



The Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



LA TROBE
UNIVERSITY



Olga Tennison
Autism Research Centre

latrobe.edu.au/otarc

VICE CHANCELLOR'S MESSAGE

During 2020 the staff of the Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre (OTARC) worked valiantly to carry on with their important research and program activity while working remotely because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of the Centre's projects had to be put on hold owing to the inability to conduct face-to-face research, while some staff were managing the dual challenge of working from home while helping their school-aged children with remote learning.

Despite these challenges, the Centre still delivered successful projects during the year. A notable project was OTARC's collaboration with the National Gallery of Victoria to develop an online art-making resource to support children with autism and help them cope with the disruption to their daily routines and their education, family and social lives caused by the pandemic.

It is hoped that OTARC's work will gradually return to normal as we come out of the COVID-19 crisis in the months ahead. The Centre will be well placed for future success following the appointment of Professor Alison Lane in late 2020 as OTARC Deputy Director and research leader for the 'Intervention for children with autism and their families' research theme.

The difficulties of 2020 were compounded when OTARC's magnanimous benefactor, Mrs Olga Tennison, passed away in January 2021, a few months short of her 93rd birthday. Olga's incredible generosity has had a profound impact on the lives of people with autism and their families, and I was very saddened when I heard this news.

Olga's memory will live on in OTARC's work to improve social, economic and community participation and inclusion for people with autism. While this work directly supports those affected by autism and their families, it benefits all of us.

I commend the staff, supporters and partners of the Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre on their achievements during what was a very challenging year in 2020.



Professor John Dewar AO
Vice-Chancellor

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Quite unbelievably, we are again in lockdown as I write this Foreword for our 2020 Annual Report! While it was and will remain a year that will certainly go down in history, for OTARC it was also the one in which we lost two of our dearest and most valued people: Professor Margot Prior, Inaugural Chair of our Advisory Committee and, more recently in early 2021, our honoured benefactor and friend, Mrs Olga Tennison. Life has, quite simply, not been the same without them.

Our achievements in 2020 were mostly realised while working from home, with many of our staff and students home-schooling their children, including autistic children. Many of our research studies came to a halt, with only some able to be continued online when face-to-face testing became impossible. Our usually steady stream of visiting researchers halted, and our funding was also affected as research contracts were put on hold while we waited all year for lockdown to ease.

Despite the long and difficult year, we were able to progress work both within OTARC and beyond, thanks largely to the resilience of our people and, of course, to technology. We even worked with the National Gallery of Victoria, where La Trobe is a learning partner, to co-develop an art activity for autistic children to engage in during lockdown. Our achievements also continue to be recognised externally. Mrs Olga Tennison was recognised in the Federal Parliament in October, with Senator Hollie Hughes speaking about her and her generous contributions to autism research. Our work at OTARC was also spoken of very favourably in her parliamentary report. Dr Darren Hedley was awarded a Fellowship by Suicide Prevention Australia to continue his vital work on mental health and suicide in autism, and I was delighted to be recognised, for the third year running, as Australian Research Field Leader for Development Disabilities in the annual Australian Research Magazine. I was also one of nine Australian scholars to be recognised as a Global Field Leader, an honour bestowed in the same year as I was selected into the Global Senior Leaders Committee of the International Society for Autism Research (INSAR).

A critical achievement in late 2020 was appointing Professor Alison Lane as Deputy Director of OTARC. Alison commenced with us in early 2021 and has been warmly welcomed by all.



**Professor Cheryl Dissanayake, PhD, MAPS, INSAR Fellow
Director and Chair, Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre**

Vale 1928 - 2021

MRS OLGA TENNISON

We are deeply saddened to announce the death of our benefactor and friend, Mrs Olga Tennison, who passed away in January 2021, a few months short of her 93rd birthday.

Olga has had a profound impact on the lives of autistic people and their families with the establishment of the Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre at La Trobe University which would not have been possible without her significant private donations. Olga was an intelligent, impressive and inspirational woman. She was also a woman of unwavering faith and unmediated graciousness with a focus on the good she could do in the world. Her voice, as someone with a close personal experience of autism, gave her determination and an authenticity to speak on behalf of the Centre and promote its work, of which she remained very proud.

Olga lived a life without extravagance so that the money she and her husband accrued over a lifetime could be put to use in a significant, lasting and meaningful way. She leaves a legacy of giving and service, and long commitment to autism research.

She will be remembered always - may she rest in peace.









Vale 1937 - 2020

MARGOT PRIOR

In September 2020, we lost Professor Margot Prior AO, who served as inaugural Chair of the OTARC Advisory Committee (2008 – 2015). She was a true pioneer in the field of autism research, as well as a life-affirming humanist, musician, and environmentalist.

Margot published the very first Australian journal article on autism in 1973 and was recognised as a leading figure in the field of psychology, becoming the first female Professor of Clinical Psychology in Australia in 1989, and establishing the first Clinical Psychology Doctoral program in the country. Beyond her scholarly and academic work, Margot has been a prominent voice for child welfare, peace and social justice initiatives. She was one of the founding members of the Psychologists for the Prevention of War and co-established the La Trobe Institute for Peace Research. She also co-founded the Victorian Parenting Research Centre in 1997 (now the Parenting Research Centre) and contributed to the development of diagnostic standards for autism in Australia.

The Victorian Autism Specific Early Learning and Care Centre at La Trobe University was named after Margot in recognition of her long contribution to autism intervention science and service. She was also a Patron of Amaze, the peak autism body in Victoria. Moreover, Margot was deeply involved in the creation of the Australasian Society for Autism Research (ASfAR), where she was awarded a lifetime membership, and it is in recognition of her that ASfAR has the Margot Prior Oral Presentation Prize and the Early Career Researcher Award.

Beyond her enormous contribution to the autism field, Margot also personally inspired many, including OTARC's Professor Amanda Richdale, who notes 'Her lecture on autism inspired me to study autism for my PhD under her supervision.'

She leaves a valuable legacy, which those of us in the field are honoured to continue.

MISSION

Through high-quality scientific research, innovation and translation we will expand knowledge to enrich the lives of autistic people and their families.

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GOALS

**At the Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre,
we instigate positive change for autistic people by:**

**Developing and evaluating innovative approaches that enrich the
lives of autistic people**

**Training the next generation of outstanding autism scholars and
clinicians**

**Leading research that enables early identification, diagnosis and
intervention**

**Generously engaging with stakeholders in research development,
knowledge transfer and successful implementation of research
findings**

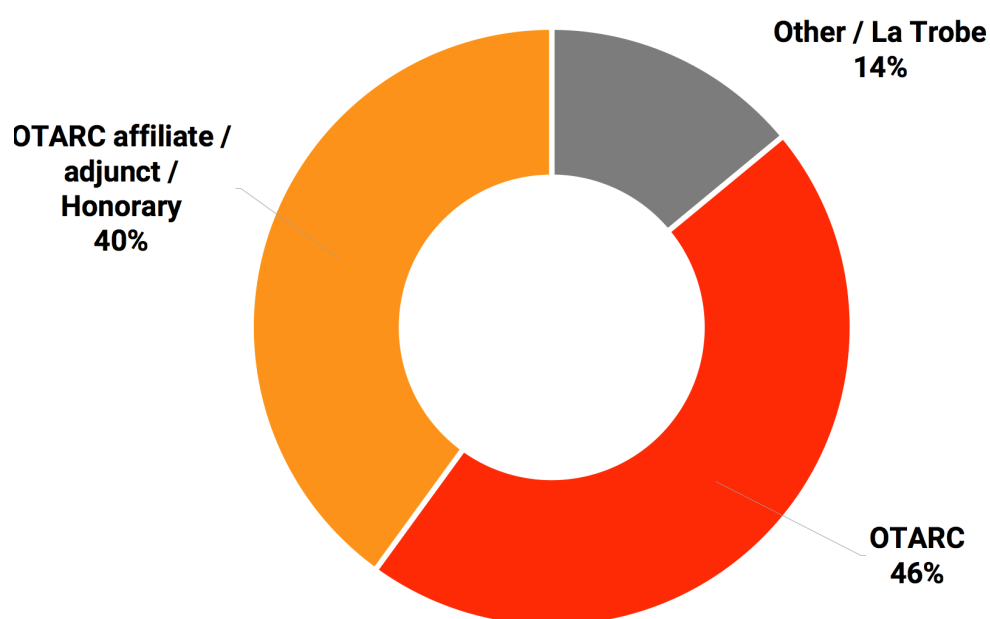
Achieving research and operational excellence



AT A GLANCE

Contributions to La Trobe

OTARC and its associates contributed 54% of La Trobe university's 2020 publications in the topic cluster 'Pervasive Child Development Disorders; Autistic Disorder; Child' - La Trobe's 5th largest source of peer-reviewed research outputs (SciVal, 2020).



Topic code	Topic	World Ranking (% OTARC ¹ publications)
Topic T.6429	Sleep Latency; Autism; Slow Wave Sleep	5 (69% ²)
Topic T.18425	Autism; Asperger Syndrome; Coping Behaviour	10 (100%)
Topic T.1597	Autism; Children with Developmental Disabilities; Autistic Disorder	11 (27%)
Topic T.7790	Autism; Autistic Traits; Asperger Syndrome	11 (33%)
Topic T.4324	Autism; Autistic Disorder; Toddlers	16 (95%)
Topic T.9243	Joint Attention; Autism; Autistic Disorder	19 (100%)
Topic T.12780	Autism; Anxiety; Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder	21 (92%)
Topic T.9850	Child Development; Early Intervention; Toddlers	27 (100%)
Topic T.3876	Temperament; Parenting; Emotion Regulation	42 (83%)

¹ OTARC staff and associates (affiliates, honoraries, adjuncts)

² All 9 publications authored by Prof A. Richdale

AT A GLANCE

20 Research Students
356 Volunteers
\$301,392 in Donations

ENGAGEMENT



42 publications
40 conference presentations and posters
10 media appearances and mentions

PARTICIPANT REGISTRY



3279 individuals on participant registry

MEDIA PROFILE



4263 subscribers to newsletter
4933 social media followers
50,000+ Downloads of mobile app ASDetect

WEBSITE - WWW.LATROBE.EDU.AU/OTARC



9,923 Sessions
9,018 Page views
8,716 New users

IN THE MEDIA

Ifrah Abdullahi

4 March

'Ten young scientists to represent Australia at Lindau Nobel Laureate meeting'

Australian Academy of Science

Darren Hedley

2 April

'Australia's deep talent pool waiting to be tapped'

The Lighthouse

by Michael Yiannakis

Darren Hedley

(systematic review mentioned)

6-8 May

'Cognitive therapy may treat anxiety in children with autism'

Telangana Today, daily hunt, Netindia, AlphaGalileo, Outlook India, SocialNews.XYZ, MedicalXpress, New Kerala, India TV, Daiji-world.com, India4U, ProKerala, infosurhoy, EurekaAlert!

Cheryl Dissanayake

6 June

'Gender identity caught up on the autism spectrum'

The Australian

by Bernard Lane

Cheryl Dissanayake

11 June

'Some say autism is a superpower': How William Callaghan's condition could have helped him survive until his miraculous rescue - as professor says some autistic youngsters feel pain very differently'

Daily Mail Australia

by Wade Flower

Cheryl Dissanayake (quoted)

12 Sep

'Professor honoured as 'trailblazer' after COVID fight'

Herald Sun

Cheryl Dissanayake, Josephine Barbaro, Cathy Bent

August

'Parents' experiences of the service pathway to an autism diagnosis for their child: What predicts an early diagnosis in Australia?'

Blog – New York University, information for practice

Lacey Chetcuti

23 Sep

'The Role of Negative Affectivity in Concurrent Relations Between Caregiver Psychological Distress and Social Emotional Difficulties in Infants With Early Signs of Autism'

Blog - MyNeuroNews, Autistic Spectrum

Cheryl Dissanayake

29 Sep

'A leader in autism research'

The Australian

Lacey Chetcuti

12 Oct

'Subgroups of Temperament Associated with Social-Emotional Difficulties in Infants with Early Signs of Autism'

Blog - MyNeuroNews, Autistic Spectrum

CULTURAL QUALITY CARE

GENEROSITY OF SPIRIT DRIVES OUR ACTIONS AND INTERACTIONS

The quality of care and generosity is exemplified by our late Principal Donor and carries through to the way that we give back to the communities we serve – and inspires them to give in turn.

Advocacy – policy submissions

OTARC has taken advantage of multiple opportunities in 2020 to use the latest research from the centre to inform how autistic Australians can thrive in all aspects of life.

1. Select Committee on Autism November 2019 (Federal)

The Terms of Reference for the Select Committee were very broad offering OTARC the opportunity to make a substantial submission summarising more than 10 years of autism research. “The committee (will) focus its attention on productive and meaningful ways to improve services and support for autistic people in the areas of education, healthcare, employment, housing, justice and rights”.

Outcome: Invitation to present at a public hearing on the 12th Feb 2021.

2. Comment on the Higher Education Support Amendment (Job-Ready Graduates and Supporting Regional and Remote Students) Bill 2020 (Federal)

When the Education and Employment Legislation Committee opened for submission to comment on the proposed changes to higher education funding OTARC composed a response detailing the ways the Bill would disadvantage the autistic community.

Outcome: Due to submissions from advocacy groups the bill was amended to make special consideration more readily available to vulnerable students.

3. Inquiry into access to TAFE for learners with disability (Victoria)

This submission was led by the SASLA team funded by the Cooperative Research Centre for Living with Autism’s (Autism CRC). The team commented on (1) social and economic benefits of increasing accessibility to Victorian TAFE, (2) experiences of learners accessing and participating in TAFE programs, (3) barriers to learning, and (4) what teachers and staff require to maximise learning experience.

CULTURAL QUALITY

ACCOUNTABLE

BEING HONEST, ETHICAL AND CONSIDERED, AND HONOURING THE VALUABLE GIFT OF PERSONAL INFORMATION FROM PARTICIPANTS.

As well as formal structures to ensure accountability, our researchers share their findings with the wider community via invited talks.

Governance - Advisory Committee Members

Name	Position	Biography
Dr Sylvia Walton (Chair)	AO, previous Chancellor of La Trobe University	Dr Walton is an experienced and passionate educator serving as Principal at Tintern and St Catherine's School, Executive Principal at Loreto College, Adelaide and as Chancellor of LaTrobe University. In 2003 Dr Walton was made an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) for services to education.
Professor Cheryl Dissanayake	Founder and Chair of OTARC	Professor Dissanayake is the Founding Director and inaugural Chair. An autism researcher since 1984. Professor Dissanayake was elected vice-President of INSAR in May 2019, and serves on its Senior Global Leaders Committee, representing the Western Pacific region.
Mr Doug Scobie	Centre Manager, OTARC	Doug Scobie joined OTARC as Centre Manager in 2016 from the University of Melbourne where he had held Business Manager and Executive Officer roles. Doug is responsible for a suite of HR, finance, research management and stakeholder engagement functions that drive and support the OTARC's internationally recognised research.
Professor Stephen Kent	Professor Kent is the Dean & Head of School of Psychology & Public Health (within which OTARC sits).	Stephen Kent provides input to the Advisory Committee on the broader La Trobe University priorities, strategy and operational environment. His academic interest is in Psychoneuroimmunology.
Professor Andy Hill	Assoc Provost (Res and Industry Engagmt) Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (SHE).	Prof Hill was appointed Director of the La Trobe Institute of Molecular Sciences (LIMS) in 2017.
Mr Stephen May	Director, Alumni and Advancement	Mr May has extensive experience in fundraising, alumni relations, strategic marketing, financial management and business development.
Mr Roger Foenander	Senior Finance Executive	Mr Foenander has 25 years' experience at both strategic and operational levels in complex, international ASX-listed organisations with a unique combination of experience in finance , M&A, strategy, international tax, international governance and treasury.
Ms Fiona Sharkie	CEO at AMAZE	Ms Sharkie is an advocate for social justice and has spent time campaigning for women's issues as Director of the Office of Women's Policy in the state government from 2003-2007, against smoking as Quit Victoria's executive director from 2007-2014 and is a strong voice for the autistic community through her position as CEO at AMAZE since 2014.

Name	Position	Biography
Ms Penny Robinson	Autism Advocate; Lecturer, Monash University	Ms Robinson is a Lecturer in the School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine at Monash University. She is an Ambassador for The I CAN Network, Yellow Ladybugs and Aspergers Victoria. She was awarded the 'Inspiration Award for Individual Achievement' by Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) in 2017 and was one of 14 Autism CRC Future Leaders in 2018.

Invited Talks

Abdullahi, I & Barbaro, J. Autism and cultural diversity. ASfAR Institute: Autism and Intersectionality 2020 webinar series.

Bury, S. M. Supporting a Neurodiverse Workplace -Mental Well-being. Invited keynote speaker. Neurodiversity: A Paradigm Shift in Higher Education & Employment conference. Dublin, Ireland.

Dissanayake, C. Promoting Early Identification of Autism in Global Settings. Invited talk at Kings College London.

Dissanayake, C. Autism Workshop (Current Perspectives on Autism; Autism in Australia; Early identification of Autism; Diagnosis of ASD; Introduction to the Australian National Diagnostic Guidelines; Early intervention for young children with Autism; Outcomes of early intervention for children with Autism; Autism and the Family; Promoting inclusion and acceptance of neurodiversity). Hue University, Vietnam

Hedley, D. From Employment to Mental Health & Suicide Prevention: Reflecting on Five Years of Research with Autistic Adults. Invited presentation at the Duke Center for Autism and Brain Development 2020-2021 Autism Speaker Series, USA.

Hedley, D. From Employment to Mental Health & Suicide Prevention: Reflecting on Five Years of Research with Autistic Adults. Alumni award recipient talk at the Nationwide Children's Hospital, USA.

Lawson, L. Conducting online longitudinal research. Judith Lumley Methods Club, online.

Lawson, L. Autism and gender. ASfAR Institute: Autism and Intersectionality 2020 webinar series.

Richdale, A. L. Sleep and Autism. Australasian Sleep Association, Sleep Health Council.

Richdale, A. L. Autism and age. ASfAR Institute: Autism and Intersectionality 2020 webinar series

Richdale, A. L., Co-occurring conditions in Autism: Insomnia, Mental Health and Well-being. 2020 Mental Health Summit.

Richdale, A. L., Invited interview on sleep in autism for "Life on the Spectrum".

CULTURAL QUALITY INNOVATIVE

CREATING A PATH FOR SCIENCE TO POSITIVELY IMPACT THE LIVES OF AUTISTIC PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES.



Fun Fidgets February

Thanks to two generous anonymous donors, OTARC was able to use funds to purchase fidget toys to give away to La Trobe students on the autism spectrum.. OTARC staff decided to invite La Trobe students to come in pick up a sensory/fidget toys at the start of Semester 1, 2020. La Trobe front office staff, Margaret and Alex were lucky enough to meet many La Trobe students and let them know about OTARC research and study opportunities and to hear their stories about studying at La Trobe.

"It was so nice to meet some of La Trobe's students both new to the university and those who knew about us but didn't feel they had the opportunity to drop in for a chat. We hope this encourages more students to engage with us in study in their third year and beyond."

(Alex Haschek, OTARC Research Officer)

New science communications strategy – interactive online presentations

In early 2020, the longitudinal Study of Australian School Leavers with Autism (SASLA; funded by the Autism CRC) surveyed it's community which consists of autistic adults, parents/ carers and autism organisations about their preferences in how we communicate the findings of our work. Short videos and interactive web pages topped the list.

During 2020 we have refined online presentations and our final one of the year was very successful at reaching the public with 636 views, proving the form was very popular with our online audience. (See an example of our new graphics, right).

Person with autism*	<input type="text"/>
Person on the spectrum*	<input type="text"/>
Autistic*	<input type="text"/>
Autistic person*	<input type="text"/>
Person with autism spectrum disorder (ASD)*	<input type="text"/>
Person with autism spectrum condition (ASC)*	<input type="text"/>

An example of the redesigned webforms for data collection.

Stop motion video - Pitch it Clever



Thanks to the amazing Hayley Anderson, (who first joined us as a work-placement student), Dr Lauren Lawson was able to enter an innovative stop-motion video to the national Pitch it Clever competition. While the video didn't win, it did gain a lot of attention online for the fun way it explains Dr Lawson's autism sleep intervention (this is a joint project with Prof. Richdale and Dr Morris).

NGV COLLABORATION

The Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre (OTARC) at La Trobe University and the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) collaborated to develop a free online resource, which introduces autistic children to art.

Professor Cheryl Dissanakaye and Dr Susan Hayward (who was a post-doctoral fellow at OTARC), worked closely with Andrea Stahel, Community and Access Programs Manager at NGV to create the resource.

Ms Stahel said that since the NGV had to temporarily close its doors due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they were looking for new and innovative ways to serve their audience, with a focus on social connection and wellbeing.

"Art-making can be incredibly meditative and in difficult times, a source of solace. This year has brought new challenges for children as they adapt to changes in their education, family and social lives. Children can often find disruptions to their daily routine challenging, but for autistic children this can be especially distressing." Andrea said.

LET'S MAKE A PATTERN



CULTURAL QUALITY CONNECTED

ACTIVELY CONNECTING HIGH-QUALITY SCIENCE WITH THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE.

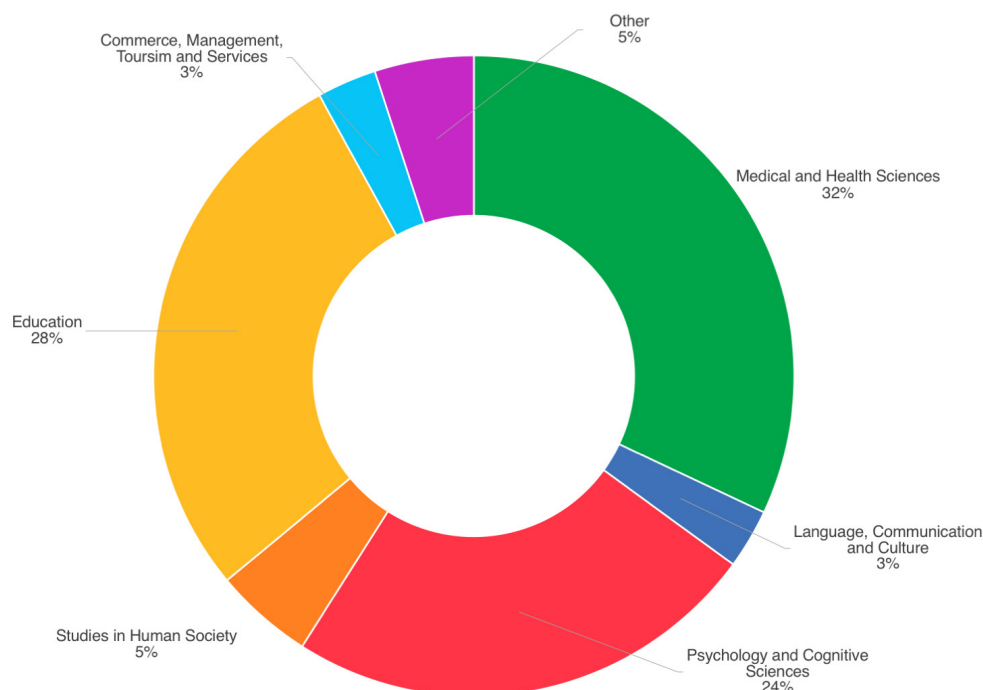
We connect locally, regionally and globally through our relationships with industry and community partners, our extensive network of research collaborations, our program of seminars and through the interdisciplinary nature of our research.

