

25 January 2017

Wicking Trust major grants announced \$8m over 6 years for ageing well and dying well

The University of Tasmania, the National Ageing Research Institute and The GroundSwell Project are the major beneficiaries of the latest round of major grants from one of Australia's most significant trusts, The Wicking Trust, managed by Equity Trustees.

The major grants, totalling more than \$8m in discretionary distributions from the Trust, are in addition to ongoing funding commitments from the Trust to Vision Australia and the O'Brien Foundation (formerly the Microsurgery Foundation), which continue to be funded out of the Trust in accordance with the direction of the Trust founders John and Janet Wicking.

"The Wickings spent their lives in a true partnership that was marked by generosity and compassion," said Tabitha Lovett, General Manager, Philanthropy and Not-for-Profit Services.

"They live on through the legacy of the Trust, which continues their commitment to improving the wellness and quality of life of older people and people with Alzheimer's disease in Australia.

"They had the foresight to understand that their investment in philanthropy had the ability to grow and continue to serve the causes dear to them well beyond their lifetime. Since 2002, Equity Trustees has been honoured to be entrusted to manage their legacy, ensuring the Trust thrives financially and continues empowering change for older Australians," Ms Lovett said.

2017 Wicking Trust major grants:

1. University of Tasmania: *Wicking Dementia Research and Education Centre*. (\$3.72m over five years) The five year commitment from the Trust will enable unprecedented expansion and reach of its dementia training offering via Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) – a format in which the Centre is now a global leader; it aims to reach more than 400,000 Australians and 1 million people globally over five years, positioning the Centre as the global leader in empowering change through dementia education and research. This grant extends the Trust's support of the Centre to almost \$8 million over 14 years.
2. National Ageing Research Institute (NARI): *Melbourne Ageing Research Collaboration (MARC): Improving the Lives of Older People*. (\$3.18m over five years) This initiative brings together a cross-sector consortium to propel theory into practice, supporting initiatives that prevent or mitigate the 'geriatric giants'ⁱ which stop older people from living independently and, at the end of life, experiencing a good death.
3. The GroundSwell Project: *Building Death Literacy: New Conversations, Innovative Practices*. (\$390k over three years) This grant provides seed funding for an innovative project which supports this emerging world leader in the field to develop and pilot a national Death Literacy benchmark tool and conduct the first national survey of death literacy in Australia.

In addition, the Trust has engaged The Australian Centre for Social Innovation (TACSI) to support this project by investigating what is needed to build 'death literacy'ⁱⁱ in the Australian community as the basis for better end of life experiences.

“Equity Trustees has a long and proud history of protecting and growing the legacy of thousands of Australians. It is a huge honour to be appointed as trustee, and to take responsibility for nurturing the dream of people, like the Wickings,” said Mick O’Brien, Managing Director, Equity Trustees.

“As an organisation able to channel the combined resources of more than 450 charitable trusts, which together distribute more than \$70 million annually, we are deeply committed to ensuring those funds work to empower change and make our community a better place for all of us. It’s not just because we have a higher duty to our clients under the legislation by which we were established, it’s a matter of trust,” he concluded.

[Click here](#) to learn more about the Wicking Trust grants. [Click here](#) to hear from our Equity Trustees team about empowering change through philanthropy.

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Equity Trustees was established in 1888 for the purpose of providing independent and impartial Trustee and Executor services to help families throughout Australia protect their wealth. As one of Australia’s largest and oldest listed independent trustees, we offer a diverse range of services to individuals, families and corporate clients including aged care advice, asset management, estate planning, philanthropic services and Responsible Entity (RE) services for external Fund Managers.

Philanthropy services are provided by Equity Trustees Limited and Equity Trustee Wealth Services Limited, which are both subsidiary companies of EQT Holdings Limited, a public company listed on the Australian Securities Exchange (ASX: EQT).

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Project summaries

University of Tasmania: [Wicking Dementia Research and Education Centre](#)

\$3.72m over five years (December 2017 to December 2022)

The Wicking Centre will be funded to develop, improve and expand the reach of its MOOCs to approximately 400,000 Australians and up to 1 million people globally, over five years. This will not only position the Wicking Centre as the global leader in dementia education and research but also have a substantial impact on the quality of care and understanding of dementia, across community, health professional and industry sectors.

The Wicking Centre was established at the University of Tasmania in 2008 through co-funding by the J.O. and J.R. Wicking Trust and the University of Tasmania. Fundamentally, the Wicking Centre was established to improve the quality of lives of people with dementia and their carers, through educational outreach underpinned by internationally competitive research into three major themes, the care, prevention and cause of dementia.

