

# Judith Lumley Centre



## Strategic Plan

2020 – 2024

Final version for endorsement

Mission	To conduct outstanding interdisciplinary applied research to improve the health and wellbeing of women, children and families.
Vision	<p>To be a global leader recognised for addressing issues of major public health importance for women, children and families.</p> <p>Our research graduates will be the future leaders in health research, teaching, policy and practice.</p>
Values	<p><b>equitable:</b> We are inclusive, diverse and committed to social justice and</p> <p><b>respectful:</b> in the way we work collaboratively with our community, stakeholders, staff and students.</p> <p><b>innovative:</b> We are progressive, flexible and creative in all that we do.</p> <p><b>courageous:</b> We are willing to tackle the difficult issues.</p>

# The Judith Lumley Centre

## Who we are

**The Judith Lumley Centre (“JLC”, “the Centre”) is a multidisciplinary health research centre in the College of Science, Health and Engineering, School of Nursing and Midwifery (the School) at La Trobe University in Melbourne, Australia.**

The Centre was established in 1991 by Professor Judith Lumley, a leading clinician, academic and public health researcher in perinatal epidemiology and maternity services. Judith was an inspiration and mentor to numerous researchers, many of whom continue to work at the Centre. She created a Centre with an emphasis on rigorous research methods and methodologies, and a collaborative and inclusive approach. Her legacy continues to inform how the Centre operates today. Originally focussed on maternal and infant health, the Centre’s activities now include a broader focus on families.

## What we do

**The Judith Lumley Centre has built a strong program of research addressing issues of major public health importance for women, children and families.**

**We lead research in the following eight areas:**

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family health
- Breastfeeding
- Child, family and community health
- Mother and infant health and maternity services
- Reproductive health and planned parenthood
- Reducing and preventing violence against women and children
- Transition to contemporary parenthood
- Work and family

We have a broad public and population health focus and our work is underpinned by a commitment to equity, diversity, social justice and the importance of supporting Australia’s most vulnerable families. Continuing the legacy of Judith Lumley, we work with migrant, refugee and Aboriginal women and their families to understand their unique needs and to design culturally safe interventions to improve their health and wellbeing. We work collaboratively with communities and other stakeholders to address complex issues.

We promote the need for research, service development, evaluation and policy to be linked. We support the evaluation of interventions using gold-standard randomised controlled trials, research translation into clinical practice, and implementation of effective and cost-effective interventions.

We are an important voice in promoting evidence-based policy decision-making, and in public discourse on contemporary issues such as pregnancy and birth, breastfeeding, parenting, work-life balance, family violence, sexual and reproductive health, families and childhood.

## Our people

**Our staff and students are the core and the strength of the Centre, each of whom makes a crucial contribution to its life and work.**

We have a dedicated team of research staff from a diverse range of disciplines including midwifery, nursing, medicine, maternal and child health, public health, epidemiology, sociology, psychology, social work, applied statistics and social science. Our staff team includes a number of proficient and engaged professional administrative and project staff. In 2019 we had 20 fulltime equivalent staff.

Our staff are highly engaged and enjoy working at JLC. Results from recent staff satisfaction surveys showed that we consistently perform higher in almost all measures of engagement and satisfaction compared to other research centres and other Australian universities.

We have a mix of local and international Higher Degree Research (HDR) students. Students actively seek a placement with our Centre given its reputation for producing world-leading research, for providing a high-quality program of education and support, and for its high completion rates. Mirroring our staff diversity, our students come from a range of disciplines including midwifery, nursing, maternal and child health, medicine, public health, psychology, pharmacy, social sciences and physiotherapy. In 2019 we had 30 HDR students. Many are undertaking their studies part-time as they continue with clinical or teaching roles.

Our students and staff come to us with diverse work and cultural backgrounds, with research interests that align with our mission and vision, but which expand our range in breadth and depth. This diversity provides opportunities to develop new research networks and partnerships and sustained programs of research in new areas to improve health and wellbeing for all families across the whole community.

