



Donor Impact Report 2025

TOGETHER FOR A BETTER WORLD

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Acknowledgment of Country

We respectfully acknowledge the Wurundjeri People of the Kulin Nation, who are the Traditional Owners of the land on which Swinburne's Australian campuses are located in Melbourne's east and outer-east, and pay our respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

We are honoured to recognise our connection to Wurundjeri Country, history, culture, and spirituality through these locations, and strive to ensure that we operate in a manner that respects and honours the Elders and Ancestors of these lands.

We also respectfully acknowledge Swinburne's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, students, alumni, partners and visitors.

We also acknowledge and respect the Traditional Owners of lands across Australia, their Elders, Ancestors, cultures, and heritage, and recognise the continuing sovereignties of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nations.





Message from the Vice-Chancellor

At Swinburne University of Technology, we do not just respond to change but provoke it, leading the charge to shape a better future. With your support, we are accelerating, deepening and strengthening this impact across the world.

Thank you for the role you played in creating remarkable opportunities at Swinburne during 2025. This report highlights the impact our dedicated and passionate donors made throughout the year and showcases some of the inspiring stories of their philanthropy.

From generous individuals, to Trusts and Foundations, our donors are supporting groundbreaking projects and making incredible outcomes possible.

Swinburne's vision is bringing people and technology together to build a better world. What sets us apart is that we want to open the gates to this tech-rich future to everyone, whether they come to us from school, return to us from a first career, as a first-in-family learner, an upskilling professional, an entrepreneur, or an industry partner with a problem to solve.

We are focused on providing support to those who would otherwise be denied an opportunity to pursue an education, as well as investing in research and innovation to develop technology-driven solutions to the greatest problems facing our planet.

Our donors' generosity means that deserving learners can receive a scholarship, that world-class research can continue to make a difference, and that Swinburne, as an institution, can continue to boldly address the challenges of our time.

Together, we are shaping a more inclusive and sustainable future, filled with boundless possibilities and opportunities for all — we are truly working together for a better world.

Again, thank you for your trust in Swinburne. We are dedicated to stewarding your gifts with the utmost care and diligence, ensuring that they are directed towards initiatives that align with our shared values and aspirations.

With your support, we will continue to work together to shape the future and create enduring impact.

Professor Pascale Quester
Vice-Chancellor and President

YOUR SUPPORT IN 2025

TOGETHER FOR A

**BETTER
WORLD
RESEARCH**



**RESEARCH PROJECTS
SUPPORTED**

Funds committed

\$2,869,501



**TOTAL
AMOUNTS
COMMITTED
BY DONOR
TYPE**



Alumni & Friends
\$2,633,919

Corporates
\$956,590

Trusts and Foundations
\$2,306,490

Amplify Staff Giving
\$67,099

New funds committed **\$5,964,100** 

BETTER WORLD



**STUDENT
SUCCESS**

90 
students received
a donor funded
Scholarship

Largest
donation
pledge 
\$1,169,923

Philanthropic funds received 
\$5,226,780



Total number
of gifts 
989

BETTER WORLD RESEARCH

Harnessing AI to tackle discrimination and level the playing field

adidas Foundation

Sport is a unifying force woven into the fabric of Australian life. It builds friendships, strengthens communities, and inspires the next generation.

Yet discrimination, whether through racism, sexism, or homophobia, continues to undermine this inclusive ideal, discouraging participation and making many feel unwelcome.

A groundbreaking initiative, enabled by a generous philanthropic grant from the adidas Foundation's United by Sport program, has empowered Swinburne's Sports Innovation Research Group to progress working to change this.

The mission of the newly established adidas Foundation is to bring communities together through sport, driving social change for people and society. They are doing so with programs like United by Sport, which strives to leverage sport's transformational power to promote equality and fight hate and discrimination.

This three-year project uses artificial intelligence (AI) to help sporting clubs respond to discrimination and build safer, more inclusive environments.

It's a bold vision — a digital tool that can guide clubs in the very moments they need it most, offering clear, unbiased, and consistent advice on how to respond to incidents of abuse or exclusion.

Led by Swinburne's Dr Carleigh Yeomans and Dr Paul Bowell, it's one of just 17 initiatives worldwide — and the only Australian recipient — chosen from over 400 applications to receive this brand-new prestigious funding from the adidas Foundation.

'Melbourne is proud of its status as both an inclusive and sporting city,' says Dr Bowell. 'But our research shows that ongoing discrimination in community sports — particularly homophobia, sexism, and racism — hinders participation and undermines healthy, active, and inclusive communities.'

The program unfolds in three stages. First comes listening: Swinburne's researchers are working alongside clubs to co-create inclusive policies and strategies.

Then comes building: a Large Language Model — an advanced AI tool — will be developed and piloted. This tool will offer clubs immediate, context-specific guidance on handling discrimination, reducing the risk of biased or inconsistent responses.

Finally, comes sharing: the AI system will be rolled out more broadly, supported by workshops and educational resources designed to challenge harmful behaviours and promote long-term cultural change.



“We want to ensure that as many people as possible around the world have the opportunity to benefit from the transformative power of sport. This is our contribution to solving some of the most pressing social and environmental issues facing the world today.”

adidas Foundation

For Dr Yeomans, the project is driven by urgency. A 2024 Swinburne study revealed that more than half of LGBTQIA+ young people in Australia had witnessed discrimination in community sports.

‘Our team at Swinburne was shocked but not surprised at these harrowing results,’ she explains. ‘We were inspired to change this, and emboldened by the adidas Foundation sharing this vision, so anyone in the sporting environment, whether they be players, coaches, volunteers, or parents, can use our tool to seek advice and clarity.’

The Yarra Junior Football League, an instrumental partner in the project, will be among the first to trial the AI system, helping refine it over the next three years. Along the way, the project will incorporate feedback from clubs, ensuring the tool is not only effective but also user-friendly and scalable.

For Swinburne's researchers and the adidas Foundation, the hope is simple yet powerful — that everyone who steps onto a field, into a pool, or onto a court feels able to thrive.

Says Dr Paul Bowell, ‘We are truly grateful for the adidas Foundation's shared vision of making community sports discrimination-free. This ensures everyone feels welcomed, respected, and safe.’

STEMeez inspires the next generation of STEM stars



The Invergowrie Foundation

From coding to chemistry, robotics to renewable energy, the skills of tomorrow are being shaped by science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

Yet across Australia, a shortage of STEM talent — and a persistent gap in participation by girls and young women — threatens the nation's ability to meet future challenges.

Generously funded by The Invergowrie Foundation, an innovative project, STEMeez, is designed to tackle this shortage. The Foundation's CEO, Kim Bartlett, explains the motivation behind their support.

'At Invergowrie, our mission is to advance the education of girls and women in Victoria. Looking at the barriers for girls in STEM education, there's still unconscious bias. Many girls are intimidated by being involved in what is still a male-dominated area.'

A unique online learning platform is helping to change that, with a significant boost of new funding to support future STEM stars.

The STEMeez learning platform is a research-informed initiative of Swinburne, the University of Melbourne, and Deakin University enabled by The Invergowrie Foundation, with an initial transformational gift awarded in 2022.

This work is being further developed by Swinburne and Deakin and has recently received an extraordinarily generous additional gift from The Invergowrie Foundation to expand its reach and impact.

The platform is designed to make STEM engaging, accessible, and relevant to everyday life. The platform uses games, animations, e-storybooks, and interactive resources to spark curiosity and build confidence.

Program lead, Swinburne's Dr Sarika Kewalramani, explains why early and continuous exposure is key. 'STEM pathways don't finish at eight years old,' she says. 'The resources and

activities contextualise STEM learning in their living and learning environments so that girls can start to see themselves doing and belonging in STEM from early childhood onwards.'

The Invergowrie Foundation's CEO, Kim Bartlett agrees 'We found that we need to get in early to the girls. They start off with a love for STEM, but it seems to drop off as they go further along in their education.'

Swinburne deeply values The Invergowrie Foundation's visionary commitment to advancing education for girls and young women. Their continued investment in STEMeez is helping us create a future where every child — regardless of gender — can see themselves as a scientist, engineer or innovator."

Katherine Goldman, Associate Director of Philanthropy

'We need to keep that interest going and make them more aware of the pathways they can follow in STEM.'

By co-designing activities with girls, their families, and teachers, STEMeez ensures its learning experiences reflect the realities and interests of young learners.

Kim explains, 'It's about making STEM accessible, fun, and available not only to the students, but also teachers and families. Particularly for this first release, aimed at zero to eight years of age, the parents really need to be involved as well to get the most out of it.'

Dr Kewalramani adds, 'Deploying a solutions-focused approach that brings people and technology together, girls will indulge in activities co-designed with them and for them. This will grow girls' uptake of STEM careers, shaping a sustainable STEM Future for Australia.'

The platform uses a 'Learning Everyday STEM Together' philosophy, extending learning beyond classrooms into homes and communities. In regional Victoria, for example, the program will create social spaces where young people can connect with everyday STEM role models.

Educators are already seeing the impact. Early Childhood Educator Padmini Narayanan says STEMeez has transformed how she introduces science lessons.

'Traditionally, I would have to do a lot of homework and research to plan my science lessons, but with STEMeez, it gives you intentionality when talking to the children.'

The Invergowrie Foundation's continued and substantial investment underscores the vital role of philanthropy in tackling systemic challenges. With this latest boost, STEMeez is poised to transform the educational landscape.





Advancing telehealth to shape the future of nursing cancer care

Barry Lim

When a patient living hundreds of kilometres from Melbourne needs cancer care, distance should not be a barrier to receiving the same level of expertise and compassion as someone sitting in a clinic.

Yet for many Australians and for countless people worldwide, geography, time, and resources have long dictated who can access specialist care.

An ambitious project aimed at changing this has been made possible thanks to the support of Swinburne alumnus, the late Sun Heng (Barry) Lim.

Through his generosity, Barry helped lay the groundwork for a future-ready nursing workforce. It was a gift that reflected his lifelong commitment to innovation, education, and improving lives — even in the midst of his own health challenges.

Barry understood the huge part that telehealth now plays in meeting the needs of remote care. What started as an emergency response during the COVID-19 pandemic has become an expectation. Patients now look to technology for timely, flexible medical care.

But while telehealth has grown rapidly, nursing education has struggled to keep up. Few programs equip nurses with the skills to deliver consistent, high-quality remote care.

With essential support provided by Barry, this is the challenge that Swinburne and the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, in partnership with Professor Debra Jackson of the University of Sydney and other collaborators, have set out to solve.

Their Advancing Telehealth project is designed not just to fill gaps, but to redefine what cancer care can look like in the future.

At Peter Mac, nurse-led clinics are central to delivering cancer care. In 2023 alone, more than 6,000 consultations were conducted across eight specialist clinics. Yet despite this critical role, there are no consistent guidelines or formal orientation processes for nurses working in telehealth.

The Advancing Telehealth project is tackling this by embedding telehealth competencies into nursing education. It will develop

detailed curricula for students and practising professionals, creating clinical practice guidelines for assessments, triage, emergencies, and follow-ups. And it will pilot these tools in real clinical and educational settings.

The empowering nature of education was something Barry felt passionate about. He graduated in 1971 with a Diploma of Commerce and went on to build a career spanning finance, agriculture, and innovation. Yet no matter how far he travelled or what he achieved, he maintained a close association with Swinburne.

Barry's philosophy of giving was rooted in his family's history of giving back to the community. In 1912, his father, an orphan, received three years of primary schooling at the Methodist School in a small town in Malaysia.

'He later supported the schools in that same area, giving scholarships, funding the construction of school buildings, libraries, a science laboratory, and many more projects that facilitated learning,' said Barry.

'As for myself, I chose to give back to Swinburne because this is where my roots are.'

Despite his own cancer challenges, Barry continued to generously support the program until his passing earlier this year. His legacy continues to fund research that shapes the future of healthcare.

And the implications of this particular project reach far beyond a single hospital or university. By sharing learnings nationally and globally, it has the potential to influence cancer control and nursing education worldwide.