The 2020 Victorian Regional Achievement and Community Awards – Different Journeys nomination led to them being listed as a semi-finalist

Different Journeys is “an Autistic peer support group where we support celebrations, provide connections and create communities”. Different Journeys has helped us with recruitment in the past for the SASLA and research staff attended social dinners and education sessions run by the group. OTARC nominated Different Journeys for the GOTAFE Community Group Award in 2020 for their valuable contribution in providing a safe peer space for autistic teens and adults and their parents. This relaxed, social environment provides a fun way to learn valuable life skills and their education sessions on special topics play a vital role in enhancing the way people connect and live in their wider community. Different Journeys were shortlisted and were listed as a semifinalist.

Discipline connections (2017-2020) - Building connections across disciplines

Publications by OTARC Researchers cover a broad range of sub-disciplines, reflecting the complex nature of autism. The top subdisciplines under which publications have been classified from 2017 to 2020 appear in the chart below.



CULTURAL QUALITY CONNECTED

Margot Prior Autism Intervention Centre

The Margot Prior Autism Intervention Centre has continued to provide early intervention and early education throughout the past 12 months, despite disruptions caused by COVID-19. In response to an eight-week closure during 2020, the team developed new programs to support families, including telehealth consultations and Parent-ESDM coaching to families at home. The team also developed and implemented one-on-one therapy on-site, to support families experiencing anxiety about group delivery and exposure to COVID.

Following introduction of the NDIS, the Centre transitioned to a fee-for-service model mid-2020, after having been block funded for over ten years by the Department of Social Services (DSS). This transition has been extremely smooth, with the early learning and care program continuing to operate at full capacity and all families funding their child's place in the program through an NDIS plan. The team continues to maintain a strong partnership with DSS and collaborated with DSS and NDIS to ensure all families were able to transition from their DSS funded position at the Centre with sufficient NDIS plans in place.

The team is collaborating with DSS on an exciting grant, with the focus being the development of resources that capacity build families and the early education sector. Our team has been redeveloping existing training programs, that currently rely on face-to-face delivery, to online platforms, including modules and videos. Our aim is to support to support educators and families to access content and resources as needed.





INDUSTRY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Collaborators - all co-authors on publications, conference presentations and grants.

International	38	27%
National	104	73%

AUSTRALIA

AEIOU Foundation

Tucker, Madonna

Anglicare South Australia

Frost, Grace

ASPECT Australia

Cai, Ru Ying
Gallagher, Emma

Australian Council for Educational Research

Ahmed, Kashfee
Dix, Katherine Louise
O'Grady, Elizabeth
Trevitt, Jenny

Australian Journal of Education

Hillman, Kylie
Lietz, Petra N.

Autism Actually

Hancock, Shadia
Hancock, Jane

ANU

Batterham, Philip

Autism Partnership

Glencross, Susan
McKinnon, Karen

University of NSW

Jalaludin, Bin B.

Curtin University

Falkmer, Torbjorn
Girdler, Sonya

Deakin University

Stokes, Mark A.
Brown, Claire

Department of Public Health

Pye, Katherine

Flinders University

Alliyza Esther Qin Shi Lim
Short, Michelle
Wenzel, Michael
Woodyatt, Lydia
Young, Robyn
Rillotta, Fiona
Bellon, Michelle

Griffith University

Reilly, Sheena M.

Ingham Institute for Applied Medical Research

Descallar, Joseph

La Trobe University

Bhopti, Anoo
Chetcuti, Lacey
Christou, Grace
Cliffe, Rebecca
Coutts, Nicole
Fanning, Peter A.J.
Flower, Rebecca L.
Hocking, Darren Robert
Hudry, Kristelle
Iacono, Teresa A.
Jovevska, Sanya
Kolivas, Natasha
Korbut, Siobhan
Low, Jennifer
Luu, Jenny
Morris, Eric
Pamment, Lindsay
Rabba, Aspasia Stacey
Rumbold, Bruce
Sahin, Ensu
Shiell, Alan
Shrestha, Rena
Spoor, Jennifer R.
Vartuli, Josh
Wakeling, Scott
Wickramasinghe, Shika
Wong, Lisa
Woollacott, Alexandra

Macquarie University

den Houting, Jacqueline

Margot Prior Autism Intervention Centre

Capes, Kristy
Jones, Carolyne

Griffith University

Caithness, Teena
Mahler, Nicole
Paynter, Jessica
Rose, Veronica J.
Sievers, Stephanie B.
Sutherland, Rebecca
Trembath, David
Westerveld, Marleen Frederike

Monash University

Freeman, Nerelie
Robinson, Penelope
Williams, Katrina Jane
Clapperton, Angela

Neuroscience Research Australia

Overs, Bronwyn J.

NSW Ministry of Health, Child, Youth and Family Health Services

Murphy, Elisabeth P.

Orygen

Robinson, Jo
Clarke, Alison

Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne

Baker, Emma K.

Royal Far West

Ayer, Chandra

RMIT

Bartram, Timothy

Southern Cross University

Donnelly, Michelle
Mozolic-Staunton, Beth
Yoxall, Jacqueline

St Giles Society

Fordyce, Kathryn

Sydney Institute for Women Children and their Families

Eastwood, John G.

Telethon Kids Institute

Boutrus, Maryam
Renton, Michelle
Varcin, Kandice J.
Whitehouse, Andrew J.O.
Pillar, Sarah

The Kirby Institute

Hwang, Ye In (Jane)

The University of Western Australia

Maybery, Murray T.
Wray, John A.

University of Melbourne

Dimov, Stefanie
Kilpatrick, H.
McVilly, Keith R.
Raine, Melissa
Thompson, Grace
Uljarevic, Mirko
Robinson, Jo
Clapperton, Angela
Cotton, Sue

University of New South Wales

Arnold, Samuel R.C.
Masi, Anne
Trollor, Julian N.
Huang, Y
Eapen, Valsamma N.
Woolfenden, Susan R.

University of Newcastle

Lane, Alison

University of South Australia

Segal, Leonie

University of Sydney

Guastella, Adam

INTERNATIONAL**Autism Initiatives Malaysia**

Leong, Daniel

Bucknell University

Evans, David

Cardiff University

Jones, Catherine
Powell, Georgie
Underwood, Jack
Hall, Jeremy

Drexel University

Vivanti, Giacomo

East Carolina University

Moore, Mark E

Haifa University

Gal, E.

King's College London

Slonims, Vicky

Miguel Hernandez University of Elche

Ballester, Pura
Peiró, Ana María

MIND Institute, University of California, Davis

Rogers, Sally
Amaral, David G.

Nationwide Children's Hospital/The Ohio State University

Stephenson, K.
Burns, C.
Mulick, J. A.
Butter, E.
Albright, C.
Kryszac, E.

Nankai University

Wang, Chongying

Open University Business School

Bend, Gemma L.

Oregon Health & Science University

Johnson, Kyle. P

Penn State Harrisburg

Schreck, Kimberly A.

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Yaari, Maya

The University of Manchester

Green, Jonathan M.

Tianjin Women and Children's Health Centre

Liang, Ying
Wang, Jing
Liu, Gongshu

Universidad de Salamanca

Canal, Ricardo

University College London

Sparaci, Laura

University of Calgary

Nicholas, David B.
Zulla, Rosslynn T.

University of Cape Town

de Vries, Petrus J.

University of Haifa

Gal, Eynat

University of Manchester

Wan, Mingwai

University of Nevada, Reno

Hayes, Steven

University of Pennsylvania

Nuske, Heather Joy

University of Valencia

Alcantud, F.
Alonso-Esteban, Yurena
Marco, Rafaela

University of Virginia

Nevill, R.

University of Colorado

Katz, Terry

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Begeer, S.

Zibo Maternal and Child Health Hospital

Wang, Ji





RESEARCH SEMINARS

MONTH	TITLE		BIO
Feb 28	A/Prof Robert Hock - University of South Carolina	Treatment of autism spectrum disorder, and children and families in mental health settings	Assoc. Prof. Hock's main interest lies in the treatment of autism spectrum disorder, and children and families in mental health settings.
Apr 24	OTARC Honours Students Presentations Olivia Corrente, Samantha Lewis, Helen Andrews, Lillian Bridie, Lauren Rizzo, Michael Glas, Emily Osborne, Shannon Elgar, Jessica Scaletti		
Jun 19	A/Prof David Nicholas - Faculty of Social Work - University of Calgary and Department of Paediatrics – University of Alberta	Employment in Autism: Toward a Systems Approach	Dr Nicholas is a Professor in the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Calgary in Canada and leads its Vocational Abilities Innovation Lab which advances capacity in autism and employment.
Jul 24	Professor Alison Lane, PhD, OTR	Sensory symptoms in autism: State of the evidence and future direction	Professor Lane is an occupational therapist with over 25 years of experience in paediatric clinical practice, health service management, research and teaching in both Australia and the United States.
Jul 31	Dr Matthew Harrison	Next level social skills: using cooperative video games as tools for developing collaborative social skills for neurodiverse Gamers	Matthew Harrison is an experienced educator and researcher who has taught in Australia, South Korea and the United Kingdom at primary, secondary and tertiary levels. He coordinates the Autism Intervention program at the Melbourne Graduate School of Education.
Aug 28	Dr Rose Nevill, Director of the University of Virginia Autism Research Core	Self-Injury in ID Populations: From Function to Intervention	Dr Nevill has conducted research on methods for effectively screening for autism in early childhood, early developmental profiles of autism, and identifying and treating comorbid behavioural, mental, and physical health concerns in people with autism.
Oct 30	Dr Beth Malow Vanderbit University	Sleep, health and wellbeing in autism. Contributors, treatments and new directions	Dr Malow is Professor of Neurology and Pediatrics, Director of the Vanderbilt Sleep Division, holds the Burry Endowed Chair in Cognitive Childhood Development, and serves as Vice Chair for Clinical Research in the Department of Neurology and incoming director of the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center Clinical Translational Core.
Nov 13	A/Prof David Nicholas - Faculty of Social Work - University of Calgary and Department of Paediatrics – University of Alberta	Workshop: How Can I Develop a Qualitative Study? Implementing Qualitative Research Methods.	Dr Nicholas is a Professor in the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Calgary in Canada and leads its Vocational Abilities Innovation Lab which advances capacity in autism and employment.
27 Nov	OTARC Honours Student Completion Seminar Jessica Scaletti , Examining the role of parental background on the diagnosis of autism in 12-42-month-old children; Lillian Bridie, The development of expressed emotion in parents of children with autism; Olivia Corrente, Interviewer perceptions of atypical workplace behaviours of an autistic jobseeker under disability disclosed or hidden conditions; evoking attribution and intergroup contact theory; Helen Andrews, Self-determination as a mediator between autistic traits and quality of life; Emily Osborne, Referral decision-making: a survey of Australian Psychologists		

VIRTUAL SEMINARS


Due to COVID 19 many of our seminars were held online to an even larger audience.



How Can I Develop a Qualitative Study: Implementing Qualitative Research Methods

Dr David Nicholas
Professor and Associate Dean, Research and Partnerships in the
Faculty of Social Work at the University of Calgary


Date and time:
Friday November 13th, 11:00AM AEST




RecordingYou are viewing: Beth Malow's screenView OptionsView

Sleep, Health and Wellbeing in Autism— Contributors, Treatments, and New Directions

Beth A. Malow, MD, MS
Professor of Neurology and Pediatrics
Burry Chair in Cognitive Childhood Development
Director, Sleep Disorders Division, Vanderbilt
University Medical Center



Beth Malow

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RESEARCH THEMES

EARLY IDENTIFICATION AND DIAGNOSIS

Theme Leader: Dr Josephine Barbaro

Identifying the early behavioural signs of autism in infancy and toddlerhood is critical to understanding how autism develops in the first years of life. This knowledge assists in identifying and diagnosing children earlier, enabling them to receive supports and services in their early and most critical years.

