

# Impact Report 2025

**Your support.  
Our stories.  
Their success.**



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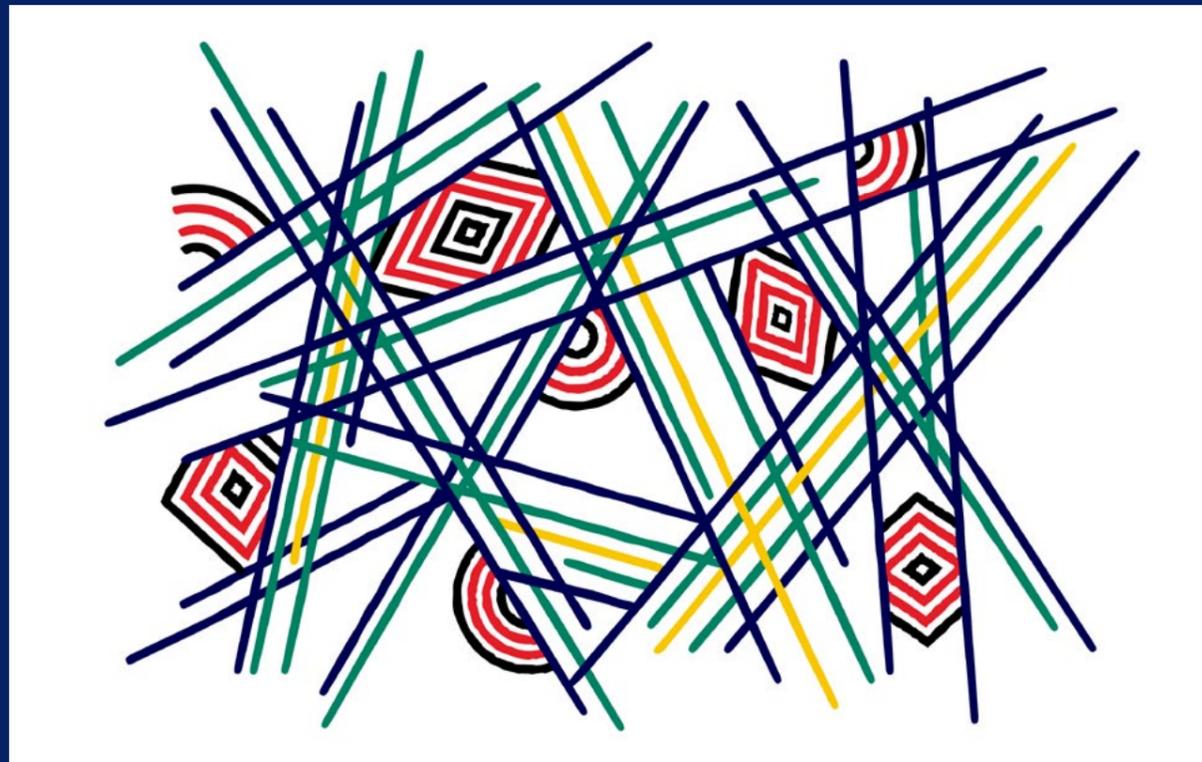
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## Acknowledgement of Country



RMIT University acknowledges the people of the Woi wurrung and Boon wurrung language groups of the eastern Kulin Nation on whose unceded lands we conduct the business of the University. RMIT University respectfully acknowledges their Ancestors and Elders, past and present. RMIT also acknowledges the Traditional Custodians and their Ancestors of the lands and waters across Australia where we conduct our business.



Artwork 'Sentient' by Hollie Johnson  
Hollie is a Gunaikurnai and Monero Ngarigo woman from Gippsland who graduated from RMIT with a BA in Photography in 2016.

Cover image: Scholarship recipient Louise King outside the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York.

# Message from the Vice-Chancellor

I always enjoy meeting with members of our donor community, and I want to begin by thanking you for your generosity and for your vision.