## Our partners

**We want our research to have an impact; to improve the health and wellbeing of families and communities. Our work to achieve this is strengthened by active and sustained collaborations with local, national and international partners.**

We work with a range of service, policy and community partners to ensure our research has a real world, applied focus that can be used to inform policy, clinical practice, service models, and new programs and services. Many of our partnerships are longstanding and include state and national government departments, health care providers such as maternity hospitals and maternal and child health services, and numerous community and non-government organisations.

We work with some of the leading national and international academics on key research that aligns with our mission and vision. We are well-connected with respected researchers nationally and internationally in our respective fields. We regularly host international researchers for visits that range from one week to one year in duration. These visits are mutually beneficial and often result in ongoing collaboration. We have developed active research collaborations with communities, services, and researchers across Australia and in countries as diverse as Brazil, Norway, Sweden, Timor Leste, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

We participate as subject matter experts in the development of national and international guidelines. We are on numerous professional advisory bodies across a range of disciplines, including maternity, maternal and child health, and sexual and reproductive health. We are members of editorial review boards for top ranking international journals in the fields of public health, midwifery, breastfeeding and social science. We are panellists for national and international competitive grant review panels, promotion review panels and international prize committees. Through these many and varied roles, we both *contribute* and *further* our knowledge in our fields of expertise.

Many of our staff have joint appointments, for example with tertiary maternity hospitals or as teaching academics in the School of Nursing and Midwifery. Professors Della Forster and Professor Christine East have joint appointments with the Royal Women's Hospital and the Mercy Hospital for Women, respectively. Joint appointments provide leadership in evidence-based clinical care and related research, promote the translation of research into policy and practice, and ultimately lead to better health outcomes for the communities served by these hospitals. Our relationships with the Women's and the Mercy are stronger as a result and mean there are always emerging opportunities for new collaborative research, as well as more visible pathways to higher degrees for clinicians at the sites. Joint appointments have recently been made with organisations in South Australia and the Northern Territory as part of our research to improve the health and wellbeing of vulnerable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

## Our achievements

We are proud of our work at the Judith Lumley Centre, and celebrate all our achievements, big and small.

This figure is a snapshot of just some of our achievements over the past five years.



**COSMOS:** COmparing Standard Maternity care with 'One-to-one' midwifery Support

**DAME:** Diabetes and Antenatal Milk Expression

**EHLS:** Early Home Learning Study

**MCH:** Maternal & Child Health

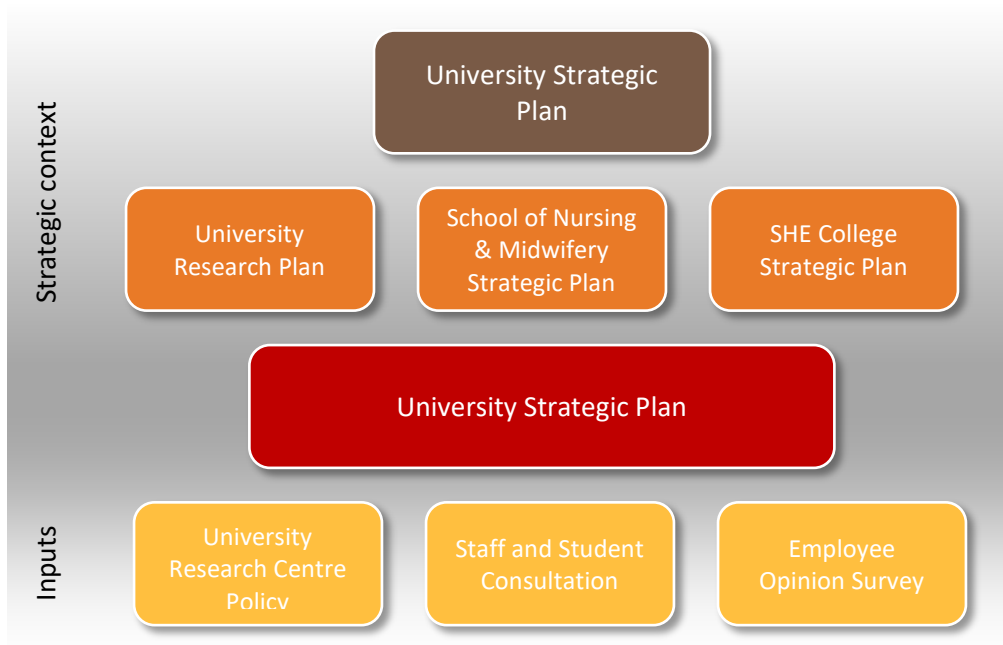
**MOVE:** Improving maternal and child health nurse care for vulnerable mothers