CURRENT STUDIES

1	Evaluation of ASDetect, a mobile application for autism Funding: La Trobe University	Josephine Barbaro Cheryl Dissanayake Nancy Sadka Lael Ridgway Melissa Gilbert
2	ASDetectPRO training needs analysis Funding: La Trobe University	Shannon Elgar (2020 honours candidate) Melissa Gilbert Josephine Barbaro Radhika Nair
3	Early identification of ASD in Japan: Statutory infant health checkups and early screening tools Funding: La Trobe University	Hiroko Kawashima (PhD candidate) Cheryl Dissanayake Darren Hedley Emiko Kezuka
4	Prospective identification of ASD in infants and toddlers: Social Attention and Communication Surveillance Funding: Autism CRC	Cheryl Dissanayake Josephine Barbaro Lyndsay Quarmby (University of Tasmania) Tony Barnett (University of Tasmania) Nancy Sadka The SACS team
5	The production and validation of a Sensory Observation Autism Rating scale (SOAR) to map autism-specific sensory behaviours and improve early diagnosis	Katy Unwin Josephine Barbaro Alison Lane
6	Examining the association between parental cultural and ethnic background and the diagnosis of autism in 12–42-month-old children Funding: La Trobe University	Jessica Scaletti (2020 honours candidate) Ifrah Abdullahi Josephine Barbaro Nancy Sadka
7	State-wide implementation of the Social Attention and Communication Surveillance-Revised (SACS-R) in Tasmania Funding: Autism CRC	Josephine Barbaro Nancy Sadka Ali Morse Lyndsay Quarmby Tony Barnett (University of Tasmania)
8	A multistate trial of an early surveillance program for autism within general practices in Australia Funding: Autism CRC	Josephine Barbaro Cheryl Dissanayake Melissa Gilbert Ifrah Abdullahi Radhika Nair Katy Unwin & the UNSW team Valsamma Eapen Anne Masi Antonio Mendoza Diaz Aline Smith Iqbal Hasan

RESEARCH THEMES

EARLY INTERVENTION AND SUPPORTS FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM AND THEIR FAMILIES

Theme Leader: Professor Cheryl Dissanayake

It is well established that early intervention promotes positive developmental outcomes for autistic children. Supporting families in the care of their children is also important to enhance wellbeing and quality of life. Our research has focused on how best to promote these positive outcomes for autistic children and their families, beginning at the earliest possible time, and understanding the predictors of best outcomes for children and their families. In so doing, it's important to acknowledge that intervention and supports at any age provides benefits for autistic people and their families. Much of our work in this program is how best to support learning in natural environments that young children typically find themselves in such as in early childhood education and care settings and the home.

CURRENT STUDIES

1	Child and Family Outcomes of children receiving the Group - Early Start Denver Model (G-ESDM) Funding: Department of Social Services	Cheryl Dissanayake Victorian ASELCC Team
2	Parental resolution to their child's autism diagnosis and fidelity of parent delivered intervention. Funding: La Trobe University	Paula Grogan (Masters candidate, Clinical Psyc) Cheryl Dissanayake Rachel Jellett Katy Unwin Maya Yaari
3	Intranasal oxytocin in preschoolers with autism receiving social learning therapy: a randomised, double-blind, repeated dose study Funding: NH&MRC	Adam Guastella Geraldine Dawson Cheryl Dissanayake Valsamma Eapen Yun Ju (Christine) Song Ruth Feldman Natalie Silove Rachel Jellett Katy Unwin Sally Rogers
4	Decreasing defensive responses: An intervention study of emotional regulation, social engagement, auditory processing and motor skills in children with autism. Funding: La Trobe University	Joanne McIntyre (PhD candidate) Darren Hocking Darren Hedley
5	The beliefs and experiences of practitioners who have worked in multi-sensory environments with autistic children: A sequential mixed-methods investigation Funding: Economic and Social Science Research Council, UK	Katy Unwin Georgie Powell (Cardiff University) Catherine Jones (Cardiff University)
6	The use of multi-sensory environments with autistic children: Exploring the effect of having control of sensory changes Funding: Economic and Social Science Research Council, UK	Katy Unwin Georgie Powell (Cardiff University) Catherine Jones (Cardiff University)

7	Brief report: preferences of autistic children for multi-sensory environment equipment: patterns of use and individual differences Funding: Economic and Social Science Research Council, UK	Katy Unwin Georgie Powell (Cardiff University) Catherine Jones (Cardiff University)
8	Early intensive behavioural intervention for autism: Understanding 'What works for whom?' Funding: Department of Social Services	Cathy Bent Cheryl Dissanayake Kristelle Hudry Victorian ASELCC Team Giacomo Vivanti (Drexel University) Karen McKinnon Susan Glenross (Autism Partnership Australia)
9	Supporting best practice in the assessment and treatment of minimally verbal children with autism Funding: Department of Social Services	David Trembath M. Tucker Kristelle Hudry Katherine Pye C. Muckett K. Fordyce G. Hoppenbrouwers A. DeBlasio S. Webb A. Joosten R. Grove J. Paynter M. Westerveld N. Maher V. Rose D. Keen Valsamma Eapen S. Riley Teresa Iacono Cheryl Dissanayake
10	Australian Infant Communication and Engagement Study (AICES)	From Telethon Kids institute: Andrew Whitehouse Kandice Varcin Maryam Boutrus Matthew Cooper From La Trobe University: Kristelle Hudry Cheryl Dissanayake Josephine Barbaro Teresa Iacono John Wray (Department of Health WA) Jonathan Green (University of Manchester) Carol Taylor (University of Manchester) Ming Wai Wan (University of Manchester) Vicky Slonims (Guys' and St Thomas Hospital, London) Murray Mayber (University of Western Australia) Emma Davidson (Child and Adolescent Health Service)

RESEARCH THEMES

VOCATIONAL PATHWAYS

Theme Leader: Dr Darren Headley

Many people on the autism spectrum do not go on to post-secondary education after they graduate, and many do not find work, work only intermittently, or work in jobs that do not match their skillset, training or education level. We envisage a world where people on the autism spectrum have the same chance as their peers to complete further education and find and retain a fulfilling vocation. Our broad research goal is to understand why people on the autism spectrum are often unable to fulfil their full potential, and to discover what factors and supports can assist them to do so.

CURRENT STUDIES

1	Understanding the experience of autistic working mothers in australia: an exploratory study Funding: La Trobe University	Katherine (Kate) Gore (Masters candidate, Clinical Psyc.) Josephine Barbaro Melissa Gilbert Rebecca Flower
2	Factors associated with transition from high school: The study of Australian School Leavers (SASLA) Funding: La Trobe University, Autism CRC	Lyndel Kennedy (PhD candidate) Amanda Richdale Lauren Lawson
3	Interviewer perceptions of atypical workplace behaviours of an autistic jobseeker under disability disclosed or hidden conditions; evoking attribution and intergroup contact theory Funding: La Trobe University	Olivia Corrente (Honours candidate) Rebecca Flower Darren Hedley
4	PEAS: Partnership for employment outcomes for autistic people in society	Rebecca Flower Susan Hayward Kathleen Denney Cheryl Dissanayake Amanda Richdale Darren Hedley Simon Bury
5	Exploring the facilitators and barriers to successful transition to university for students on the autism spectrum.	Alison Nuske (Flinders University) Fiona Rillotta (Flinders University) Michelle Bellon (Flinders University) Amanda Richdale



RESEARCH THEMES

CO-OCCURRING CONDITIONS

Theme Leader: Prof. Amanada Richdale

Physical and mental health conditions such as anxiety and sleep difficulties commonly occur in autistic children and adults. Co-occurring conditions can negatively affect learning, behaviour and family wellbeing. In adults these conditions impact everyday functioning in the community and workplace. We aim to develop a better understanding of these conditions, which will contribute to the development of better supports and prevention strategies for autistic individuals both in Australia and internationally.

CURRENT STUDIES

1	Suicide prevention and mental health & well-being in autistic adults Funding: Suicide Prevention Australia	Darren Hedley Angela Clapperton Cheryl Dissanayake Stokes, M Julian Troller Jo Robinson Mirko Uljaravic
2	Intervention for insomnia in autistic adults (ACT-i) Funding: Latrobe University BHCRA	Amanda Richdale Eric Morris Lauren Lawson
3	SLEAPI: Intervention for insomnia in adults with autism Funding: La Trobe University	Amanda Richdale Eric Morris Lauren Lawson
4	Improving the competence of mental health practitioners in providing care to their autistic clients Funding: La Trobe University	Robyn Ball (PhD candidate) Amanda Richdale Eric Morris Lauren Lawson
5	Substance use disorders in autism: Associations with psychiatric and neurodevelopmental disorders Funding: Fellowship to KU (2019-2020) - Future Leaders Waterloo & National Mental Health Research Institute Fellowship	Katy Unwin From the National Mental Health Research Institute Cardiff University - Jack Underwood Jeremy Hall
6	Influence of autism symptoms and transdiagnostic factors on anxiety, depression and insomnia in autistic adolescents. Funding: Autism CRC and La Trobe University	Alexa Jordan Chalmers (Masters candidate - Clinical Psychology) Amanda Richdale Lauren Lawson
7	Self-determination as a mediator between autistic traits and quality of life' Funding: La Trobe University	Helen Andrews (2020 honours candidate) Simon Bury Darren Hedley
8	Sex differences in restricted and repetitive behaviours for autistic adolescents and adults. Funding: Autism CRC and La Trobe University	Samantha Lewis (2020 Honours candidate) Lauren Lawson Amanda Richdale
9	Examining psychological flexibility and other transdiagnostic psychological processes in poor sleep Funding: La Trobe University	Michael Glas (2020 Honours candidate) Eric Morris Amanda Richdale

11	Cognitive profiles associated with STEM occupations in ASD: Characterising the 'autism advantage' Funding: La Trobe University	Eva Laurent (PhD candidate) Amanda Richdale Cheryl Dissanayake
12	The impact of sleep quality, fatigue and social wellbeing on depressive symptomatology in autistic older adolescents and young adults (SASLA) Funding: Autism CRC and La Trobe University	Amanda Richdale Lacey Chetcuti Alex Haschek Susan M Hayward Ifrah Abdullahi Eric Morris Lauren Lawson



RESEARCH THEMES

CROSS-THEME RESEARCH

While most OTARC research can be categorised under the four themes above, we are also committed to broadening the scope of our research, by encouraging interdisciplinary and collaborative approaches. Studies in this section may fit under more than one of the four main themes or may fall outside the themes altogether.