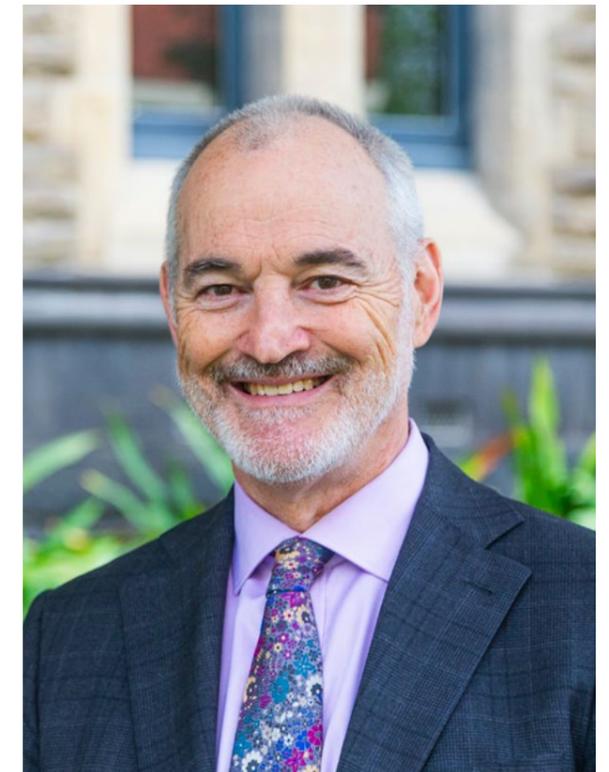
While it was a year of progress and achievement, it was also indelibly marked by the untimely loss of a dear colleague and friend of RMIT, Saskia Loer Hansen. Known to many of you, Saskia was a visionary leader and, at the point of her passing, our Deputy Vice-Chancellor, International and Engagement, and Interim General Director, RMIT Vietnam. Saskia embodied the true purpose of university work and championed the transformative power of education, so I know she would have been pleased with the global scholarship set up in her memory.

Many of you share Saskia's passion for access to education and my appreciation to everyone who gave generously to help students experiencing financial hardship and other barriers to learning, through equity scholarships and student hardship grants. Our ability to offer support through difficult times can be the difference between a future filled with opportunity and one without.

We are also fortunate to have your support for a wide range of other projects, from research and discovery across many disciplines, to initiatives that enhance our cultural lives. Your generosity increases our collective impact.

The end of 2025 marked the close of the first horizon (2023-25) of RMIT's *Knowledge with Action* strategy, purposefully designed to adapt and respond with the times. Thanks to the collective efforts of our community, we pioneered innovative earn and learn education models; scaled transdisciplinary education programs; delivered research in response to complex global issues; partnered on urgent workforce solutions; expanded our presence in Europe, India, Indonesia, Singapore and beyond; and celebrated an extraordinary 25 years of contribution in Vietnam.

In this next horizon (2026-28), our vision, mission, ambition and overarching directions will remain consistent, while the way we achieve our strategy will flex with the times. Signature initiatives will hone our focus and, if you are not already familiar with it, I encourage you to find out more about RMIT's Regenerative Futures Institute, a bold response to complex challenges, that moves beyond sustaining and preserving the status quo, towards actively regenerating our social, economic and ecological systems.



Thank you for sharing our mission and I look forward to your continued engagement with our community in 2026 and beyond.

Kind regards,

**Professor Alec Cameron**  
Vice-Chancellor and President  
RMIT University

# A year of giving



**\$5.3M**

Total given to RMIT



**1,409**

Total number of gifts



**520**

Total number of donors



**108**

First-time donors in 2025



**73**

Donors committed to regular gifts



**190**

Donors who are also graduate alumni



**87**

Number of new gifts in Wills notified to RMIT

# The difference you've made

Your generosity allows us to support students and researchers, and progress initiatives that benefit our communities.



**\$4.3M**

**Student support**

Gifts that help students thrive at university, through scholarships and prizes, and hardship allowances for when times are tough.



**\$1.4M**

**Research**

Support for research programs and academic positions that drive discovery and creativity.



**\$225K**

**Community engagement**

Donations that enhance our cultural and social life, including the RMIT archives.



**\$84.4M**

**Investing for the future**

Total value of the RMIT Philanthropic Investment Portfolio

Funding comes from donations and investment earnings.



## Hidden treasures emerge from the darkness

Thanks to the generosity of donors, Australia's architecture and design history is being brought to new audiences.

For years, some of Australia's most significant architecture and design treasures have remained hidden away because there was not enough space or funding to bring them to light.

Now, thanks to the generosity of the Isaacson Davis Foundation, the RMIT Design Archives (RDA) is bringing thousands of pieces of important design history alive through strategic support for digitisation and documentation of the collection. What was once at risk of fading quietly into history is now preserved and shared online for students, researchers and design lovers everywhere.

Established by Tony Isaacson and Megan Davis, the Isaacson Davis Foundation has played a key role in supporting the RDA since 2019.

"We recognise that the constant problems with design archives are money and space. Digitising offers an opportunity to capture things that can't be stored or shown publicly in their physical form, and we like that," said Tony.

Elizabeth Marsden, RMIT's Cultural Collections and Public Engagement Manager, said that in 2025, a deliberate decision was made to shift the RDA's focus to making its collections more accessible and increasing their use. "We're now working to embed the RDA more deeply into teaching, learning, and the core business of RMIT. Our digitisation efforts are now guided by what our users need and by conservation priorities, so they're more targeted," she said.

The impact has been significant. In 2025, the Cultural Collections team were able to reach 999 students through 37 classes and nine studios or electives. They've seen a 205 per cent increase in student engagement and a 35.5 per cent rise in time spent using all the collections combined.

"Support from donors like Tony and Megan has really helped us make this shift, allowing us to bring in extra help to expand our digitisation works," said Elizabeth.



Tony is the Chair of the Robin Boyd Foundation, which is dedicated to advancing the legacy of Robin Boyd, one of Australia's most influential architects and public intellectuals. In 2024 Tony was awarded the President's Prize from the Australian Institute of Architecture's Victorian Chapter for his work in promoting architecture to the wider community.

"With the Isaacson Davis Foundation's ongoing support, the RDA has grown its capacity to preserve and share significant architectural collections," said RDA Curatorial Officer, Ann Carew. "For example, we have journal editions, high-profile digitisation projects, and the public release of rare collections that give visibility to overlooked narratives – especially female architects – and ensuring fragile records are preserved and accessible for researchers globally."

Since 2019, the Foundation has supported the publication of a special Robin Boyd edition of the RDA Journal Vol. 9 No. 2: Robin Boyd Redux, to mark the centenary of Robin Boyd's birth and involving contributions from prominent RMIT academics. It has also funded the digitisation of significant architectural drawing collections including works from O Noel Coulson, Ernest Fooks, Frederick Romberg and Robin Boyd, and Bernard Joyce and William Nankivell, all of which are now available to the public and researchers online.

One of the quirkiest projects the Foundation has contributed to is the digitisation of cassette and VHS tapes of the Half-Time Club from 1979. The club was a group of architecture graduates and students who watched established architects present their latest projects and discussed their work with them. These recordings were previously inaccessible, due to the lack of suitable playback equipment, but can now be used for study.

In 2024, the Foundation supported the cataloguing and digitisation of the Berenice Harris Archive, enhancing the visibility of women architects in Melbourne and supporting exhibitions for Melbourne Design Week.

By coincidence, the Robin Boyd Foundation was given a suitcase of archival material, including drawings and correspondence, from the estate of Berenice (Missy) Harris. Missy was a distinguished Melbourne architect who made significant contributions to architecture and was known for involvement with the Lyceum Club, an organisation founded in 1912 to support professional women.

**"The collection wasn't directly related to the Robin Boyd Foundation and we felt it was important that it was given to someone who could look after it better than us, so we facilitated the transfer to the RDA."**

**Tony Isaacson**

Most recently, the Isaacson Davis Foundation enabled increased documentation of under-researched collections, resulting in hundreds of new catalogue records. This makes it easier for students, researchers and the wider community to find the information they need.

The RDA stands out in Australia for its broad focus on design, covering everything from architecture and automotive to fashion, graphic, and interior design. With more than 350,000 physical items, and over 16,400 accessible online via the digital archives, it's a rich resource for anyone interested in design history.

And for Dr Catriona Quinn, a design historian from the University of New South Wales, it has been fundamental to her work.

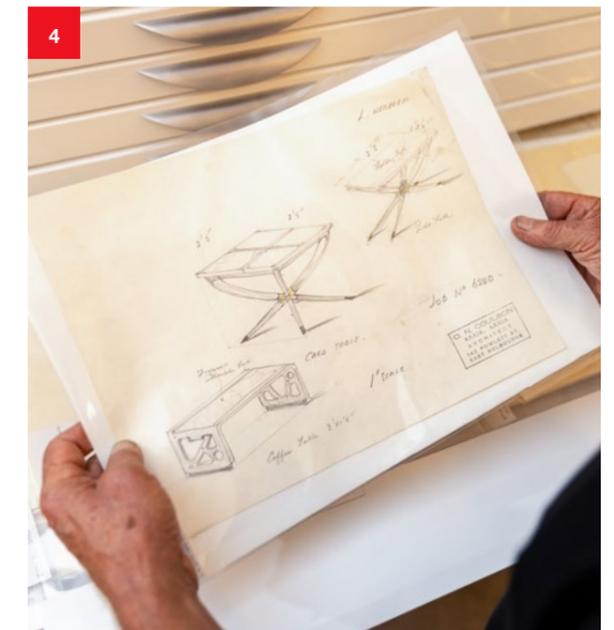
"Digitisation has supported the inclusion of RMIT materials, in particular from the Noel Coulson archive, in articles and book chapters I have published internationally and in papers at conferences around the world," she said. "These bring RMIT Design Archives into the orbit of the world's leading scholars of interior design and architecture and will, in turn, cause them to access its collections and draw Australian histories into global debates."

Tony said there were "a lot of crossover points" that led to the Isaacson Davis Foundation choosing to support the RDA. "I studied building and construction at RMIT, and I've had a life-long interest in design and architecture. I was working on some projects of my own as well as with the Robin Boyd Foundation and they were all overlapping with what the RDA are doing," he said.

He added that while the Isaacson Davis Foundation's main interest was in design and built environment, it was committed to supporting the RDA more broadly.

"We give to the Archives and they're the ones largely deciding what they use the money for," he said.

"We understand that the RDA has limited financial ability to get these things done and we think it's worthy of our support and does work that we're interested in. We want to give money to protect the collection in general rather than create some kind of legacy for ourselves."



- 1 A passion for design: Tony Isaacson in the RMIT Design Archives with some of the architecture and design treasures that have been digitised.
- 2 Voices from the past: Half-Time Club cassette tapes from 1979 that captured architects presenting and debating new projects.
- 3 Design histories revealed: Tony Isaacson and RDA Curatorial Officer Ann Carew with drawings from the Peter Elliott Collection, catalogued in 2025.
- 4 Bringing archives to light: Tony Isaacson with a drawing from the O Noel Coulson Collection, one of 463 works digitised in 2022.



# Putting community benefits front of mind

## Philanthropic partnership will make psychological support easier to access – now and into the future.

The demand for clinical psychology services has never been greater, yet it's never been harder to get help.

Private mental health practices are under enormous strain, and it's a particular problem for young people needing psychological support. A 2020 study by the Murdoch Children's Research Institute found a third were closed to new referrals. Families are facing long waits and high costs to see specialists, and when they finally get an appointment, too often it's not with their preferred practitioner.

It's an issue that resonated with Carl and Wendy Dowd, whose family foundation has a strong track record in supporting community causes, many focused on young people.

"With life currently in a state of flux, and with little certainty of immediate improvement, we believe it is especially important that people of all ages can access psychological support," said Carl. "The ability to reach out to a psychologist for guidance on building resilience and developing strategies to cope with life's challenges has never been more vital."

In 2023, they approached RMIT and asked the question: how do we improve mental healthcare outcomes for communities, particularly children? The University's response, combined with the family's generosity, has led to changes that will have far-reaching benefits for people across Australia.

Training future psychologists is a long and intensive process: students must complete six years of study and at least 1,000 hours of supervised clinical placements before they can graduate.

With a shortage of clinical supervisors, there is a limit to how many students can enter the workforce each year, so the psychology team at RMIT, including Associate Professor Karen Hallam, Professor Leila Karimi and Dr Tara Quinlivan, set about finding a solution.

Thanks to a significant gift from the Dowd Foundation, RMIT has been able to increase the supervision available to students, and secure dozens of additional external placements. As a direct result, the clinical psychology cohort grew from 16 students in 2023 to 35 in 2026, an expansion that would not otherwise have been possible.

Not only does this mean there will be more qualified psychologists graduating in years to come, but the additional trainee psychologists are already making a difference.

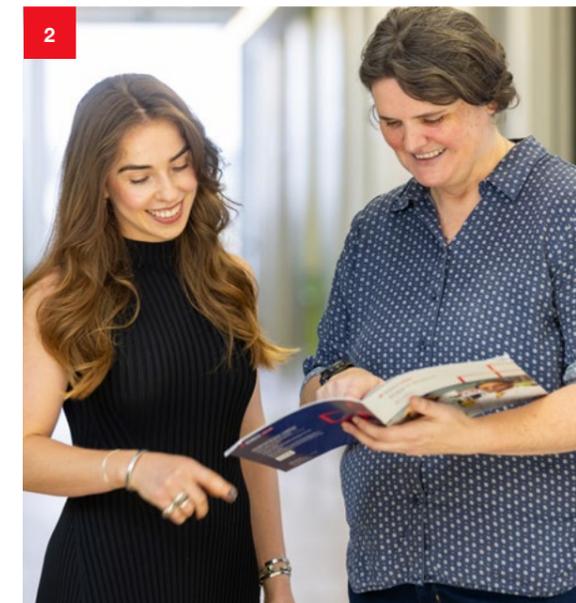
Dr Hallam said: "With more students training on site, the RMIT Health Clinic has been able to extend its reach and provide many more low-cost, evidence-based appointments to the community. This has resulted in hundreds of hours of additional support delivered each year, reducing waiting times and improving access for people who may otherwise struggle to find affordable care."

"At the same time, our students benefit from a richer and more diverse clinical experience. This support has strengthened both our training program and the services we can offer the community."

Dr Hallam said the Dowd Foundation's support has been genuinely transformative. "This partnership reflects a shared commitment to delivering real, measurable benefits to the community – something that sits at the heart of RMIT's value of impact."

**"The generous donation of the Dowd Foundation has allowed RMIT to provide invaluable education and experience to budding psychologists like me. The passionate faculty and outstanding RMIT Health Clinic have created an excellent learning environment that is moulding informed and caring psychologists of the future."**

**Jack Jordan, Psychology student**



- 1 Building capacity: RMIT can now prepare more psychologists to meet community needs.
- 2 Individualised support: Provisional Psychologist Ainsley and Associate Professor Karen Hallam discussing their work at RMIT.
- 3 Transformative impact: Carl and Wendy Dowd, whose family foundation is helping to improve access to mental healthcare.
- 4 Meet the team: (L-R) Associate Professor Karen Hallam, Dr Tara Quinlivan and Professor Leila Karimi, working together to expand access to psychological training.

# A life-changing legacy



## A scholarship established in memory of an outstanding leader is allowing students to develop their own leadership skills overseas.

Louise King's exchange to New York is exactly the type of experience Saskia Loer Hansen would have loved for every RMIT student.

The second year Bachelor of Professional Communication student was the inaugural recipient of the Saskia Loer Hansen Memorial Scholarship, established in the memory of the visionary university leader, who died in 2025.

Saskia strongly believed in ensuring students had opportunities to become global citizens. Having enjoyed an international career herself, she recognised the value of gaining first-hand experience of other cultures and communities, and in bringing a broadened perspective back home. The scholarship has allowed Louise to combine her passion for communications and fashion by spending a semester at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City.

**“Studying overseas was something I had dreamed about for years, but financially it felt out of reach.**

**Even after being accepted into the program, I remember feeling excited but also deeply unsure, knowing I likely wouldn't be able to afford it. The Saskia Loer Hansen Memorial Scholarship changed that completely.”**

**Louise King**

RMIT established the scholarship through an endowed fund that has been supported by many donors, including Saskia's family, friends, and colleagues, and organisations that share her belief in the transformative power of an overseas educational experience.

The scholarship helps RMIT students from any program, who face financial disadvantage and who demonstrate leadership potential, to overcome barriers to international study.

Layton Pike, RMIT Vice-President, International, said he was thrilled to see how Louise benefited from the scholarship.

“Saskia was passionate about the power of education and the importance of global experiences for students in broadening their world and cultural perspectives,” he said.

“Louise is such a worthy recipient and has an exciting journey ahead of her.”

The donations to establish the scholarship are a testament to Saskia and her legacy. Saskia made a significant impact on the global education sector and was latterly the RMIT Deputy Vice-Chancellor, International and Engagement, and Interim General Director, RMIT Vietnam. She was widely respected for her humanity and commitment to putting people first.

Amy Harrington, RMIT Director, Philanthropy and Public Engagement, said collective giving was at the heart of the fund's success.

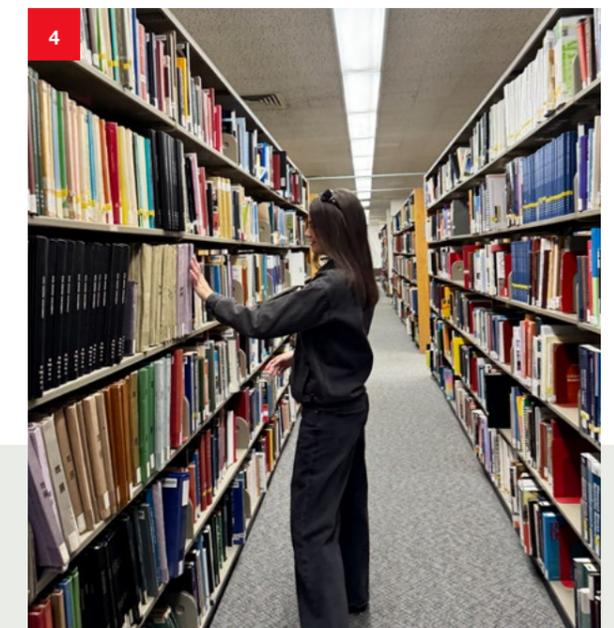
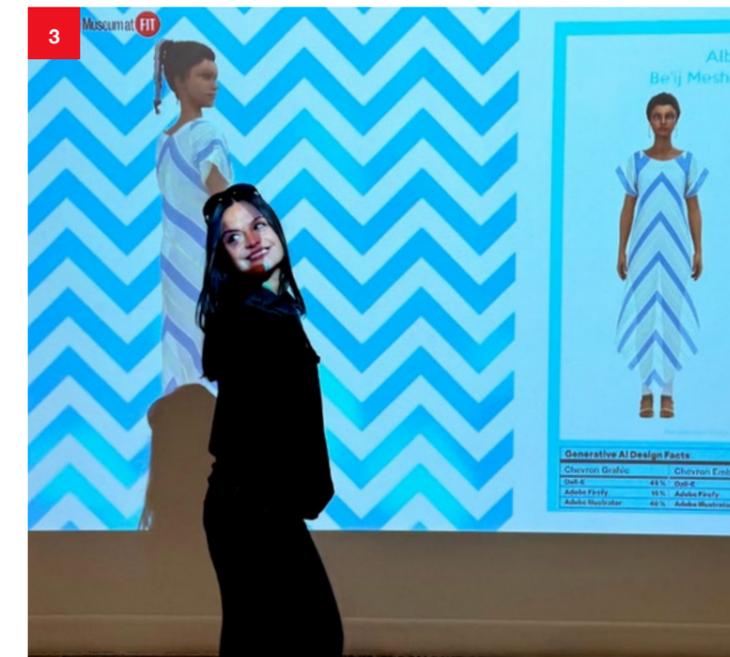
“We know that not everyone is able to give large amounts to causes they support, but through programs like this the impact of every gift is multiplied,” she said.

**“Whether someone makes a single gift, of any amount, or sets up a regular gift, every dollar is helping our students to enjoy the kind of overseas experience Saskia knew was so life-changing.”**

**Amy Harrington**

For Louise, receiving the support to pursue her dream in New York has felt “surreal, like stepping into a movie”.

“It didn't just make this experience possible; it gave me the confidence to say yes to an opportunity I never thought I could take. Being here in New York is already shaping my studies, my career aspirations, and my belief in what's possible for me.”



- 1 Global classroom: Scholarship recipient Louise King outside the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York.
- 2 City of possibilities: Louise King navigating everyday life in New York City during her semester-long exchange.
- 3 Immersed in creativity: Louise King exploring a fashion exhibition in New York.
- 4 Expanding knowledge: Louise King delving into fashion and communications resources at the Fashion Institute of Technology library.

## Continuing your support

We value your contribution to the work of RMIT. Your generosity changes lives.

### Give online or by telephone

To support priority projects, visit [rmit.edu.au/giving](https://rmit.edu.au/giving) or call +61 3 9925 5220.

### Tailored gifts

If you are considering a bespoke gift that could make a significant difference, please contact us to discuss how we can turn your passion into impact.

### Gifts in Wills

Leaving a gift to RMIT in your Will is a beautiful way of ensuring that the causes you believe in are supported beyond your lifetime. If you have included RMIT in your Will, or are considering doing so, please contact us.

Simple online Wills can be made through RMIT's trusted partner, EveryWill. Scan the QR code to learn more.



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