**TCPP:** Transition to Contemporary Parenthood Program

**HPNF:** Healing the Past by Nurturing the Future

## Development of the Judith Lumley Centre Strategic Plan

The Judith Lumley Centre Strategic Plan was informed by and aligns with the University-wide Strategic Plan and Research Plan, and School of Nursing and Midwifery Strategic Plan. All Centre staff and students were invited to a series of consultation sessions where the content and priorities were developed. The content was progressively refined and a draft of the Plan was distributed for feedback.



# Our Goals

## Goal 1 We will be the research partner of choice

**We have strong, stable and productive relationships with a broad range of research partners. We know that to improve outcomes for families and communities, we must actively partner with them. Our collaborative approach means our research is accessible and able to be translated into practice. We want to nurture and grow our research partnerships – within La Trobe University, with government departments, with health, education and community providers, and importantly, with families and communities.**

Objective	Actions	Timeframe
1.1 Nurture and grow collaborations with our stakeholders and experts national and internationally	a) Value and strengthen community stakeholder participation in research	Ongoing
	b) Increase our use of codesign in our research projects	Within 2 years
	c) Establish a JLC external advisory committee	Within 2 years
	d) Participate in collaborative activities e.g. expert panels, government advisory groups, grant review panels, etc	Ongoing
	e) Engage with potential collaborative partners through invitations to speak at JLC events and participate in projects and publications	Ongoing
1.2 Strengthen and broaden our clinical stakeholder relationships	a) Nurture and consolidate existing and establish new relationships with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ metropolitan hospitals/health services</li> <li>▪ regional health services</li> <li>▪ primary care and community-based providers</li> </ul>	Within 5 years
1.3 Partner with internal departments in the University to further the University's strategic agenda	a) Strengthen existing and establish new relationships with key internal stakeholders	Within 2 years
	b) Create and respond to opportunities within the University to conduct relevant research	Ongoing
	c) Support the teaching and learning activities of the School and University	Ongoing
1.4 Proactively disseminate our research activities and outcomes to our research partners and other key stakeholders	a) Ensure our JLC newsletter is engaging and meets the needs of the target audience	Biannually
	b) Ensure our Annual Report is engaging and meets the needs of the target audience	Annually
	c) Ensure findings from our all our research projects are developed into high quality briefings and reports, and disseminated to key stakeholders, tailored to the target audience	Within 2 years

## Goal 2 We will produce and sustain high quality research

**Our past research outputs speak for themselves. We want to build on this firm foundation of existing research and continue our success of attracting research funding to produce high quality research that will make a difference to women, children and families.**

Objective	Actions	Timeframe
<b>2.1</b> Increase the number of high-quality publications in peer reviewed journals	a) Publish articles that are: highly ranked in their field, relevant, cited, and used to inform policy, practice and research	Ongoing
	b) Be appropriately inclusive of colleagues in publications	Ongoing
<b>2.2</b> Increase research funding from all sources to sustain the JLC vision	a) Be proactive in seeking out available grants (C1-4) and create better systems for communicating and responding to them	Within 2 years
	b) Foster our collaborative approach to grant writing through the training and mentoring of staff	Ongoing
	c) Access Research Focus Area (RFA) grants to support pilot research and ECR projects	Annually
<b>2.3</b> Ensure the long-term sustainability of our research programs	a) Develop and support succession planning	Within 2 years
	b) Develop the newly established child, family and community health research and practice stream	Within 1 year
	c) Continue to expand the Aboriginal health program to be recognised as a leader in Aboriginal family health research	Within 5 years
	d) Build a JLC strategic fund to respond to opportunities, future proof and ensure appropriate professional support	Within 5 years
	e) Invite university and government research leaders to the Centre to be introduced and informed about our current and past programs of research	Ongoing