The Wicking Centre's vision is to transform the understanding of dementia across the community at large, as well as in aged care and health care systems - creating dementia literate communities. To this end, the Wicking Centre has established strategic collaborations with national and international leaders in dementia research and education to bring the latest scientific evidence to build health literacy in the understanding and prevention of dementia through Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs).

In less than 10 years, the Wicking Centre has delivered educational offerings to over 80,000 people in Australia and internationally. The MOOC program's aims are to build dementia literacyⁱⁱⁱ and drive systemic change in dementia care in Australia and internationally. In 2015, more than 22,000 people enrolled in the Wicking Centre's Understanding Dementia MOOC (62% of these enrollees were Australian). The completion rate for this MOOC was 45%, making it the world's most successful MOOC by completion rate (the global average is just 6%).

The funding will support key positions at the Centre, and marketing and development of a new digital platform for the MOOCs.

National Ageing Research Institute (NARI): [Melbourne Ageing Research Collaboration \(MARC\) Improving the Lives of Older People.](#)

\$3.18m over five years (December 2016 to December 2021)

This grant will provide the MARC with the capacity to increase activity and more effectively scale and spread the solutions they develop. It is anticipated this will be an important catalyst for longer-term systemic change at individual, organisational, community and policy levels. By working together, the MARC partners (including researchers, clinicians, industry and government) will improve the lives of older people by developing better solutions and more rapidly translating them into policy and practice. Outcomes from MARC projects will be used to significantly improve the wellbeing and quality of life of older people living in community, hospital and residential settings.

MARC is a unique consortium of partners from research, university, health services, community, government, advocacy and industry sectors and has been operating for two years. It was supported in 2015 by the Wicking Trust to strengthen the collaboration to support its effectiveness and increase its readiness to receive larger-scale funding.

The MARC collaboration will conduct practical research that engages the end-users from the outset focusing initially on preventing falls, promoting independence and healthy ageing, end of life care and dementia. By pooling knowledge and effort, the collaboration aims to achieve better outcomes for older people so that they can live as independently as possible, prevent problems commonly associated with ageing, and, at the end of life, experience a good death.

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The Groundswell Project: Building Death Literacy: New Conversations, Innovative Practices
\$390k over three years (December 2016 to December 2019)

The funding will primarily be used to support The Groundswell Project (GSP) to develop and pilot a national Death Literacy Benchmark tool, conduct the first national survey of death literacy and disseminate the findings. This will be an important corollary to the work that the Wicking Trust has engaged The Australian Centre for Social Investment (TACSI) to undertake to help build a more effective 'end of life' system.

GSP, is emerging as an international leader in death literacy, and has been one of the organisations at the forefront of this movement in Australia. Founded in 2010, GSP has grown from small, grassroots and modestly funded beginnings to an organisation that has developed and delivered 55 community capacity-building projects and programs aimed at creating a cultural shift in the way Australians respond to end of life (EOL) planning. These programs include the '10 Things to Know Before you Go' workshop, and an arts-and-health based community death literacy program with people of all ages in contexts including schools, hospitals and workplaces. GSP has also initiated a national day of action, 'Dying To Know Day' (D2KDay) to build death literacy in the community through local leadership and social action which has now inspired 281 events. Through its programs, GSP seeks to transform community conversations into action, noting that it takes more than raising public awareness to create systemic change.

ⁱ The so-called geriatric giants are the major categories of impairment that appear in elderly people, especially as they begin to fail. These 'giants' are typically considered to be: Immobility (e.g. falls); Incontinence; Impaired cognition (such as confusion, delirium or dementia); Impaired homeostasis (is an impaired ability to control the internal conditions of the body so normal metabolic functions that support life cannot properly proceed); and Iatrogenic disorders (Unintended and adverse consequences of well-intended healthcare interventions such as side effects from the interactions of multiple drugs).

ⁱⁱ Death Literacy is the practical know-how needed to plan well for end of life. This includes knowledge, skills, and being able to take action. Death literacy recognises the role that everyone has in end of life care and death care. Having knowledge helps us make informed decisions about the care, being able to act on that knowledge is empowering. In its totality death literacy includes more than just planning for health care and end-of-life care. It also includes things like organising one's financial affairs (e.g. estate planning and Powers of Attorney).

ⁱⁱⁱ Health literacy is the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions.