did matter, consistently, was informal mindfulness—the everyday application of mindful awareness through brief pauses, attentive listening or mindful eating.

This funder-supported research provides evidence that accessible, bite-sized meditation combined with mindfulness in daily life can support improvements in mental health and wellbeing. The findings offer useful insights for how we design and deliver mindfulness programs, suggesting that approaches emphasising everyday practice alongside shorter formal sessions may be more practical and sustainable for wider audiences.

Publications

Bowles, N.I., Davies, J.N. & Van Dam, N.T. (2022). Dose–response relationship of reported lifetime meditation practice with mental health and wellbeing: A cross-sectional study. *Mindfulness*, 13, 2529–2546. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-022-01977-6>

Bowles, N., Burger, A., Davies, J.N., Galante, J., Dennis, S., Stone, B., Simpson, J.A. & Van Dam, N.T. (2025). Examining dose-response effects of Mindfulness Meditation interventions on wellbeing study: Protocol for a randomized controlled trial. *JMIR Research Protocols*, 14. DOI: [10.2196/72786](https://doi.org/10.2196/72786)

Bowles, N. I., & Van Dam, N. T. (2025). Dose–response effects of reported meditation practice on mental-health and wellbeing: A prospective longitudinal study. *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being*, 17(4). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/aphw.70063>

Our Research Higher Degree Students



Nicholas Bowles
*Quantifying the dose-response
effects of meditation*



Tim Wood
*Investigating the range of
meditation phenomenology*



Julia Adams
*Differential predictors of
engagement in meditation app
use*



Alice McAvoy
*Better together? Mindfulness
teachers' perspectives on how the
group format affects mental health
outcomes in mindfulness-based
programs*



Dinuk Welagedera
*The interaction between meditation
and lifestyle factors, and its effect on
cognitive functioning*

Fatemeh Aghaei: Supplementing a voice care program with mindfulness-based intervention

This project evaluates whether supplementing mindfulness alongside a vocal care program (VCP) can improve voice quality in university teaching staff at the University of Melbourne. As professional voice users, this group is at increased risk of vocal fatigue. VCP targets physical voice care (e.g., hydration, reducing harmful vocal behaviours), while mindfulness enhances awareness of bodily sensations and stress, potentially reducing tension that affects voice production. Together, they may offer greater benefits than either approach alone.

The project has three phases, the first two of which are complete. First, a cross-sectional survey assessed the prevalence of vocal fatigue and its associations with factors such as age, gender, and workload, using the Vocal Fatigue Index (VFI). Second, semi-structured interviews with a subset of participants explored the acceptability and feasibility of integrating mindfulness into voice care, including preferences for delivery, duration, and perceived barriers and benefits. Third, a 6-week pilot randomised controlled trial will compare VCP alone with VCP plus mindfulness meditation (VCP+MM), using validated pre- and post-intervention measures of vocal function. This study addresses a gap in preventive voice care by targeting both physiological and psychological contributors to vocal fatigue.



Prai Wattanatakulchat: Temporal dynamics of meditative mechanisms

In recent decades, millions of people globally have adopted spiritual and Buddhist-inspired secular meditation practices to support their mental health (Davies et al., 2024, 2025), with eight-week Mindfulness-based Programmes (MBPs) as widely implemented examples (Crane et al., 2017). Although substantial empirical evidence indicates that at least certain forms of meditation can be beneficial for mental health (Galante, Friedrich, et al., 2021; Goldberg et al., 2022; Goyal et al., 2014), the psychological processes through which meditation exert its effects and how they unfold over time remain unclear (Galante et al., 2023). Existing research provides limited evidence regarding temporal precedence of mechanisms (Gu et al., 2015), offers inadequate examination into their temporal relationships (Maloney et al., 2024), and is largely contained within MBPs (Sparby & Sacchet, 2025).

To inform the monitoring of meditation-based interventions and to optimise their benefits, my PhD project will examine the temporal relationships among psychological mechanisms underlying the effects of meditation towards mental health over time. The project will draw upon (1) meditation teachers' observations of their students, (2) meditators' perspectives and observations, and (3) a longitudinal model of meditators' self-report measures. To address the gaps identified, it will use a longitudinal study design with multiple follow-up time points, examine multiple mechanisms and their temporal relationships, and regularly monitor meditation practice and context beyond initial instruction.



Engagement

In 2024 and 2025, we continued to play an important role as a hub for meaningful public engagement, delivering and contributing to a broad program of events, guided practices, digital resources and interdisciplinary conversations that connected research with real-world application.

These activities reached audiences across Australia and internationally, extending well beyond the University and continuing to establish the Centre as a trusted leader on contemplative practice, care and wellbeing.

Activities addressed timely and complex themes including mental health and wellbeing, care and compassion, social connection, and the safe and ethical use of contemplative practices, bringing together the public, academic, community and industry spheres.

Contemplations on Care: Empathy in Action

This series featured three events offering a rich exploration of empathy's role in fostering care, justice and equity for a more compassionate society.

The series brought together leaders, scholars and students in law, medicine, arts, social sciences and education; contemplative studies practitioners; and community stakeholders to explore how contemplative practices and interdisciplinary dialogue can reshape the ways we approach care and compassion in our communities.



Event speakers Professor Emerita Rhonda V. Magee, Dr Mariam Tokhi and Natasha Mitchell



Venerable BomHyon Sunim and Professor Pip Nicholson



A platform for conversations and applications of empathy across disciplines

Opening the series was a public event and conversation moderated by ABC Radio's Natasha Mitchell with international guest, Professor Emerita Rhonda V. Magee, founding Director of the Center for Contemplative Law and Ethics at the University of San Francisco and specialist in mindfulness-based stress reduction for professionals, alongside medical doctor and writer, Dr Mariam Tokhi.

Together, they illustrated the transformative power of empathy in tackling social justice and health inequities. They explored how mindfulness practices can help overcome biases and promote inclusivity and how narrative medicine - using the power of storytelling - can improve healthcare by fostering deeper connections between practitioners and patients. The event concluded with a short, guided meditation, offering attendees a moment to reflect on the conversation.

On the second day we delved into a more academic setting with an interdisciplinary roundtable hosted by Insight Fellow, Associate Professor Ana Eclair and Associate Professor Julieta Galante. Joined by six University of Melbourne academics and Professor Emerita Rhonda V. Magee, the participants discussed empathy's potential to drive transformation in education. With empathy as a shared lens, the panellists and audience unpacked complex intersections between care, inequity and social justice, encouraging attendees to reconsider how these themes apply within their own disciplines and professional contexts.

People engaged in 2024 and 2025

 16,265

The series closed with an interactive workshop led by Dr Mariam Tokhi and Dr Katie Moore, focusing on the practical applications of storytelling, listening, and narrative medicine for wellbeing. Graduate researchers and early career academics explored the ways in which storytelling can serve as a therapeutic and creative outlet, enhancing both personal and professional wellbeing. Participants learned how educators are using the arts in health spaces with the goal of improving communication and care, leaving them inspired to integrate these approaches into their work.



News

In the News

- October 2024 - Associate Professor Julieta Galante was interviewed for 'Can you breathe your way to better wellbeing?' by the Sydney Morning Herald.
<https://go.unimelb.edu.au/thh2>
- November 2024 – Associate Professor Julieta Galante was interviewed for 'Resilience interventions do work – why coping strategies should be a staple of education' by The Guardian.
<https://go.unimelb.edu.au/dhh2>
- December 2024 – Associate Professor Julieta Galante was featured in Cosmos Magazine – 'Into the dark night: the dangers of meditation'.
- January 2025 – Associate Professor Julieta Galante was interviewed for 'The science of being unable to meditate – and what to do instead' by the Sydney Morning Herald.
<https://go.unimelb.edu.au/vhh2>
- January 2025 - Associate Professor Julieta Galante spoke to The Age to share insights on the science behind stress and how we can deal with it. Her expert advice on mindfulness meditation? Mindfulness is most effective when learned in a group with a skilled teacher – it's the method with the strongest evidence for effectiveness. 'The science of stress: Our ancient superpower, and curse'
<https://go.unimelb.edu.au/5hh2>
- March 2025 – Associate Professor Nicholas Van Dam wrote 'In therapy or meditation, is it normal to feel worse at first?' for Psyche.
<https://go.unimelb.edu.au/8e6p>

Grants Awarded

- Associate Professor Julieta Galante and Associate Professor Ana Eclair were awarded a \$37,086 PEACE Grant by the Mind & Life Institute in Virginia, USA for a project entitled 'How are mindfulness meditation teachers implementing social justice literacy in their classes?'
- Dr Cate Bailey was awarded \$41,500 by EuroQol for 'Testing validity and responsiveness to change of the EQ-HWB-S in a mental health sample; Medito Study'.
- Dr Cate Bailey was awarded \$40,000 by EuroQol for 'The psychometric performance of the EQHWB-S in two Nationally Representative Samples'.
- Associate Professor Julieta Galante was awarded \$941,309 by Tiny Blue Dot Foundation US for the three year project 'When does meditation expand the Perception Box? A comparative longitudinal study'.
- Dr Chris McCaw was awarded \$28,500 from Chancellery - Learning and Teaching Initiative grants for 'Implementing contemplative pedagogies across disciplines: supporting student wellbeing and connection through embodied, experiential learning practices'.
- Associate Professor Julieta Galante & Cullan Joyce were awarded \$18,000 by the MSPS - Research Incentive Scheme for 'Leveraging contemplative practices to promote community mental health and resilience'.
- The CSC received \$25,000 in grants from the Faculty of Arts & Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry, and Health Sciences for the Empathy & Compassion Series of events.
- Dr Karin Matko was awarded \$44,754 by Mind & Life EU & Lohrer Foundation D for 'Who practices what and why? A Global Exploration of Meditators'.

Thank you

Martin and Loreto, thank you for supporting the
Contemplative Studies Centre

\$1,575,838 Support for research and
research training

\$610,852 Support for education and
practice

\$558,519 Support for events and
engagement

\$442,538 Support for governance and
operations



Your support makes a
true impact.

Contemplative Studies Centre

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Acknowledgement of Country

The University of Melbourne acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditional owners of the unceded land on which we work and learn. We pay respect to the Elders, past and present, and the place of Indigenous knowledge in the academy.

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Faculty of
Medicine,
Dentistry and
Health Sciences



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE