



Issue 4, December 2025

Welcome to the latest issue of the ITTC in Optimal Ageing newsletter.

This year has been one of tremendous growth. With 14 Industry Partners and the majority of Project Agreements now signed, we've welcomed eight PhD students and appointed Dr Catherine Robb as our Postdoctoral Researcher. We also held our first training workshop and launched our webinar series.

Next year, we look forward to welcoming two additional Industry Partners (to be announced in 2026), onboarding five new PhD students in January/February, continuing our webinar series and delivering further workshops and training opportunities. We're also looking forward to hosting our first Research Showcase, with details to be shared in 2026.

Yen and Dana 🗨️ 🤖

A Milestone Moment: Our First Training Workshop



The ITTC in Optimal Ageing PhD student cohort. From left to right Deepangika Pillai, Joshua Ee, Shelci Martin, Irushi Ediriweera, Rachel Sinanan, Shloka Dhareshwar, Anna Sochiera, Basil George.

In November, we achieved an exciting milestone for our Centre, as we held our first training workshop. It was a significant moment for our Directors, Professor Yen Ying Lim and Professor Dana Kulić, to see our

Postdoctoral and PhD student cohort come together for the first time. Thank you to our Partner Investigators Ken Liang, Jeanna Manifold and Paul Maruff, and our Chief Investigators Associate Professor Roisin McNaney, Professor Colette Browning and Professor Patrick Olivier for attending and sharing their experience and expertise.

After a fun ice breaker activity that challenged participants to solve an impossible health or digital health problem, the workshop featured a microtraining program designed by Dr Ling Wu and Professor Patrick Olivier. The program introduced foundational concepts across Co-design, Implementation Science, Systems and Web Engineering in Healthcare, Health Equity and AI for Health. We extend our sincere thanks to our presenters Dr Anu Ivaturi, Dr Alex Waddell, Dr Delvin Varghese, Dr Siew Lim, Dr Jue Xie, Dr Jackie Rong and Dr Ling Wu for generously sharing their expertise and insights.

A particular highlight was the Speed Mentoring session facilitated by Dr Catherine Robb, where mentors Professor Colette Browning, Professor Paul Maruff, Associate Professor Roisin McNaney and Dr Lisa Bransby provided guidance and career perspectives on a range of topics including how to navigate the first year of your PhD and working effectively with industry partners. We also appreciated the candid reflections shared during the Career Development Panel, featuring Professor Yen Ying Lim, Dr Delvin Varghese, Dr Catherine Robb and Dr Ling Wu, who responded to questions posed by the cohort.

We're looking forward to offering our cohort more training, connection and development opportunities in 2026.

If you or someone you know is conducting research in the field of ageing, and would like to be invited to attend our workshops and other events, we welcome applications from Affiliates. As an Affiliate, you'll have access to networking opportunities, invitations to training workshops and industry events, and competitive funding for travel and conferences. Becoming an Affiliate is easy—just fill out a short application form ([linked here](#)). We'd love to have you join us and be part of our cohort.



Meet Shloka Dhareshwar

PhD project: The usability and effectiveness of speech and language features used in a telehealth-administered cognitive assessment platform

We're excited to welcome Shloka Dhareshwar to Monash University. Shloka will be supervised by Professor Yen Ying Lim, Dr Catherine Robb and Adam Vogel from our Industry Partner Redenlab. Her PhD will focus on assessing the feasibility and usability of telehealth cognitive assessments in older Australians and identifying language, speech and voice patterns for automated cognitive assessment. Shloka brings an impressive background in data analysis and computational modelling, neuroscience research and experimental techniques, and communication and public engagement. Read more about Shloka [here](#).



Meet Rachel Sinanan

PhD project: Understanding Current Digital Health Literacy Levels and Related Training Needs of Adult Clients Aged 45+, with an Aim to Co-develop and Prototype Tailored Solutions Ready for Future Roll Out



We're pleased to introduce Rachel, a PhD student from Federation University, who is undertaking her PhD project focused on strengthening digital health literacy among adults aged 45 and over. This group of adults is increasingly required to navigate digitised healthcare systems, due to rapid increases in the use of digital technologies, but often face higher exclusion rates. Digital technology use has been shown to be beneficial to positive health outcomes. Rachel is supervised by Associate Professor George van Doorn and she is working with industry partners Flourish Australia, WellAware and the City Of Ballarat.

Rachel's project recognises that midlife and beyond is a period of continued growth and emerging wisdom, as highlighted in positive and humanistic psychology. Yet many adults experience biological challenges, such as changes in vision or cognitions, alongside psychological barriers like lower technology confidence. Improving digital health literacy can enhance autonomy, reduce isolation, and support more meaningful sustained engagement with healthcare.

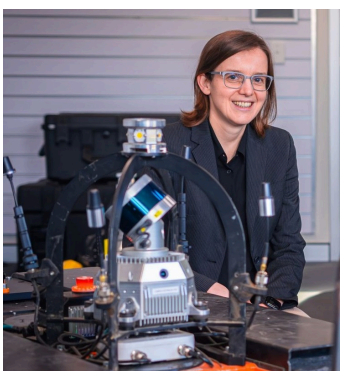
To address these needs, Rachel will assess digital health literacy through an expanded bio-psycho-social-digital framework. This holistic approach will guide the co-development of tailored, person-centred training and prototype solutions that go beyond technical skills, focusing instead on building confidence, critical thinking, and genuine empowerment.