Barry's generosity will ensure nurses are equipped not only with compassion, but also with the digital fluency to deliver world-class care through new technologies, supporting so many more patients and survivors during their cancer journey.

Chemistry Futures Fund: A legacy for tomorrow's scientists

Vaclav and Peter Havlicek Chemistry Scholarship

Every breakthrough in chemistry tells a story. It's a story of curiosity, persistence, and the belief that science can change the world for the better.

A new chapter in that story is being written at Swinburne through the launch of the Chemistry Futures Fund — an initiative that not only honours the past but also looks boldly to the future.

With special thanks to the extraordinary generosity of the late Dr Peter Havlicek, a distinguished and much-respected member of Swinburne's Department of Chemistry, and his father, Vaclav, the first phase of the Chemistry Futures Fund has been catalysed.

Together, the Havlicek's commitment to advancing science and supporting education, will empower generations of chemists and biotechnologists to tackle the challenges of tomorrow.

Chemistry and biotechnology play a crucial role in developing solutions to address global challenges such as climate change, health, and sustainable energy. This research and knowledge are essential for creating evidence-based practices that enhance community well-being and promote technological advancements.

"Thanks to Peter and Vaclav Havlicek's philanthropic legacy, Swinburne is able to give the next generation of chemists the opportunity to make a real positive impact on scientific advancement."

Professor Enzo Palombo, Acting Executive Dean, School of Science, Computing and Emerging Technologies

Swinburne's Department of Chemistry and Biotechnology is at the forefront of this work, with the Chemistry Futures Fund supporting students and researchers through three key pillars:

- Scholarships that remove financial barriers and attract top talent from around the globe.
- Future-focused labs and equipment that provide access to the latest technology, ensuring students learn in environments that mirror industry and research settings.
- Leadership development opportunities such as global conferences, exchanges, and research experiences that prepare emerging scientists to lead on the world stage.



For those who knew him, Dr Peter Havlicek was more than a brilliant chemist — he was a mentor, an innovator, friend, and an inspiration. His research helped pave the way for environmentally friendly chemical solutions, but his greatest legacy may be the culture of curiosity and excellence he instilled in his students.

Peter's work embodies the university's spirit of innovation and impact. He believed deeply in the power of education to transform lives. His father, Vaclav, shared this vision, and together they ensured that the next generation of scientists would have opportunities to learn, grow, and lead with the support of generous scholarships and well-equipped laboratories.

The Chemistry Futures Fund, with future support from across the Swinburne community, will continue to carry this vision forward, creating a pathway for students to make discoveries that will shape industries and improve society on the whole.

The true impact of the university lies in the lives it changes and the ideas it brings to the world. And philanthropy is a key enabler to power this impact.

With the Chemistry Futures Fund, students from diverse backgrounds will have the chance to access world-class education and research opportunities. They will step into cutting-edge laboratories, work with advanced technologies, and connect with scientists and innovators across the globe.

These experiences will not only prepare them for successful careers but also equip them to solve the problems facing society today.

Like all great initiatives, the Chemistry Futures Fund is powered by generosity. The visionary gift of Peter and Vaclav Havlicek set the foundation, and continued support from donors will ensure the fund grows and thrives.

Over a decade of support for early career researchers

Barbara Dicker Brain Sciences Foundation



Founded in 2011 by Dr Ian Dicker AM and his family, the Barbara Dicker Brain Sciences Foundation (BDBSF) was created to honour the memory of his late wife, Barbara Dicker.

Since then, through its generous ongoing commitment, the Foundation has become a driving force behind pioneering research at Swinburne, awarding more than \$100,000 each year to projects tackling mental health conditions, sleep disorders, and dementia. The vision is clear — to discover new treatments, prevention strategies, and ultimately, cures.

Distinguished Professor Jim Oglloff AM, Executive Dean, School of Health Sciences, underlines the significance of the Foundation's contribution.

'The generous support the Barbara Dicker Brain Sciences Foundation has provided Swinburne over the past ten years has been remarkable. Not only in terms of funding vital breakthroughs, but also by providing students and early career researchers a pathway to meaningful careers in mental health and brain science.'

Beyond funding vital breakthroughs, the BDBSF also invests in people. By supporting students and early career researchers, the Foundation helps launch meaningful careers in brain science.

As the Foundation's Chair, Dr Tony Dicker explains, 'With early career researchers, we can say, here's someone we were able to assist by funding some of their research early on — and then over time, we see them go on to do many other things as well.'

One of those researchers is Professor Sunil Bhar, who has had a number of projects generously supported by the BDBSF.

'Ten-plus years ago, there were a couple of projects of Sunil's that we funded,' says Tony. 'From those initial projects, he had some good data, which gave him information to use for larger projects and grants.'

'We've watched that evolution from his early career all the way through to being in charge of a significant-sized grant for a multidisciplinary dementia clinic.'

Tony has also witnessed the evolution of research priorities. 'There's been a lot more focus on mental health and related issues over the past fifteen years. More frequently now, researchers are applying for grants relating to using certain technologies to achieve a certain outcome.'

Swinburne is deeply grateful and proud to partner with the Barbara Dicker Brain Sciences Foundation, supporting researchers like those highlighted here to advance research that changes lives.

Professor Sunil Bhar

Could mobile apps transform how we support people living with dementia, offering easy access to brain training anytime, anywhere? Professor Sunil Bhar is leading a BDBSF-funded study to find out which apps truly improve cognitive stimulation.

Says Sunil, 'While countless apps promise memory benefits through engaging features, their effectiveness hasn't been fully tested. This systematic review will examine existing research to uncover what works best, and why. I am grateful to the BDBSF for their ongoing support of this vital work.'

The findings guided smarter app design, ensuring technology delivers real benefits. By identifying the most effective tools, this work could change dementia care — making cognitive support as accessible as a smartphone or tablet.

Professor Susan Rossell

Too stressed to think clearly? Stress doesn't just affect mood — it can cloud thinking, slow learning, and even fuel mental illness. Professor Susan Rossell is exploring why, by studying both biological and lifestyle factors that influence the impact stress has on cognition.

