North Sydney Campus international nursing student Pukkaporn Sangvattonakul, 22, from Thailand, has extended her love of science and health care by contributing to the collaborative research efforts of ACU National’s National Centre for Clinical Outcomes Research (NaCCOR).

Pukkaporn has been exploring the research priorities of stroke survivors and their carers. “I’ve been very excited to find out that consumers are most interested in the time period directly after the stroke, the ambulance transport process,” said Pukkaporn. “Another student is looking at clinicians’ research priorities, and it will be very interesting to combine and compare our findings.”

Pukkaporn, pictured above, selected nursing as a career after realising the skills would be useful for her friends and family and for her own life. After a placement at Strathfield Private Hospital during her studies, she discovered other benefits. “As a nurse we are there to look after people who are sick and vulnerable and to comfort them,” she said. “It’s a great reward emotionally.”

Pukkaporn has appreciated the friendliness and support of the University’s academic staff. “ACU National is the best University to study nursing. Our campus is quite small, all the lecturers and tutors are very approachable, and they are willing to give us time to go through our assignments. I feel they really care for us and are there when we need them.

“The laboratory equipment is also good, and we have been given plenty of time in the lab to practise our skills on the dummies.”

Pukkaporn’s strong academic results and keen interest in her studies gained her admission to the Faculty of Health Sciences’ pilot Faculty Honours Support Scheme. “This means that I was able to undertake my new graduate nursing clinical program at St Vincent’s Private Hospital whilst undertaking my Honours year full time at ACU National. Usually people need to choose between gaining clinical experience in a new graduate program or studying further. So I am very fortunate not to have to choose.”

St Vincent’s and Mater Health Sydney Nursing Research Unit director Professor Sandy Middleton said she and her research team were delighted that the Faculty of Health Sciences is piloting a Faculty Honours Support Scheme this year. “It allows us to encourage our talented students to focus on research and contribute to improvements in health care,” Professor Middleton said. Financial assistance from the Faculty of Health Sciences enables the students to work three days a week in their clinical areas and two days a week on their Honours thesis in the Nursing Research Unit under the guidance of experienced research staff.

“This exciting initiative combines the new graduate year with an Honours program, offering a unique opportunity for new graduates to gain clinical experience at the same time as undergoing training in research methods.”

Pukkaporn’s research is a collaborative project with the National Stroke Foundation and other partners through NaCCOR. The results of Pukkaporn’s research will be of interest to stroke clinicians and researchers both nationally and internationally, and may also assist in determining future stroke research from the point of view of patients and their carers.

“Seeking Better Care for Stroke Survivors”

“Delivering Results in Health Care”

“This exciting initiative combines the new graduate year with an Honours program, offering a unique opportunity for new graduates to gain clinical experience at the same time as undergoing training in research methods.”
Federal Treasurer Mr Wayne Swan MP recently toured the Brisbane Campus (McAuley at Banyo).

Following the announcement of 50 additional Commonwealth-supported places in nursing and early childhood education for 2009, Mr Swan, whose electorate of Lilley takes in the University, inspected the progress of the new Health Sciences building, which will house additional facilities for nursing and midwifery in 2009. The new four-year Bachelor of Nursing/Bachelor of Paramedicine degree, popular in Ballarat, will also be offered at the Brisbane Campus.

"The extra 30 nursing spaces aim to take the pressure off hospitals in our local community, while the extra 20 childhood positions will help meet increased demand for qualified early childhood education teachers," said Mr Swan, viewing the construction site.

Pro-Vice Chancellor Professor John O’Gorman said the University has had a strong commitment to quality health care over many years.

"The University is the largest provider of graduate nurses in Australia and has recently expanded its offerings to include undergraduate degrees in midwifery and paramedicine," he said.

"The University also intends to continue to grow, with plans to introduce exercise science and physiotherapy at the Brisbane Campus in the near future."

Mr Swan also met Indigenous staff and students, and discussed a recently awarded $60,000 grant from the Australian Government’s Whole School Intervention strategy for Building a Foundation – Literacy and Numeracy Cluster Program.