### Goal 3 Our research will have local and global impact

**Our research aims to improve the lives of women, children and families. We want to have a recognised impact on local, national and global policies, programs, families and communities. We are proud of our translational research, which is increasingly recognised as world leading. There is potential to grow our reach so that we become the first point of contact for expert knowledge in the pregnancy and birth, breastfeeding, family violence, maternal and child health and contemporary parenting.**

Objective	Actions	Timeframe
<b>3.1</b> Promote and showcase our world leading research	a) Establish a biennial JLC research showcase for scholars, clinicians and students	Within 2 years
	b) Devote ongoing resources and commitment to collaboration with Marketing and Alumni and Advancement to promote JLC achievements locally and globally	Ongoing
	c) Refresh the JLC website including enhancing its search capacity and building research area profiles	Within 1 year
	d) Maintain an active presence on relevant social media sites and grow our network	Ongoing
<b>3.2</b> Develop our knowledge translation capacity evenly across the centre to ensure meaningful impact	a) Ensure we have knowledge translation and impact plans developed at the design phase of every major project	Within 5 years
	b) Provide education and other support to our postgrads and Early Career Researchers (ECRs) to develop skills in producing high quality reports and briefings from their research, tailored to the target audience	Within 5 years
<b>3.3</b> Contribute evidence-based knowledge to contemporary debates about women, children and families	a) Proactively work with the La Trobe Media Unit to promote JLC research and provide expert comment	Ongoing
	b) Provide staff with media training (including social media)	Within 2 years
	c) Encourage, mentor and support students and staff to write about their research for publications such as <i>The Conversation</i> and <i>The Guardian</i>	Ongoing
<b>3.4</b> Maintain contact with alumni and showcase their achievements	a) Create a process for establishing and maintaining contact with student alumni	Within 2 years
	b) Build alumni profiles for the JLC newsletter and website	Within 1 year

## Goal 4 Our staff and students are the lifeblood of our Centre. We will inspire, support, grow and celebrate them

**We value our staff and students, and the collaborative and caring culture that is present within our Centre. We are known for our community of scholarship. We want to protect and enhance this unique environment so that our people continue to feel welcome, valued and included, and so that we grow and develop the leaders of the future.**

Objective	Actions	Timeframe
4.1 Nurture and support our staff and students to maintain our safe, compassionate environment	a) Establish a JLC wellbeing group and develop a suite of activities to promote and support the wellbeing of staff and students	Within 1 year
	b) Set and model good work practices (transparency, accountability, flexibility)	Ongoing
	c) Celebrate our people and achievements	Ongoing
4.2 Promote equity in our workplace and draw on the strengths of our diverse staff and student body	a) Ensure that we are aligned with the University's commitment to promoting equal opportunities and support for all students and staff	Ongoing
	b) Leverage the diverse backgrounds, skills and experience of our staff and student body to create new streams of work and forge new opportunities	Within 3 years
4.3 Value and prioritise a rigorous and excellent community of scholarship	a) Conduct an annual review of our formal program of learning activities to ensure they are meeting staff and student needs and expectations	Annually
	b) Lead and/or participate in research communities of practice, and create new ones where needed	Within 5 years
4.4 Provide an outstanding Higher Degree Research (HDR) student experience	a) Ensure appropriate staff at all levels are trained and resourced to supervise students to successful completion	Ongoing
	b) Periodically review JLC HDR student support mechanisms to ensure they are meeting the needs of students	Biennially
4.5 Foster ongoing career development and research pathways for staff	a) Conduct a review of mentoring and career development support needs for staff and students	Within 2 years
	b) Review career development and progression opportunities for Mid-Career Researchers and establish plans to address identified gaps	Within 2 years
	c) Plan and support career pathways via career success development plans	Annually