With generous support from the BDBSF, her team will use microarray gene expression profiling to investigate genetic activity alongside coping styles and early life stress. By studying these effects in healthy individuals, the research aims to reveal what makes some people more resilient to stress.

The findings have laid the foundation for larger clinical studies and new interventions designed to reduce stress, protect thinking, and support mental health.

Dr Neil Thomas

How we see ourselves shapes recovery from mental illness. But for people living with persistent conditions like depression or schizophrenia, their sense of identity can be deeply affected by societal stigma, cultural attitudes, treatment experiences, and loss of social roles.

Led by Professor Neil Thomas FAIDH FCCLP, Director National eTherapy Centre, Centre for Mental Health and Brain Science, Swinburne University of Technology, this BDBSF-funded project seeded a research collaboration with Stanford University. Combining surveys with in-depth interviews, the study aims to uncover how identity influences healing.

Explains Neil, 'Negative self-views are linked to poorer outcomes, while redefining identity can be key to recovery. We are so appreciative of the BDBSF's invaluable support of this study, which will guide better therapies, peer support programs, and online tools, offering new hope for lasting recovery.'

Dr Matthew Hughes

Supported by the BDBSF, Dr Matthew Hughes is studying how changes in brain blood vessel health may play a key role in Alzheimer's disease and its impact on memory and thinking.

"Cerebrovascular Reactivity (CVR) — how well blood vessels respond to carbon dioxide — can reveal the health of the brain's vascular system," he explains. "By widening vessels and improving blood flow, CVR may influence cognitive function."

'I am grateful for the generous support from the BDBSF, which enables us to use Transcranial Doppler Ultrasound and MRI to measure vessel health and link it to cognitive functioning. Our study aims to deepen understanding of Alzheimer's and lay the groundwork for tests and treatments that improve brain blood flow and slow cognitive decline.'

Associate Professor Andrea Phillipou

Why do people with anorexia nervosa (AN) sleep so poorly? AN is a devastating mental illness with high rates of depression and suicide, alongside severe physical effects.

Poor sleep makes recovery even harder, because it can contribute to increased symptoms of depression and AN. Thanks to funding from the BDBSF, Associate Professor Andrea Phillipou's study is digging deeper.

'We truly appreciate the valuable support from the BDBSF, which is enabling us to collect detailed data to pinpoint the relationship between sleep problems and eating disorder symptoms in AN,' she says. 'The goal is to develop better, targeted treatments that improve sleep, mental health, and overall outcomes for those living with this devastating illness.'

Dr Sean Carruthers

Why do some people's memories fade faster than others? Dr Sean Carruthers is deploying his BDBSF grant to investigate whether the brain's muscarinic system — a key chemical messenger network — holds the answer.

While gradual memory decline is a normal part of ageing, dementia accelerates this process dramatically. Animal studies show the muscarinic system is crucial for healthy memory processing, but its role in humans is largely unknown.

Says Sean, 'Thanks to the generous support of the BDBSF, we have been able to study over 150 adults with chronic mental health conditions through memory tests, brain scans, blood analysis, and sleep monitoring. These results may lead to better detection and treatments for sleep disturbances in numerous mental health conditions.'

Sean also appreciates that whilst the philanthropic BDBSF grants are advancing scientific understanding, they are also instrumental in providing opportunities and training to both early-career researchers like himself, and to undergraduate and postgraduate students. 'The grants that are awarded help fund student projects, who then go on to either further postgraduate study or into clinical practice,' he says.

Associate Professor Elisabeth Lambert

Depression doesn't just affect the mind — it may also strain the heart, especially in people with anorexia nervosa.

Associate Professor Elisabeth Lambert's BDBSF-funded research shows that around a third of patients with depression have high activity of nerves in their heart, which can enlarge the heart or damage blood vessels, raising the risk of serious cardiac complications. Elisabeth suspects that anorexia patients with high depression levels face even greater cardiovascular danger.

'We are thankful for the valuable support from the BDBSF, which will help us compare heart, nerve, and vessel function in patients with and without depression,' she explains. 'This should reveal how mental health drives heart disease in anorexia — and hopefully pave the way for better, targeted care.'





Philanthropy powers a revolution in astronomical imaging

Eric Ormond Baker Charitable Trust

High atop the volcanic summit of Maunakea, Hawaii, the giant W. M. Keck Observatory stands poised to peer deeper into the cosmos and unlock the secrets of the universe. And it will soon do so with unprecedented clarity and depth.

Thanks to generous philanthropic support, including from the Eric Ormond Baker Charitable Trust, a groundbreaking instrument — the Wide-Field Imager (WFI) — is being designed by Swinburne.

Trustee Graeme Baker feels the WFI development fits perfectly with his great-uncle Eric's intentions. 'One of the great things about this project is that he believed in opening doors for others. His Will specifically called for the support of education, science, and benevolence.'

'So, continuing that through Swinburne's astrophysics program feels like it's living out his intentions, and that's important for me as a trustee of his legacy.'

The WFI is a revolutionary ultraviolet (UV)-sensitive, optical, wide-field imaging system being designed to capture the faintest glimmers of light across vast stretches of the sky.

Existing instruments cannot meet the astronomical community's increasing demands for extreme depth, rapid response, and large-scale imaging — especially in the UV spectrum. Without such a tool, many cosmic mysteries remain just out of reach.

The WFI project is led by Distinguished Professor Jean Brodie and Professor Jeff Cooke, from Swinburne's Centre for Astrophysics and Supercomputing. Once funding is secured for the build, it will allow astronomers to see farther, faster, and more comprehensively than ever before.

Graeme Baker recently had the opportunity to visit the Keck Observatory. 'Standing up at 14,000 feet with Dr Marc Kassis, the Instrument Program Manager at Keck, and Professor Jeff Cooke, what struck me was how down-to-earth the whole team was,' he says.

'Jeff was explaining exoplanet research in a way that felt vast, but also quite immediate. And I realised that the Keck Wide Field Imager is not just an upgrade, it's a key to questions that many scientists haven't even thought to ask yet.'

Swinburne is leading the international collaboration with Caltech, the University of California, Yale University, and NASA to design, build, and deploy the WFI. This camera will be installed in the prime focus cage of the Keck telescopes — immense instruments weighing 300 tons and standing six stories high yet operating with nanometre-level precision.