CURRENT STUDIES

1	Longitudinal Study of Australian School Leavers with Autism (SASLA) Funding: Autism CRC	Amanda Richdale Ru Ying Cai Mirko Uljarević Lauren Lawson Rebecca Flower Susan M Hayward Ifrah Abdullahi Alex Haschek Melanie Muniandy (PhD candidate) Torbjorn Falkmer (Curtin University) Nick Lennox (The University of Queensland) Julian Trollor (University of New South Wales) David Harley (University of Queensland) Samuel Arnold Kitty-Rose Foley
2	Australian Longitudinal Study of Adults with Autism (ALSAA) Funding: Autism CRC	Julian Trollor (UNSW) Nick Lennox (UQ) Torbjorn Falkmer (Curtin University) Amanda Richdale Mirko Uljarevic Lauren Lawson Rebecca Flower Susan M Hayward Samuel Arnold Kitty-Rose Foley
3	#TakeTheMaskOff: Autistic performativity and the neurodiversity movement Funding: La Trobe University (Department of Social Inquiry and OTARC)	Elisabeth Radulski (PhD candidate) Katie Wright Cheryl Dissanayake
4	Emotional awareness in young autistic adults (SASLA) Funding: Autism CRC	Alex Haschek Rebecca Flower Amanda Richdale Mirko Uljarević Ru Ying Cai Lauren Lawson
5	Coping and resilience in autistic adults Funding: Autism CRC	Melanie Muniandy (PhD candidate) Amanda Richdale Lauren Lawson
6	Coping and emotional distress in family caregivers of adolescents and young adults on the autism spectrum Funding: La Trobe University	Carol Bryden (Masters candidate- clinical psychology) Amanda Richdale Lauren Lawson Eric Morris

7	School-age outcomes of children with autism and parental wellbeing: investigations on the contribution of method-of-referral and age-of-diagnosis Funding: NHMRC	Cheryl Dissanayake Josephine Barbaro Alan Shiell Katrina Williams Alex Ure Katy Unwin Rachel Jellett
8	Autistic adults' experiences with end-of-life services, grief and bereavement. Funding: La Trobe University	Jennifer Lowe (PhD candidate) Bruce Rumbold Cheryl Dissanayake
9	Characterising autistic burnout and its underlying mechanisms: An exploratory investigation Funding: La Trobe University	Jane Mantzalas (PhD candidate) Amanda Richdale Cheryl Dissanayake
10	Participation, quality of life and parental outcomes in caregivers of school aged children with autism Funding: La Trobe University and NHMRC	Gemma Davy (PhD candidate) Cheryl Dissanayake Josephine Barbaro Katy Unwin
11	Associations and predictors of early sensory profile differences using an existing large dataset Funding: La Trobe University and University of Melbourne	Katy Unwin Mirko Uljarević (University of Melbourne)



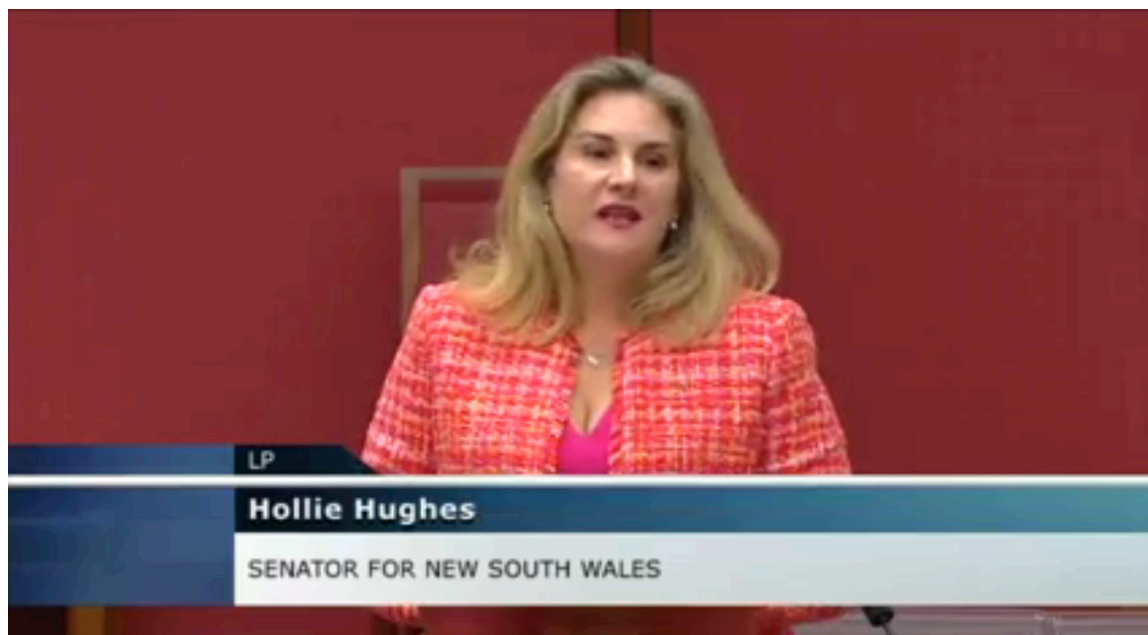
SENATOR HOLLIE HUGHES PAID TRIBUTE TO OLGA TENNISON IN PARLIAMENT

As the Chair of the Senate Select Committee of Autism, Senator Hughes has a professional interest in the topic. However, she also shares with Mrs Tennison the situation of having a family member with autism. Describing Mrs Tennison's early life, she noted that Mrs Tennison's interest in autism was triggered when her grandson was diagnosed with Asperger's disorder at 12.

"I have an autistic son. When my child was diagnosed, the grief and challenges that I faced as a parent were in trying to discover what therapies were the best options to undertake, where to turn, where to get assistance and where to get support.

Many Australian families, I know, would like me to say on their behalf that it is with great gratitude that we acknowledge the amazing philanthropic donations that enabled the Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre to be developed in the first place and that enable the work that it continues to undertake."

– Senator Hollie Hughes, 7 October 2020



SUPPORTING A NEURODIVERSE WORKFORCE

A collaboration between DXC Technology, the Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Limited (ANZ) and the Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre (OTARC) has resulted in the development of a world-first toolkit to assist workplaces to support the mental health and well-being of autistic employees.

While employment programs have been successful in helping autistic people to gain work, mental health challenges continue to be a significant barrier to sustainable employment. DXC Technology (whose Dandelion Program supports people on the autism spectrum to gain employment and pursue careers in information technology) and ANZ Bank (whose Spectrum Program is committed to recognising the talents of autistic people and shaping a workplace where they can thrive) determined that a mental health toolkit to support neurodiverse people was needed, and enlisted OTARC to partner in its development.

The result: Supporting a Neurodiverse Workforce: A Mental Health and Well-Being Resource and Training Package. The toolkit contains information and strategies for autistic employees, their employers, support workers, mentors and colleagues to help manage mental health and wellbeing in the workplace, and facilitate long-term, sustainable employment for people on the autism spectrum.

OTARC's lead on the project, Dr Simon Bury, notes that standard employee assistance programs often lack specific knowledge to best support the mental health of autistic employees. "Supporting a Neurodiverse Workforce aims to bridge the gap," he says. "It provides an overview of autism and autism-friendly work environments, along with evidence-based strategies to promote mental health and wellbeing, with specific information on mental health and autism."

Professor Cheryl Dissanayake, Director and Chair of OTARC, agrees, and hopes the toolkit will "both support the mental health of autistic employees but also build the sustainability of autism employment initiatives such as the Dandelion Program."

OTARC are currently working with DXC, and their strategic partner Untapped, to produce employer training based on the toolkit. There are also plans to make a version of the toolkit available via DXC Technology's open source channel via Cornell University.

"The toolkit was co-designed with people on the autism spectrum with lived experience and their support workers, co-workers and managers, as well as leading academics from around the world," adds Michael Fieldhouse, DXC Dandelion Program Executive. "It is a world-first resource and we are committed to making it available to the autism community and employers."



ACADEMIC STAFF



**Professor Cheryl Dissanayake,
Director and Chair.**

Professor Dissanayake's 2020 achievements include:

- Fellow, International Society of Autism Research (INSAR)
- Vice-President, INSAR
- Vice President, Australian Society of Autism Research (ASfAR)
- Awarded a Lifetime Membership of ASfAR
- Commissioner of the Lancet Commission on Autism (one of 23 international scholars)
- Recognised as Field Leader in Australia and globally for Developmental Disabilities in The Australian Research Supplement, for the third year in a row
- Senior Global Leader INSAR
- Cheryl is also the leader of the Early Intervention Research Program at OTARC



**Professor Amanda Richdale,
Principal Research Fellow.**

Professor Richdale's 2020 achievements include:

- Leader of the 'Co-occurring conditions' Research Program at OTARC
- Project Leader of the Study of Australian School Leavers with Autism (SASLA), an Autism CRC funded longitudinal study
- Committee member of the Australian Psychological Society (APS) Interest Group "Psychology of Intellectual Disability and Autism"
- Registered Psychologist and Fellow of the APS College of Educational and Developmental Psychologists
- Organising committee member for the International Pediatric Sleep Association presenting the 6th congress of the International Pediatric Sleep Association
- Edited the book - Sleep Difficulties and Disorders in Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Member of the Editorial Board for Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders.
- Autism Editor for Current Developmental Disorder Reports.
- Editor of Special Issue on Sleep and Autism for Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders.

Professor Richdale regularly appears in the media (e.g., APS journal, ABC radio, Spectrum News) discussing sleep and autism and other co-occurring conditions, and autism school and tertiary transition issues.

ACADEMIC STAFF



**Senior Research Fellow
Dr Josephine Barbaro.**

Dr Barbaro's 2020 achievements include:

- Leader of the 'Early identification and diagnosis of autism' Research Program at OTARC
- Project Leader with the Autism Cooperative Research Centre (ACRC)
- Elected member of La Trobe University Academic Board
- Elected member of the Australian Society for Autism Research Executive Committee
- Member of 8 national and international committees



**Research Fellow
Dr Darren Hedley.**

Dr Hedley's 2020 achievements include:

- Recipient of the Alumni Research Award, Nationwide Children's Hospital Child Development Center; "Awarded to a former CDC trainee who has made significant contributions to the field of Intellectual and Developmental Disability"
- Leader of the 'Vocational Pathways' Research Program at OTARC

Research Fellow Dr Lauren Lawson

Early Career Researcher (Master's in Clinical Psychology and PhD completed in 2015)
Chair of the La Trobe University ECR Network Committee
ECR Coordinator, Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre
Member of the La Trobe University's Academic Board
Registered Clinical Psychologist
Deputy-chair of the CoCON group

Postdoctoral Research Fellow Dr Simon Bury

Early Career Researcher (PhD completed in 2017)
HDR Coordinator, Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre
Registered Psychologist
Assistant Coordinator PSY2SOC

Postdoctoral Research Fellow Dr Ifrah Abdullahi

Early career researcher (PhD completed in 2019)
Co-founder of 'Muslim ability WA'
Founder of the 'Young Somali Women's Society'
Co-Founder & Liaison Officer 'Hope for the Horn Collective'

Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Dr Katy Unwin

Early career researcher (PhD completed in 2019)
• Member of Early Career Researchers committee, La Trobe University
• Co-chair of Early Identification research group, Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre

Postdoctoral Research Fellow Dr Melissa Gilbert

Dr Gilbert is currently working on a trial for the early detection of autism within general practices and the ASDetect evaluation study. She was also involved in training the Victorian Maternal and Child Health workforce in the early detection of autism. Her research interests include the early identification of autism, women's health, and disability.

- Lead supervisor, ASDetectPRO Training Needs Analysis: An Investigation of Professionals' Autism Knowledge and Requirements for the Development of an Early Autism Training Program
- Joint supervisor, Understanding the Experience of Autistic Working Mothers in Australia: An Exploratory Study, Gore K
- Reviewed for Frontiers in Neurology

Postdoctoral Research Fellow Dr Susan Hayward

Dr Hayward worked on several projects with OTARC in 2020 including employment and social inclusion, increasing the knowledge of disability employment service providers around autism and the SASLA project.

Postdoctoral Research Fellow Dr Rachel Jellett

Early career researcher (PhD completed in 2016)
Health professional member of La Trobe's Human Research Ethics Committee
Clinical psychologist and a board approved supervisor
Dr Jellett is passionate about applying her experience as a practicing psychologist to autism research, and teaching others.

Postdoctoral Research Fellow Dr Rhylee Sulek

Early career researcher (PhD completed in 2019)
Currently working on projects which evaluate outcomes for children on the autism spectrum receiving group based early intervention.
Interested in supporting children with ASD to achieve positive outcomes, primarily through the use of evidence-based practices, as they transition to school.