Rachel's work will play an important role in shaping more inclusive and effective digital health support for adults aged 45+.

Read more about Rachel [here](#).

Webinars

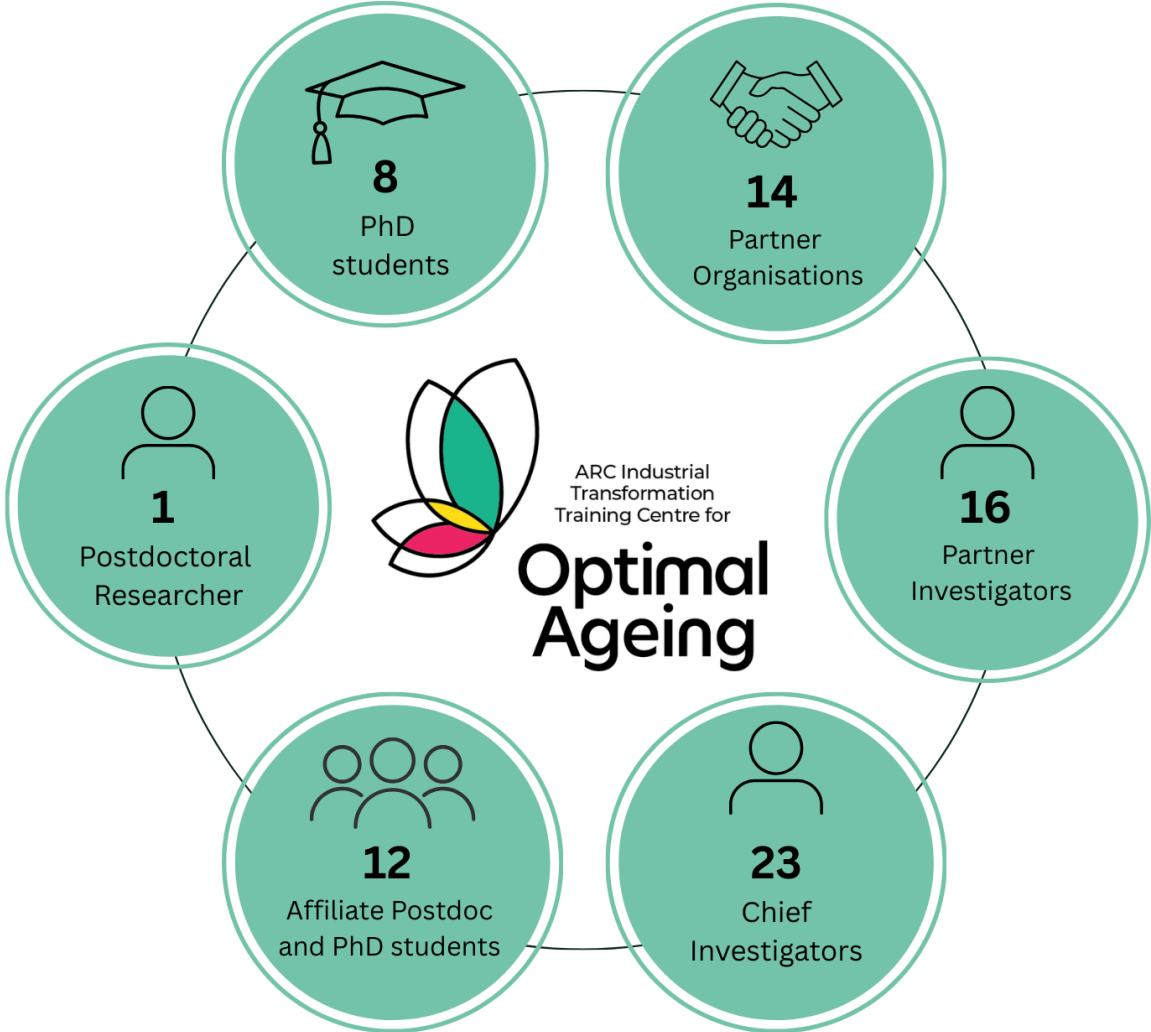
This year, we launched our webinar series with a presentation by Professor Dana Kulić '*Monitoring and Enhancing Mobility*'. Many older adults experience significant declines in mobility as they age, due to a variety of illnesses including stroke, Parkinson's, arthritis and others. In her talk, Dana described sensors, algorithms and AI-enabled strategies for monitoring and enhancing mobility and independence of older adults. The webinar is available for viewing from our website <https://optimalageingcentre.com.au/webinars/>



In 2026, we look forward to hosting more webinars, with presentations from our Partner and Chief Investigators, Postdoctoral Researcher and PhD students. Our first webinar for the year will be given by our PhD students Basil George and Rachel Sinanan on 2 February 2026 at 11 am. They will introduce their projects and give a progress update. More details to follow.

If you'd like to receive communication about our webinars, please email karen.little@monash.edu.

Our Centre



Our Industry Partners

We're proud to collaborate with partners across government, peak body, technology development and mental health support sectors, all committed to the health and wellness of the community.



REDENLAB

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