At the heart of the instrument are innovations that philanthropy is helping enable, that will push technology to its limits. High-throughput optics, UV-optimised sensors, and rapid-response multiplexing mean the WFI can detect the faintest UV light and react to transient events in real time.

Swinburne Factory of the Future has fabricated and tested components like the filter exchanger and shutter, using Industry 4.0 technologies such as digital twins and smart sensors to help make the WFI the first 'smart instrument'.

Local industry partners helped test these components under conditions replicating the environment atop Maunakea. And behind the scenes, Swinburne's Astronomy Data and Computer Services (ADACS) is building the Instrument Control Software and Data Reduction Pipeline.

Says Graeme, 'I think it's really amazing that Swinburne is part of this science group and they're developing these things right here in Melbourne.'

'As philanthropists, we like to fund projects that are already on a success trajectory but just need extra help to develop. Directly supporting this project, Jeff and his team invited us to be a part of a shared mission — it was really cool.'

The potential scientific discoveries and impacts are vast. From uncovering the sources of gravitational waves to studying transient astronomical events and probing the early universe, the WFI will redefine what is possible in astrophysics.

We are deeply grateful to be able to expand these possibilities thanks to the support of the Eric Ormond Baker Charitable Trust.

STUDENT SUCCESS

STEM and Robotics play program boosts school readiness for Indigenous children

Collier Charitable Fund

For children in remote Indigenous communities across Australia, the transition to primary school can be daunting. Early educational experiences shape lifelong learning, yet many children face barriers that impact school participation and confidence.

Thanks to generous funding from the Collier Charitable Fund, a Swinburne initiative aims to change this narrative, using STEM and Robotics play to prepare Indigenous children for school in a culturally safe and engaging way.

Co-created with educators, Swinburne's Moondani Toombadool Centre and Associate Professor Wendy Goff, this evidence-based early childhood program has already proven its impact. Last year, it helped improve school readiness skills in young children across eight kindergarten settings in disadvantaged Victorian communities. Now — with targeted philanthropic funding and collaborative partnerships — the program is being scaled so that Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory can bring play-based learning to both home and formal school environments.

The Collier Charitable Fund was established under the Wills of three sisters, Alice, Annette, and Edith Collier, to improve the lives of those in need. The foresight and generosity of these women in the 1800s now contribute in excess of \$131 million to benefit Australians in need. They were ahead of their time, and we believe would be thrilled that they were at the forefront of STEM play pathways.

STEM pathways are about curiosity, problem-solving, and confidence. By integrating robotics and STEM play into early learning, children develop skills and attitudes that make the transition to school smoother, while also valuing their cultural identity.

The program is co-designed with an Indigenous advisory group, local educators, and parents. This ensures activities are culturally relevant, enjoyable, and tailored to the needs of each community. Children explore problem-solving, numeracy, communication, social-emotional skills, and self-regulation.

Adults support the learning process using step-by-step prompts, while children engage in hands-on, interactive activities documented via diaries, online journals, and PhotoVoice methodology — a process that lets children tell their stories through pictures.

Enabled by the generous support of the Colliers Charitable Fund, researchers will visit participating schools bi-annually and conduct fortnightly online sessions with educators and families.



“Swinburne’s STEM and Robotics play is a fun and highly engaging early childhood education program for children that encourages an enquiring mind and eagerness to learn. We feel truly privileged to be able to support this vital program in changing the trajectories of so many children.”

Collier Charitable Fun

Using data mapped against the Australian Early Development Instrument (AEDI, 2021), the team monitors children’s progress and develops resources to enhance learning outcomes.

The aim is for children to gain skills and confidence, while parents and educators feel capable and motivated to continue using the program.

The program’s short-term objectives:

- 30% of participating children will improve in language, communication, social-emotional skills, and attitude towards learning.
- 30% will gain skills in problem-solving and numeracy, boosting motivation and school attendance.
- Parents’ and carers’ awareness of school readiness will increase, helping normalise the transition to primary education.
- 25% of educators and parents will feel confident using program resources independently.
- Children’s learning journeys will extend seamlessly into primary schooling.

The Collier Charitable Fund’s generosity means that beyond its immediate impact, the program can also implement its long-term ambitions — with plans to share findings locally through online seminars, nationally via early childhood symposia, and internationally through academic publications.

The evidence gathered will support future scaling across Australia, including online and in-person STEM opportunities in museums, libraries, and cultural centres. The Collier Charitable Fund’s visionary investment will help inspire increased support for the program, offering even more children the tools, confidence, and curiosity to thrive in school and beyond.

Encouraging the best female minds to advance Australia's STEM capability

Women in STEM Futures Fund



With vital philanthropic support from passionate members of the Swinburne community, Swinburne is unlocking the potential of bright minds to shape a future of innovation, equity, and excellence.

At the heart of this mission is the next gen Futures Funds — created with alumni, industry, and philanthropic partners. These industry-specific excellence groups offer scholarships, as well as real-world experiences, leadership development, and cutting-edge learning environments and equipment, as well as entrepreneurial opportunities.

Among these initiatives, the Women in STEM Futures Fund addresses the persistent underrepresentation of women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

As Professor Laura-Anne Bull, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education, Experience and Employability, explains, our generous donors are helping build a pipeline of career-ready graduates ready to lead with confidence and creativity.

'We are immensely grateful to our philanthropic partners for their support of the Women in STEM Futures Fund,' she says.

'These investments give female students access to transformational learning experiences, through which they are provided with the skills and encouragement to pursue their ambitions.'

Here are just some of the many Women in STEM Futures Fund scholarships kindly supported by our donors.



The Claire Sorati Scholarship for Women

Distinguished Swinburne University alumnus, Claire Sorati lived a life defined by achievement and generosity. Working for 11 years as a beloved teacher and later as a corporate trainer, she believed in creating opportunities for women, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to pursue STEM careers.

Following her mother’s death, Claire established the Alba Sorati Scholarship for Women, supporting and inspiring women in the sciences.

‘It will hopefully make a difference to somebody and knowing that people will benefit from the scholarship makes me happy, and I know it would make Mum happy,’ Claire said.