Research Officer Dr Nancy Sadka

Dr Sadka has a passion for research on autism where this research can be translated to help support parents and carers across the life span. She serves on several boards in the community for strategic planning and implementations of support for people with disabilities.

Research Officer Alex Haschek

Alex Haschek works on the Study of Australian School Leavers with Autism (SASLA) managing data collection and the production of peer-reviewed articles and with the Director of OTARC.
Alex was shortlisted with 3 other individuals from 61 nominees for La Trobe University's Vice-Chancellor's Cultural Qualities Award "Accountable" in 2020 and was also nominated for a La Trobe University's Vice-Chancellor's Cultural Qualities Award "Care" award.
Facilitated and co-authored 3 policy submissions; the Select Committee on Autism, the Higher Education Support Amendment (Job-Ready Graduates and Supporting Regional and Remote Students) Bill 2020 and Inquiry into access to TAFE for learners with disability (Victoria).

PROFESSIONAL STAFF

Doug Scobie - Centre Manager

Alex Aulich - Laboratory Coordinator (Jan – March 2020)

Perrin Date - OTARC Research Operations Coordinator
(From March 2020)

Mick Leahy - Mobile App Marketing Officer

Melinda Denham - Communications Coordinator

Mithun Roy - CRM Officer

Radhika Nair - Project Manager

Margaret Laughton - Administration Officer

Erin Beattie - Project Officer

Elfriede Ihlen – Research and Operations Architect

Kat Denney - Research Assistant

Jenny Luu - Research Assistant

Affiliate Members

Dr Kristelle Hudry,
Senior Lecturer,
Department of Psychology &
Counselling

Dr Jennifer Spoor,
Senior Lecturer,
La Trobe Business School

Mr Eric Morris,
Senior Lecturer and Psychology Clinic Director,
Department of Psychology &
Counselling

Dr Teresa Iacono,
Professor of Rural and Regional Allied Health,
La Trobe Rural Health School

Emmanuelle Walkowiak,
Senior Lecturer, La Trobe Business School

Dr Rebecca Flower,
Department of Psychology &
Counselling

Honorary members

Dr Nusrat Ahmed,
Shuchona Foundation, Bangladesh

Dr Yuan Gao,
Independent Consultant, China

Dr Elfriede Ihlen,
School of Psychology and Public Health, La Trobe
University

Dr Han Ming (Daniel) Leong,
Co-chair, Autism Initiatives Malaysia

Dr Mirko Uljarevic,
ARC Senior Research Fellow, University of Melbourne

Dr Giacomo Vivanti,
Assistant Professor, Early Detection & Intervention
Program, Drexel University, USA

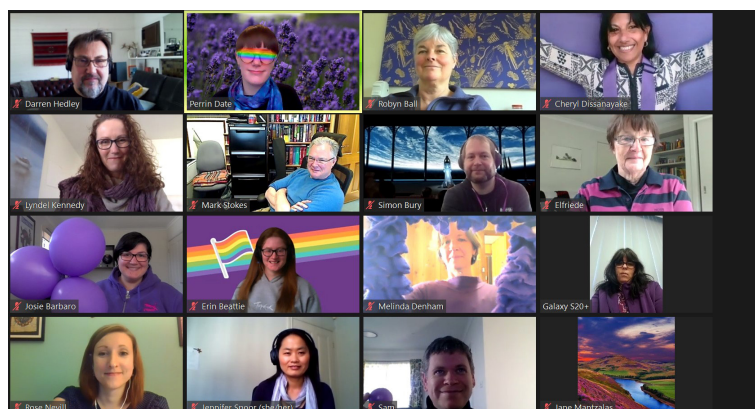
Adjunct members

Mr Daniel Bognar,
Executive Vice President, Solution Engineering, Asia
Pacific, Salesforce

Mr Michael Fieldhouse,
Director, Emerging Businesses & Cyber Security; Dandelion
Program Executive, DXC Technology

Dr Tania Pietrzak,
School of Psychology and Public Health, La Trobe
University

Dr David Trembath,
Associate Professor, School of Allied Health, Griffith
University



Staff celebrate Purple Day 2020 - via ZOOM.

PUBLICATIONS AND OUTPUTS

Peer reviewed articles

Note: metrics compiled 12-01-2021. **Highlighted** authors were staff at the time of submission.

Australian Health Review - Explores health policy and management including healthcare delivery systems, clinical programs and health financing (1yrIF = 1.32).

1. Ayer, C., Eapen, V., Overs, B., Descallar, J., Jalaludin, B., Eastwood, J.G., **Dissanayake, C.**, Williams, K., Murphy, E., & Woolfenden, S. (2020). Risk factors for non-participation in a universal developmental surveillance program in a population in Australia. *Australian Health Review*, 44(4), 512-520. <https://doi.org/10.1071/AH18236> (69th percentile citation impact)

Autism - publishing research of direct and practical relevance to help improve the quality of life for individuals with autism or autism-related disorders (2.327 = 5yrIF).

2. Hudry, K., Chetcuti, L., Boutrus, M., Pillar, S., Baker, E. K., Dimov, S., **Barbaro, J.**, Green, J., Whitehouse, A. J., & Varcin, K. J. (2020). Performance of the Autism Observation Scale for Infants with community-ascertained infants showing early signs of autism. *Autism*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362361320965397> (Altmetric score = 24 (top 25%), 125 access and downloads from 22nd Oct 2020).
3. **Lawson, L. P., Richdale, A. L., Haschek, A., Flower, R. L., Vartuli, J.**, Arnold, S. R., & Trollor, J. N. (2020). Cross-sectional and longitudinal predictors of quality of life in autistic individuals from adolescence to adulthood: The role of mental health and sleep quality. *Autism*, 24(4), 954–967. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362361320908107> (3 citations (94th percentile), FWCI = 3.88, Altmetric score = 11 (top 25%), 1214 views and downloads)

Autism and Developmental Disorders (Open access). Published by the Moscow State University of Psychology and Education.

4. **Hedley, D, Bury, S. M.**, & Spoor, J. R. (2020). The Relationship Between Quality of Life and Job Satisfaction in Autistic Workers. *Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 18(3), 12-21. <https://doi.org/10.17759/autdd> (93 downloads 07/01/2021)

Autism & Developmental Language Impairments (open access) - focusses on helping shape research in the growing field of developmental communication disorders.

5. Smith, J., **Bent, C. A.**, Green, C. C., Woollacott, A., & Hudry, K. (2020). Non-native language proficiency may influence the responsiveness of bilingual parents towards young children with autism: A short report. *Autism & Developmental Language Impairments*, 5. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2396941519899684> (Altmetric score = 3, views and downloads 1140, since Jan 2020).

Autism in Adulthood - Research and scholarship on the most pressing issues affecting adults on the autism spectrum, from emerging adulthood to later life (1st year of publishing).

6. Arnold, S.R.C., Huang, Y., Hwang, Y.I. (Jane), **Richdale, A.L.**, Trollor, J.N., & **Lawson, L.P.** (2020). "The Single Most Important Thing That Has Happened to Me in My Life": Development of the Impact of Diagnosis Scale—Preliminary Revision. *Autism in Adulthood*, 2(1), 34-41. <http://doi.org/10.1089/aut.2019.0059> (Altmetric score = 5).
7. Jovevska, S., **Richdale, A.L., Lawson, L.P.**, Uljarević, M., Arnold, S.R.C., and Trollor, J. N. (2020). Sleep Quality in Autism from Adolescence to Old Age. *Autism in Adulthood*, 2(2), 152-162. <http://doi.org/10.1089/aut.2019.0034> (3 citations (81st percentile, FWCI = 1.92, Altmetric score = 12 (top 25%)).
8. **Sahin, E., Bury, S., Flower, R., Lawson, L., Richdale, A., & Hedley, D.** (2020). Psychometric evaluation of an Australian version of the Vocational Index for adults with autism. *Autism in Adulthood*, 2(3), 185-192. <https://doi.org/10.1089/aut.2019.0060> (Altmetric score = 4).

Autism Research - Covers research relevant to ASD and closely related neurodevelopmental disorders (4.110 = 1yrIF).

9. Chetcuti, L., Uljarević, M., Varcin, K.J., Boutrus, M., Wan, M.W., Slonims, V., Green, J., Segal, L., Iacono, T., **Dissanayake, C.**, Whitehouse, A.J.O., Hudry, K., and the AICES Team (**Barbaro, J.**, Dimov, S., Maybery, M., Renton, M., **Sadka, N.**, Wakeling, S. & Wray, J.). (2020). The role of negative affectivity in concurrent relations between caregiver psychological distress and social-emotional difficulties in infants with early signs of autism. *Autism Research*. 13(8), 1439-1357. <https://doi.org/10.1002/aur.2296> (1 citation (79th percentile), FWCI = 1.15, Altmetric score = 1).
10. Chetcuti, L., Uljarević, M., Varcin, K.J., Boutrus, M., Wan, M.W., Green, J., Iacono, T., **Dissanayake, C.**, Whitehouse, A.J.O., Hudry, K., & the AICES Team (**Barbaro, J.**, Dimov, S., Maybery, M., Renton, M., **Sadka, N.**, Segal, L., Slonims, V., Wakeling, S. & Wray, J.). (2020). Subgroups of Temperament Associated with Social-Emotional Difficulties in Infants with Early Signs of Autism. *Autism Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/aur.2381> (Altmetric score = 10 (top 25%)).

11. **Dissanayake, C., Barbaro, J., Gilbert, M., Hayward, S. M., Hedley, D., Lawson, L. P., Sadka, N., & Unwin, K.** (2020). "Reflections on the Impact of COVID-19 on Autism Research in Australia" in Amaral, D. G., & de Vries, P. J. (2020). COVID-19 and Autism Research: Perspectives from Around the Globe. *Autism Research*, 13(6), 844–869. <https://doi.org/10.1002/aur.2329> (3 citations (98th percentile), FWCI = 6.29, Altmetric score = 57 (top 5%))

BMC Pediatrics (Open access) - research on all aspects of health care in neonates, children & adolescents (3yrIF = 2.49)

12. **Barbaro, J., Yaari, M.** (2020). Study protocol for an evaluation of ASDetect - a Mobile application for the early detection of autism. *BMC Pediatr* 20, 21. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12887-019-1888-6> (Altmetric score = 12 (top 25%), 1985 accesses)

Campbell Systematic Reviews (open access) - publishes systematic reviews, evidence and gap maps, and methods research papers.

13. Hillman, K., Dix, K., Ahmed, K., Lietz, P., Trevitt, J., O'Grady, E., Uljarević, M., Vivanti, G., & **Hedley, D.** (2020). Interventions for anxiety in mainstream school-aged children with autism spectrum disorder: A systematic review. *Campbell Systematic Reviews*, 16(2), e1086. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cl2.1086> (Altmetric score = 117 (top 5%))

Child Neuropsychology - A Journal on Normal and Abnormal Development in Childhood and Adolescence (2.89 = 3yrIF)

14. Fanning, P.A.J., Sparaci, L., **Dissanayake, C.**, Hocking, D.R., Vivanti, G. (2020). Functional play in young children with autism and Williams syndrome: A cross-syndrome comparison. *Child Neuropsychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09297049.2020.1804846> (Altmetric score = 2)

Current Opinion in Psychology - The views of experts on current advances in psychology in a clear and readable form. 2. Evaluations of the most interesting papers, annotated by experts, from the great wealth of original publications (4.162 = 1yrIF).

15. Schreck, K.A., & **Richdale, A.L.** (2020). Sleep problems, behavior, and psychopathology in autism: inter-relationships across the lifespan. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 34, 105-111. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2019.12.003> (Altmetric score = 10 (top 25%))

Frontiers in Neurology: Pediatric Neurology - Dedicated to providing a forum for the publication of innovations, analyses, and observations in clinical, translational and basic science research relevant to child neurology.