And thanks to her own generous bequest, Claire’s commitment to learning has been endowed with the establishment of the Claire Sorati Foundation, which has already enabled seven students to achieve their dreams.

Offering full financial support for four years, these scholarships support female students from government high schools studying Science, Engineering, or Information and Communication Technologies.

Adrian Di Marco Women in Software Development Scholarship

Named after founder Adrian Di Marco, who launched *TechnologyOne* in 1987 as one of Australia’s first tech startups, the scholarship continues his vision of transforming industries with software.

TechnologyOne CEO, Ed Chung, says, ‘This scholarship is an opportunity to support the next generation of coders, architects, and entrepreneurs who will power Australia’s economy... and our goal to bring more women into senior roles across our organisation.’

Inaugural scholarship recipient, Teisha Damman, is studying a Bachelor of Information and Communications Technology. Teisha hopes to pursue cybersecurity and build safer online environments. The scholarship’s financial support, mentoring, and an internship help bring that dream closer.

‘I’ve been working full-time since I was 16, so being able to step up and receive that support has helped me to focus more on building that goal of mine,’ she says.

International Aerospace Womens Association Scholarship

The International Aerospace Womens Association (IAWA) is a non-profit association with members in 38 countries, dedicated to promoting the advancement of women in the aviation and aerospace industries.

The generous scholarship provides financial support, return flights and accommodation to attend the IAWA Global Conference, and a one-year IAWA membership.

Recent recipient, aviation student Beatrice Lorenzo, plans to obtain her Private Pilot Licence upon graduation, aiming for a balance between flying recreationally and her future career in aviation management.

‘I am truly grateful for IAWA’s support, and I am motivated to pay it forward when I graduate, by supporting more women to succeed in STEM careers,’ she says.

Violet Louise Bonner Postgraduate Scholarship for Women

This scholarship was generously established by Swinburne alumnus Kate Brown in memory of her late mother, Violet Louise Bonner.

The scholarship supports female postgraduate students to complete their studies in the sciences, particularly where their research aims to translate into innovative products or processes to assist the community.

Says Katherine Goldman, Associate Director, Philanthropy, ‘Postgraduate scholarships are rarely provided, and yet they have never been more important in helping to close the STEM gender gap. We are truly grateful for Kate’s generous support in memory of her mother and trailblazer, Violet Louise Bonner — it is making a remarkable difference.’

carsales Foundation — Women in STEM Scholarship

With gratitude to carsales.com, a leading online digital marketplace, this generous scholarship aims to promote gender equality in tech, and inspire the next generation of women to build impactful careers in the technology industry.

The carsales Foundation is a charitable fund which supports the education of the next generation to help address the inequalities that remain in the technology industry.

The scholarship offers support for up to four years, and to date three talented female students studying Computer Science or Information Technology have been helped along their journey.

Says Luke Bell, Director, Advancement, ‘Our sincere thanks to carsales.com for their significant support. The carsales.com scholarship is providing women a life-changing pathway into STEM careers.’

Pridmore Scholarships for Women in STEM

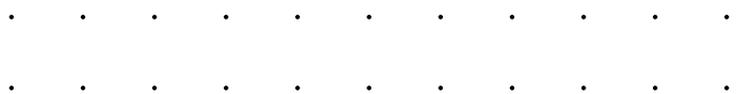
Local identity, Fannie Pridmore was the widow of J Brook Pridmore, a respected Hawthorn councillor appointed to the Swinburne College Council in 1935 and later President — and these scholarships were generously funded from Fannie’s estate.

Their legacy has continued to support vital programs right across Swinburne, including enabling more women to succeed within the field of STEM. This year alone, the fund has supported three first-year female students enrolled in Vocational Education and Training (VET) or Higher Education STEM courses, with each life-changing scholarship covering the duration of their course.

The CitiPower, Powercor and United Energy Women in Engineering Scholarship

Created to help high-performing female electrical engineering students, this impactful scholarship provides financial support for up to three years. Recipients are also offered the invaluable opportunity to participate in a 12-week paid internship focused on sustainability projects.

CitiPower, Powercor and United Energy provide safe, reliable and affordable electricity supplies to over a million residential and commercial customers across Victoria. This generous scholarship reflects the companies’ commitment to inspiring women to pursue careers shaping a sustainable energy future.



Swinburne's culture of generosity

Staff and Community Scholarships & Ethel Swinburne Society

Moving to a new city, juggling work and study, and covering basic living costs can create barriers that prevent even the most determined learners from reaching their potential.



Swinburne Amplify

Swinburne staff are helping to remove those barriers through Amplify — the Swinburne Staff Giving Program which enables staff to support the next generation of change-makers by helping provide scholarships for deserving students.

Luke Bell, Director of Advancement, explains the impact. 'Being a student can be tough, particularly when you're trying to study and you're having to work part-time. I would hate the idea that someone was not able to achieve their full potential because they couldn't afford to go to university.'

For the students themselves, the difference is profound. Rory, a scholarship recipient, recalls the challenges of moving for study. 'I used to live four hours north of Melbourne, so it was quite a trip to come down here. Growing up, especially in the country, my family made quite a lot of sacrifices so that I could get a decent education.'

Cinder, another recipient, shares how the scholarship transformed her study experience. 'Receiving the scholarship has meant that I've been able to reduce hours of work, so then I've had more time available to study and really commit to getting the highest grades that I can with my degree.'

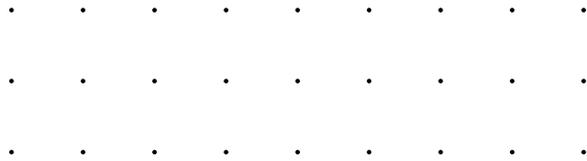
Staff themselves find giving through Amplify easy and rewarding, as Virginia Kilborn, Chief Scientist, explains.

'These scholarships can really help somebody who may not have come to university or may not have studied this particular degree to actually have an opportunity to do that.'

Marion Ware, a Swinburne alum, shares her motivation for supporting students through scholarships. 'Swinburne really did open the doors for me professionally and personally, and I wanted to give other people, who were not so lucky, the opportunity to be able to embark on that quest of becoming better at what you do and changing other people's lives.'