16. **Barbaro, J.**, Wang, C., Wang, J., Liu, G., Liang, Y., Wang, J., **Abdullahi, I.**, & **Dissanayake, C.** (2020). A Pilot Investigation of the Social Attention and Communication Surveillance (SACS) Tool for the Early Identification of Autism in Tianjin, China (SACS-C). *Front. Neurol.* 11:597790. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fneur.2020.597790> (Altmetric score = 13 (top 25%)).
17. **Luu, J., Jellett, R., Yaari, M., Gilbert, M., & Barbaro, J.** (2020). A Comparison of Children Born Preterm and Full-term on the Autism Spectrum in a Prospective Community Sample. *Frontiers in Neurology*. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fneur.2020.597505> (Altmetric score = 10 (top 25%), 617 views, 71 downloads since Dec 3 2020).

International Journal of Wellbeing (Open access) - promoting interdisciplinary research on wellbeing.

18. Thompson, G. A., Raine, M., **Hayward, S. M.**, & Kilpatrick, H. (2020). Gathering community perspectives to inform the design of autism-friendly music-making workshops for wellbeing. *International Journal of Wellbeing*, 10(5), 117-143. <https://doi.org/10.5502/ijw.v10i5.1497>

JMIR Pediatrics and Parenting - has a unique focus on technologies, medical devices, apps, engineering, informatics applications for patient/parent education, training, counselling, behavioral interventions, preventative interventions and clinical care for pediatric and adolescent populations or child-parent dyads.

19. **Rabba, S., Dissanayake, C., & Barbaro, J.** (2020). Development of a web-based resource for parents of young children newly diagnosed with autism: A participatory research design. *JMIR Pediatrics and Parenting*, 3(2), e15786. <https://doi.org/10.2196/15786> (Altmetric score = 7 (top 25%))

Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders - Focusing on all aspects of autism spectrum disorders and related developmental disabilities (5yrIF = 4.367).

20. Arnold, S., Uljarević, M., Hwang, Y. I., **Richdale, A. L.**, Trollor, J. N., & **Lawson, L. P.** (2020). Brief Report: Psychometric Properties of the Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9) in Autistic Adults. *Journal of autism and developmental disorders*, 50(6), 2217–2225. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-019-03947-9> (6 citations (97th percentile), FWCI = 6.47, Altmetric score = 4, 723 accesses since March 2020)
21. **Bury, S. M., Flower, R. L., Zulla, R., Nicholas, D. B., & Hedley, D.** (2020). Workplace social challenges experienced by employees on the autism spectrum: An international exploratory study examining employee and supervisor perspectives. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-020-04662-6> (Altmetric score = 11 (top 25%)).



This publication was one of the top three articles in this journal in 2020.

22. Bury, S. M., Jellet, R., Spoor, J. R., & Hedley, D. (2020). "It's something I have" or "it defines who I am": What language do [autistic] Australian adults [on the autism spectrum] prefer?. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-020-04425-3> (10 citations (99th percentile), FWC1 = 11.65, Altmetric score = 32 (top 5%), 991 accesses).

23. Cai, R.Y., Richdale, A.L., Uljarević, M., & Dissanayake, C. (2020). How does emotion regulation strategy use and psychological wellbeing predict mood in adults with and without autism spectrum disorder. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 50, (5), 1786-1799.

24. Dissanayake, C., Richdale, A., Kolivas, N., & Pamment, L. (2020). An Exploratory Study of Autism Traits and Parenting. *Journal of autism and developmental disorders*, 50(7), 2593–2606. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-019-03984-4> (Altmetric score = 3, 672 accesses since March 2020).

25. Flower, R.L., Richdale, A.L. & Lawson, L.P. (2020). Brief Report: What Happens After School? Exploring Post-school Outcomes for a Group of Autistic and Non-autistic Australian Youth. *J Autism Dev Disord*, 24(4), 954-967. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-020-04600-6> (Altmetric score = 26 (top 25%), 263 access on springer since July).

26. Trembath, D., Sutherland, R., Caithness, T., Dissanayake, C., Eapen, V., Fordyce, K., Frost, G., Iacono, T., Mahler, N., Masi, A., Paynter, J., Pye, K., Reilly, S., Rose, V., Sievers, S., Thirumanickam, A., Westerveld, M., Tucker, M. (2020). Clinician Proposed Predictors of Spoken Language Outcomes for Minimally Verbal Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-020-04550-z> (1 citation (81st percentile), FWC1 = 1.29, Altmetric score = 9 (top 25%), 373 accesses on Springer)

27. Uljarević, M., Hedley D., Foley, K.R., Magiati, I., Cai, R.Y., Dissanayake, C., Richdale, A., & Troller, J. (2020). Anxiety and depression from adolescence to old age in Autism Spectrum Disorder. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 50, 3155–3165

Psicothema (open access) - admit work from both the basic and applied research fields, and from all areas of Psychology, all manuscripts being anonymously reviewed prior to publication (1.81 = 1yrIF).

28. Alonso-Esteban, Y., Marco-Taverner, R., Hedley, D., Uljarević, M., Barbaro, J., Canal-Bedia, R., & Alcantud-Marín, F. (2020). Screening instruments for early detection of autism spectrum disorder in Spanish speaking communities. *Psicothema*, 32(2), 245-252. <https://doi.org/10.7334/psicothema2019.340> (Altmetric score = 1)

Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders - Empirical articles and reviews that contribute to a better understanding of Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) at all levels of description; genetic, neurobiological, cognitive, and behavioural (2.327 = 5yrIF)

29. Hayward, S. M., McVilly, K.R., & Stokes, M. (2020). Sources and impact of occupational demands for autistic employees. *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders*, 76, 101571. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rasd.2020.101571> (1 citation (80th percentile), FWC1 = 1.2, Altmetrics score = 14 (top 25%).

30. Korbut, S., Hedley, D., Chetcuti, L., Sahin, E., & Nuske, H. J. (2020). Temperament predicts challenging behavior in children with Autism Spectrum Disorder at Age 5. *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders*, 71. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rasd.2019.101492> (2 citations (89th percentile), FWC1 = 2.4, Altmetric score = 4, 23 readers)

31. Mozolic-Staunton, B., Donnelly, M., Yoxall, J., & Barbaro, J. (2020). Early detection for better outcomes: Universal developmental surveillance for autism across health and early childhood education settings. *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders*, 71, [101496]. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rasd.2019.101496> (3 citations (89th percentile), FWC1 = 2.4, Altmetric score = 1, 31 readers)

Research in Developmental Disabilities - aimed at publishing original research of an interdisciplinary nature that has a direct bearing on the understanding or remediation of problems associated with developmental disabilities (2.357 = 5yrIF).

32. Bent, C. A., Barbaro, J., & Dissanayake, C. (2020). Parents' experiences of the service pathway to an autism diagnosis for their child: What predicts an early diagnosis in Australia? *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, 103 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ridd.2020.103689> (Altmetric score = 14 (top 25%).

33. Bury, S. M., Hedley, D., Uljarević, M., & Gal, E. (2020). The autism advantage at work: A critical and systematic review of current evidence. *Research in Developmental Disorders*, 105, 103750. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ridd.2020.103750> (1 citation (81st percentile), FWC1 = 1.29, Altmetric score = 13 (top 25%).

Sleep Medicine Reviews - International coverage of sleep disorders, their aetiology, diagnosis, treatment and implications for related conditions at an individual and public health level (10.765 = 5yrIF).

34. Ballester, P., Richdale, A. L., Baker, E. K., & Peiro, A. M. (2020). Sleep in autism: a biomolecular approach to aetiology and treatment. *Sleep Medicine Reviews*, 54, 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.smrv.2020.101357> (1 citation (70th percentile), FWC1 = .49, Altmetric score = 18 (top 25%).

Book/ chapter

35. Richdale, A. L., & Johnson, K. P. (Eds.). (2020). *Sleep Difficulties and Disorders in Autism Spectrum Disorder*. ISBN: 9781648020940

36. Baker, E.K., Ballester, P., & Richdale, A.L., (2020). Adults with autism (pp29-48). In Richdale, A.L. & Johnson, K.P. (Eds). *Sleep difficulties and disorders in Autism Spectrum Disorder*. Information Age Publishing, Charlotte, NC.
37. Richdale, A.L., & Johnson, K.P. (2020). Conclusion. Where to next? (pp 227-234). In Richdale, A.L. & Johnson, K.P. (Eds). *Sleep difficulties and disorders in Autism Spectrum Disorder*. Information Age Publishing, Charlotte, NC.
38. Spoor, J. R., Hedley, D., & Bartram, T. (2020). Supporting meaningful employment for individuals with autism (p151-166). In S. L. Fielden, M. E. Moore, & G. L. Bend (Eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Disability at Work*. UK: Palgrave Macmillan. doi:10.1007/978-3-030-42966-9 (Altmetric score = 2)

Reports

39. Dissanayake, C., Richdale, A., Haschek, A., Ihlen, E., Barbaro, J., Hedley, D., Bury, S., Flower, R., Hayward, S.M., Sadka, N., & Denham, M. (2020). La Trobe University Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre (OTARC) response to the Senate Select Committee on Autism. La Trobe. <https://doi.org/10.26181/5f20f14745abe> (OPAL: 279 views, 66 downloads)
40. Flower, R., Hayward, S. M., Denny, K., Dissanayake, C., Hedley, D., Bury, S., & Richdale, A. L. (2020). Partnership for employment outcomes for autistic people in society (PEAS). La Trobe.
41. Haschek, A., Richdale, A., Lawson, L., Abdullahi, I., Flower, R., Unwin, K., Hedley, D., & Bury, S. (2020). The Longitudinal Study of Australian School Leavers with Autism's (SASLA) response to the inquiry into access to TAFE for learners with a disability Victoria, Australia. La Trobe. <https://doi.org/10.26181/5f890479948c5> (OPAL: 211 views, 53 downloads)
42. Richdale, A., Dissanayake, C., Haschek, A., Ihlen, E., Hedley, D., Bury, S., Flower, R., Hayward, S. M., & Denham, M. (2020). La Trobe University's Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre (OTARC) response to the Education and Employment Legislation Committee: Comment on the Higher Education Support Amendment (Job-Ready Graduates and Supporting Regional and Remote Students) Bill 2020's potential impact on autistic higher education students. La Trobe. <https://doi.org/10.26181/5f585f483a2e2> (OPAL: 223 views, 72 downloads)

Conference presentations

International Society for Autism Research 2020 Virtual, 3 June 2020.

Bury, S. M., Jellett, R., Spoor, J., & Hedley, D. "It's Something I Have" or "It Defines Who I Am": What Language Do (autistic) Australian Adults (on the autism spectrum) Prefer?

Australasian Society for Autism Research 2020 Conference, Wellington NZ (online), 10-11 December 2020. <https://asfar.org.au/asfar-2020-in-wellington-nz/>

Abdullahi, I., Sadka, N., Gilbert, M., & Barbaro, J. (2020). *Investigating the role of ethnicity in family attendance, research engagement, and referral pathways at Maternal and Child Health Centres following the use of Social Attention and Communication Surveillance-Revised (SACS-R) for early autism identification.*

Bent, C. A., Dissanayake, C., Glencross, S., McKinnon, K., Hudry, K., & Vivanti, G. (Panel) 'What Works for Whom?': Understanding Early Intensive Behavioural Intervention for Autism.