Luke Bell emphasises this, 'A huge thank you to all involved in Amplify, enabling an incredible impact through these scholarships, helping to change the lives of many students needing support.'





Ethel Swinburne Society

We want to honour all the people leaving a gift in their Will to Swinburne — all the members of the Ethel Swinburne Society. By letting us know about your intentions, we can honour your generosity and support during your lifetime.

The Society is named in honour of Ethel Swinburne, one of our founders. A philanthropist both during her lifetime and through her bequest, Ethel championed women's education at a time when many were encouraged to leave school and become homemakers.

In 2025 we awarded the inaugural Ethel Swinburne Society Scholarship in Nursing, funded by members of the Ethel Swinburne Society. This scholarship helps students facing educational disadvantage, with preference given to Indigenous students.

Through support channels like these, Members of the Swinburne community, including staff, are doing more than donating — they are transforming lives and helping build a better world. Thank you.

“We are deeply grateful for the generosity of the Swinburne community in helping to shift the dial for students who otherwise couldn't afford to go to university.”

Luke Bell, Director of Advancement





SNXG scholarships empower future engineers

Technotia Laboratories

For many aspiring engineers, the jump from study to career can feel like a leap into the unknown. The Swinburne Engineering Excellence Group (SNXG) scholarships are designed to bridge that gap — turning potential into real-world achievement.

Each scholarship opens doors to practical experience, peer-to-peer mentoring, and engagement with industry experts — a combination that equips students with the skills, confidence, and networks they need to succeed beyond the classroom.

Swinburne is truly grateful to Technotia Laboratories for the visionary investment that has been made in establishing the SNXG program.

Founded by Swinburne Professor James Murray-Parkes, Technotia provides mentoring and guidance. James also created SNXG and is a world leader in high-end problem solving, innovation, and design.

Professor Emad Gad, Executive Dean, School of Engineering, recognises the impact Technotia is enabling. 'Technotia has been actively supporting students to experience real-world projects, working alongside their multi-disciplinary team,' he says.

'Students get exposure to expertise in structural, mechanical, materials, and electrical engineering, as well as physics, design, and innovation. It's an incredibly creative learning experience for them.'

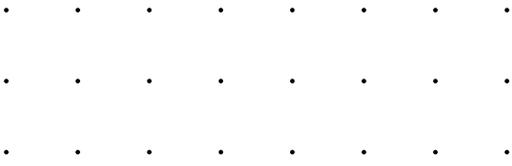
Ensuring students understand the necessary balance between the benefits of technology with the requirements of regulatory frameworks and stakeholder expectations is vital to their education. She explains how the partnership with Swinburne came about.

James likes to work with incredible people, so he was drawn to finding that intersection between the university, what Technotia does, and our clients.'

'We like working on projects that other people haven't been able to fix,' adds James. 'That means we're often called in to different businesses, different sectors, different types of problems, but we take that scientific, rigorous approach.'

The difference each Technotia-funded SNXG Scholarship makes is tangible and the students are incredibly grateful for this support. Ethan Suffern, Bachelor of Engineering (Honours), says, 'This scholarship supported me in my move to Melbourne from rural Northeast Victoria. I am just so appreciative of this support, giving me the opportunity to pursue the relevant studies to achieve a career in engineering.'

Madeleine O'Brien, Bachelor of Engineering (Product Design), says, 'Without the pressure to work to cover expenses, I was able to keep a High Distinction average and dedicate time to helping to tutor other students in subjects to help them achieve higher grades. This support has been truly life-changing.'



Dakota Sabine, Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) (Professional), also appreciates the opportunity to focus on and excel in her studies.

‘This means I will complete my studies to a better standard, and I will have a deeper understanding of the concepts, which means I will be a better engineer. I am motivated to pay it forward, and am grateful for the impact that the SNXG has had on my life so far.’

Through their placements at Technotia, scholars gain far more than professional experience — they become part of a supportive community that values curiosity, collaboration, and innovation. Working alongside experienced engineers, they’re encouraged to share ideas, ask questions, and learn from real-world challenges in a setting that celebrates growth and creativity.

This close connection between Technotia’s team and the scholarship recipients foster a strong sense of belonging and shared purpose. It’s a community built on mentorship and mutual respect, where each student is supported to develop their skills, confidence, and vision for the future — and where lasting professional and personal relationships take root.

By generously combining scholarships, mentorship, and hands-on experience, SNXG and Technotia Laboratories are doing more than supporting education — they’re shaping the next generation of engineers.

“Through their generosity, James and everyone at Technotia have created a unique pathway that gives engineering students an encouraging and collaborative opportunity to shine. On behalf of the next generation of engineers — thank you.”

**Professor Emad Gad, Executive Dean,
School of Engineering**

Ensuring the brightest students can study at Swinburne

The George Alexander Foundation

Among Swinburne's most prestigious and transformative awards, the George Alexander Foundation (GAF) Scholarships stand as a testament to the life-changing impact that philanthropy can have on young Australians.

Established at Swinburne in 2007, this generous program was created to support talented students from rural and regional Australia who dream of pursuing higher education in Melbourne.

Each scholarship, valued at \$24,000 over the length of a degree, recognises students who not only excel in their studies but also demonstrate strong leadership potential and a commitment to giving back.

Swinburne's Katherine Goldman, Associate Director, Philanthropy, reflects on Swinburne's deep appreciation for the kindness of the George Alexander Foundation.

'We are immensely grateful to the Foundation for its financial support of these outstanding students, and to Mairead Phillips and Nina Beer from GAF for their ongoing support of education,' she says.

Founded in 1972 by the late industrialist and philanthropist Mr George Alexander AM, the Foundation was built on a simple belief — that education has the power to transform lives and strengthen communities.

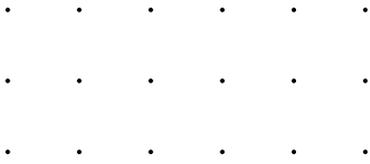
Its mission continues to focus on supporting access to education for promising young people, particularly those from remote areas. By helping students overcome barriers and realise their potential, the Foundation ensures that George Alexander's generosity continues to ripple outward, shaping future generations.

George Alexander himself believed in 'planting seeds and hoping they grow into pretty big trees.' Through this vision, the Foundation has nurtured thousands of students who, after graduating, go on to make meaningful contributions to society.

At Swinburne, the GAF Scholarships are strengthened further by the GAF Scholars Network, established in 2008. This peer-support community ensures that new scholars receive guidance from existing ones, easing the transition to university life and city living.

The network fosters connection, collaboration, and leadership, providing scholars with mentoring, academic and social opportunities, and membership in an Australia-wide GAF Scholars cohort.





For many recipients, this support is truly transformative. GAF scholarship recipient, Kit Henseleit, shares how it eased the move from Nhill to Melbourne to study a Bachelor of Interior Design and Business.

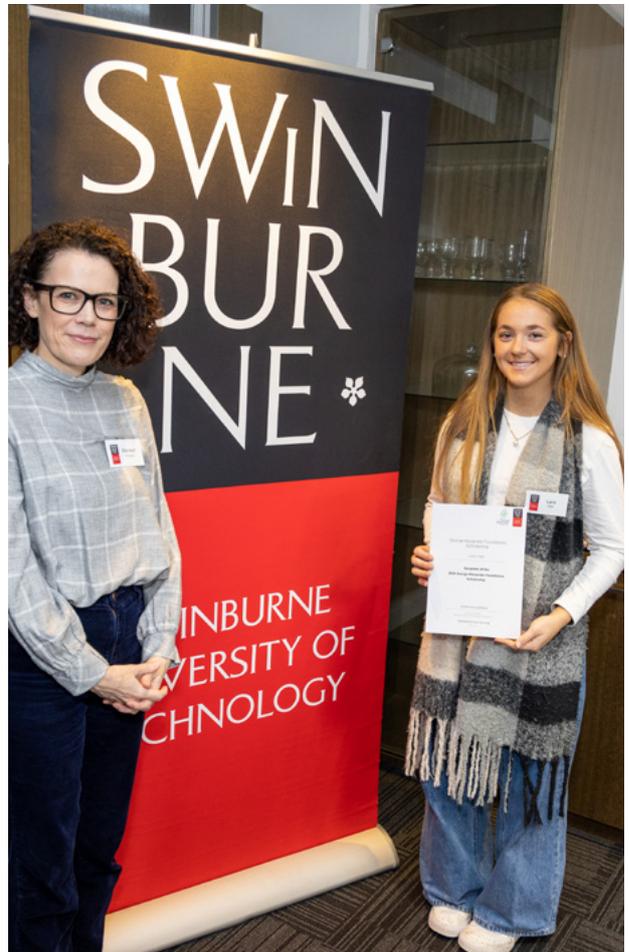
‘The George Alexander Foundation nurtures you, and it was a great way to have a support network in a place you haven’t been before,’ she says.

GAF scholar, Grace Griffith, echoes this sentiment. ‘The George Alexander Foundation scholars network is one of the most valuable components of the scholarship. The GAF team and scholars were among some of the first people I met when I moved to Melbourne. I love that it’s such a support network.’

Through the unwavering generosity of the George Alexander Foundation, over a hundred Swinburne students have been given the chance to thrive. Swinburne remains profoundly grateful for this partnership — one that continues to transform lives, inspire achievement, and honour George Alexander’s enduring legacy.

“We are incredibly grateful and proud that the George Alexander Foundation established this generous scholarship program with Swinburne, providing regional students with a world-class tertiary education.”

Luke Bell, Director of Advancement



“On behalf of everyone who has been positively impacted by your generosity, I want to express my gratitude to you and all who support the university and its community. Your commitment to Swinburne has made a big impact on our shared academic goals and helped us achieve remarkable success.”



Thank you

Luke Bell
Director, Advancement

Looking back on the past year, your generosity has created a positive learning environment where creativity and excellence flourish.

Your support has allowed us to fulfil our mission of bringing people and technology together for a better world. Your contributions are empowering the next generation of leaders and thinkers.

This report shows how your investments in education have transformed lives. From providing scholarships to deserving students, to funding world class research, your generosity has left a lasting impact on Swinburne, its students and its academics.

The stories in this report are not just numbers; they are tales of ambition, perseverance, and success. Looking ahead, we are inspired by your dedication to our university's mission and vision. Your ongoing partnership is crucial in shaping the future of our institution and society. Together, we are creating a legacy that goes beyond generations, making a positive impact on the world through the education and opportunities we provide to our students.

I want to express my deepest appreciation for your invaluable contributions. Your belief in the power of education and research is making a significant difference in the lives of our students and the world more broadly. I encourage you to explore this report to see the tangible outcomes of your support.

Thank you once again.



Ways to give

Through Swinburne's Together for a Better World, we are empowering a new generation of changemakers equipped to confront global challenges head-on. Your philanthropic support will ensure that the ripple effects are felt for generations to come.

Your gift

Philanthropy at Swinburne transforms lives. Every gift — no matter the size — joins a collective effort to spark meaningful change. Whether it's opening doors for a single student through a scholarship or driving discovery through groundbreaking research, your support helps shape a brighter, more equitable world.

Your advocacy

By standing with Swinburne as a philanthropic advocate, you amplify the causes that matter most to you. When you champion a passion or purpose, you help turn inspiration into action — accelerating impact and inspiring others to join the journey.

Your support matters

Philanthropy

To make a tailored gift towards a specific area that will make an important difference, we would love to hear from you. Please contact Advancement's Philanthropy Team on +61 3 9214 4409 or by email to giving@swinburne.edu.au.

Gift In Will

Including Swinburne in your Will is a way of providing enduring support for the next generation and things you care about. If you have included Swinburne in your Will, or are thinking about doing so, please let us know. We would love to welcome you as a new member of [The Ethel Swinburne Society](#).

Giving Online

Support specific priorities by giving online visit advancement.swinburne.edu.au/giving.

Volunteering

To learn more about volunteering and mentoring at Swinburne, visit advancement.swinburne.edu.au/mentor-and-volunteer.

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