Bury, S., Flower, R., Zulla, R., Nicholas, D & Hedley, D. *Workplace social challenges experienced by employees on the autism spectrum: Perspectives of employees and supervisors.*

Dissanayake, C. (Panel discussion). *DIAGNOSTIC, BEHAVIORAL, SENSORY AND INTELLECTUAL SCREENING AND ASSESSMENT - Understanding Individual Differences in Autism: Predictors of Developmental Trajectories and Intervention Outcomes.*

Dissanayake, C., Christou, G., & Lawson, L. *Early developmental trajectories of children with autism from multiplex and simplex families.*

Chetcuti, L., Uljarević, M., Varcin, K., Boutrus, M., Pillar, S., Dimov, S., Barbaro, J., Dissanayake, C., Wan, M. W., Whitehouse, A., Hudry, K., & the AICES Team. *Child temperament and caregiver psychological distress predict internalizing and externalizing symptoms in infants with early autism signs.*

Chetcuti, L., Uljarević, M., Varcin, K., Boutrus, M., Pillar, S., Dimov, S., Barbaro, J., Dissanayake, C., Wan, M. W., Whitehouse, A., Hudry, K., & The AICES Team. *Subgrouping infants with early autism signs on the basis of temperament: Classification continuity and predictive utility.*

Hedley, D., Uljarevic, M., Cai, R., Bury, S., Stokes, M., & Evans, D. *Autism domains as transdiagnostic predictors of DSM-5 suicide risk.*

Lawson, L., Wong, L., Haschek, A., & Richdale, A. *Does mindful awareness mediate the impact of somatic arousal on anxiety or sleep quality?*

Lowe, J., Rumbold, B., Dissanayake, C. *Autistic perspectives on palliative care, death, grief and bereavement.*

Mozolic-Staunton, B., Barbaro, J., & Donnelly, M. *Early detection for better outcomes: Building capacity to identify and support children showing early signs of autism in early childhood education and care settings.*

Muniandy, M., Richdale, A. L., Arnold, S., Trollor, J., & **Lawson, L. P.** *Inter-relationship between resilience, coping strategies and mental health in autistic adults.*

Radulski, B. *#Take the mask off: Autistic performativity and the neurodiversity movement.*

Sulek, R., Smith, J., Abdullahi, I., Green, C., Bent, C., Dissanayake, C., & Hudry, K. *Differences in mental health, well-being and parenting sense of competency for parents of children on the autism spectrum from Australian versus South-East Asian backgrounds.*

Unwin, K., Powell, G., & Jones, C. R. G. (Dec 2020). *Preferences of autistic children for Multi-Sensory Environment equipment: Patterns of use and individual differences.*

Unwin, K., Underwood, J., & Hall, J. (Dec 2020). *Psychiatric, Neurodevelopmental and Sociodemographic Risk Factors for Substance Use Disorder in Adults with an Autism Spectrum Disorder.* Accepted oral presentation.

67th Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, Chicago (Virtual), 12-24 October 2020.

Vivanti, G., **Dissanayake, C., Bent, C.,** & Rogers, S. J. *Outcomes and factors underlying intervention response for children with autism spectrum disorder receiving the Early Start Denver Model.* <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaac.2020.07.567> (Altmetric score = 63)

Poster presentations

International Society for Autism Research 2020 Virtual, 3 June 2020.

Barbaro, J., & Freeman, N. C. *Investigating Gender Differences in the Early Markers of Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC) in Infants and Toddlers.*

Bent, C., Yaari, M., Smith, J., Green, C., Dissanayake, C., & Hudry, K. *Individual Differences in Developmental Gains across One Year of Early Intervention for Pre-Schoolers with Autism.*

Cliffe, H. R., Dissanayake, C., & Barbaro, J. *A Comparative Study of Developmental Trajectories in Minimally Verbal and Verbal Children with Autism from 2- to 4-Years of Age.*

Dissanayake, C., Christou, G., & **Lawson, L.** *Early Developmental Trajectories of Children with Autism from Multiplex and Simplex Families.*

Flower, R. L., Hedley, D., & Wood, E. *Perceptions of Autistic Job Candidates: The Role of Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication.*

Haschek, A., Flower, R., Richdale, A., Uljarevic, M., Cai, R., & **Lawson, L.** *Trait Emotional Awareness in Autistic Adolescents and Young Adults.*

Hedley, D., Sahin, E., Bury, S. M., Flower, R. L., Lawson, L. P. & Richdale, A. L. *Evaluation of the Australian Modified Vocational Index for Adults with Autism (M-VIAA).*

Lawson, L. P., Richdale, A. L., Morris, E., & Denny, K. *ACT Based Insomnia Intervention for Autistic Adults.*

Muniandy, M., Richdale, A. L., Arnold, S., Trollor, J., & **Lawson, L.** *Factor Structure and Psychometric Properties of the Brief COPE in Autistic Adults.* Abstract accepted. <https://us15.admin.mailchimp.com/campaigns/show?id=1552758>

Unwin, K., Powell, G., & Jones, C. R. G. (2020). *Preferences of autistic children for Multi-Sensory Environment equipment: Patterns of use and individual differences.*

Rabba, S., Dissanayake, C., & Barbaro, J. *Family Wellbeing in Parents Following Their Child's Early Diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder: A Retrospective Study.*

Rabba, S., Dissanayake, A., & Barbaro, J. *Measuring the Impact on Parents of an Autism Diagnosis in Their Young Child.*

Radulski, B. *#Takethemaskoff: Unmasking Autistic Representation.*

Shrestha, R., Dissanayake, C., & Barbaro, J. *Implementing and Evaluating Social Attention and Communication Surveillance (SACS) to Prospectively Identify Autism in Very Young Children in Nepal.*

Sulek, R. P., Smith, J. A., Trembath, D., **Dissanayake, C.,** & the Victorian ASLECC Team. *The Utility of Automated Vocalisation Indices Collected in a Clinical Setting for Preschool Children on the Autism Spectrum.*

Australasian Society for Autism Research 2020 Conference, Wellington NZ (online), 10-11 December 2020. <https://asfar.org.au/asfar-2020-in-wellington-nz/>

Hedley, D., Hayward, S.M., Clarke, A., Uljarević, M., & Stokes, M. *Suicide and autism.*

Muniandy, M., Richdale, A. L., Arnold, S., Trollor, J., & **Lawson, L. P.** *Associations between Coping and Mental Health Outcomes in Autistic Adults.*

Muniandy, M., Richdale, A. L., Arnold, S., Trollor, J., & **Lawson, L. P.** *Factor Structure and Psychometric Properties of the Brief COPE in Autistic Adults.*

Other publications

Dissanayake, D. *A mentor to many and much-loved friend*. Professor Margot Prior Hansen March 24, 1937-August 24, 2020. <https://www.smh.com.au/national/a-mentor-to-many-and-much-loved-friend-20201009-p563nd.html>

Bury, S. M., Hayward, S. M., Dissanayake, C., & Hedley, D. (2020). *Supporting a neurodiverse workforce: A mental health and well-being resource and training package*. Melbourne: La Trobe University.

Resources

Haschek, A. (Oct, 2020). *Participants' impact on OTARC research*. <https://sway.office.com/7zYEzhmJV3bA3ZJL?ref=Link> (97 views). Also available for download <https://doi.org/10.26181/5fd144f6d26d1> (46 views).

Haschek, A. (Oct, 2020). *The demand for and adequacy of Commonwealth, state, and local government mental health services*. <https://sway.office.com/YeONzMQmaV4ASXl8?ref=Link> . Also available for download <https://doi.org/10.26181/5fd15c6822e27> (179 views, 13 downloads).

Haschek, A. (Oct, 2020). *The demand for and adequacy of Commonwealth, state and local government transition-to-study services*. <https://sway.office.com/vNRNECZXezw6pngt?ref=Link>. Also available for download <https://doi.org/10.26181/5fd14ae4421c9> (134 views, 10 downloads).

Haschek, A. (Oct, 2020). *Current approaches and barriers to consistent, timely and best practice autism diagnosis*. <https://sway.office.com/OgzRYS75B8lpEyBJ?ref=Link>. Also available for download <https://doi.org/10.26181/5fd149b5412c4> (224 views, 13 downloads).

Haschek, A. (Oct, 2020). *Misdiagnosis and under representation of females in autism data, and gender bias in autism assessment and support services*. <https://sway.office.com/9DObzwhm8EIP7hx8?ref=Link>. Also available for download <https://doi.org/10.26181/5fd148983c42d> (254 views, 24 downloads).

Haschek, A. & Bury, S. (Dec, 2021). *"It Defines Who I Am" or "It's Something I Have": What Language Do [Autistic] Australian Adults [on the Autism Spectrum] Prefer?* (Online summary presentation). La Trobe. <https://doi.org/10.26181/5fd15ed6cd998> (706 views).

Haschek, A., Lawson, L., Hayward, S., Muniandy, M., & Richdale, A. (June, 2020). *SASLA's contribution to the Australian Select Committee on Autism*. <https://sway.office.com/NWXY6fTEzKHHe4hU?ref=Link> (138 views).

Hedley, D. (April, 2020): *Transdiagnostic predictors of DSM-5 suicide risk [raw dataset]*. La Trobe. Dataset. <https://doi.org/10.26181/5e992fc659d7c> (292 views, 47 downloads).

Richdale, A., Haschek, A., & Lawson, L. (Oct, 2020). *SASLA research directions survey results*. <https://doi.org/10.26181/5fd15a7163ad1> (79 views).

Richdale, A., Haschek, A., Lawson, L., Hayward, S., & Abdullahi, I. (Dec, 2020). *Supporting mental health: What young Australian autistic adults tell us*. La Trobe. <https://sway.office.com/8lt8lxNRZepuMCFd?ref=Link>. Also available to download <https://doi.org/10.26181/5fd10c56879a> (100 views, 19 Downloads).

Richdale, A., Haschek, A., Lawson, L., Hayward, S., & Abdullahi, I. (Dec, 2020). *Anxiety, depression and autistic adults*. La Trobe. <https://sway.office.com/zDMNO8GzStVfJJqs?ref=Link>. Also available for download <https://doi.org/10.26181/5fd10c5939471> (87 views, 5 downloads).

GRANTS

New 2020 Grants

1. **Bury, S. M., Nair, R., Dissanayake, C., Hedley, D.** (2020-2021). Untapped Holding Pty Ltd. *Supporting a Neurodiverse Workforce: A Mental Health & Well-being Resource & Training Package – Development of train-the-trainer and online training – Stage I.* \$119, 847
2. Flower, R. L., & **Bury, S. M.** (2020). Victorian Department of Health and Human Services research grant. *Co-design of a recruitment and support model for people on the autism spectrum to enable the expansion of the Rise at DHHS Program.* \$39, 820
3. **Hedley, D.,** Clapperton, A., Uljarević, M., Robinson, J., **Dissanayake, C.,** Trollor, J., & Stokes, M. (2020-2022). Suicide Prevention Australia. *Understanding and preventing suicidal behaviour in individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder.* \$498,914.

Ongoing grants

4. **Barbaro, J., & Nair, R., Dissanayake, C., & Alvarez, N** (2019-2020). La Trobe University Strategic Innovation Fund. *Development of ASDetectPRO – an early detection tool for professionals.* \$300,000
5. **Barbaro, J.,** Eapen, V., **Dissanayake, C.,** Jalaludin, B., et al. (2019-2022). Autism Cooperative Research Centre (Autism CRC) Strategic Project. *A multistate trial of an early surveillance program for autism within General Practices in Australia.* \$881,975
6. **Bury, S. M., Hedley, D., Flower, R.,** Nicholas, D., & **Dissanayake, C.** (2019-2020). La Trobe University School of Psychology and Public Health Income Growth Grants Scheme: Increase International Collaborations. *Assessing the workplace social skills of individuals on the autism spectrum.* \$7,506
7. **Dissanayake, C., Barbaro, J.,** Shiell, A., & Williams, K. (2019-2022). NHMRC Project Grant. *Schoolage Outcomes of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and Parental Wellbeing: Investigations on the contribution of Method-of-Referral and Age-of-Diagnosis.* \$473,000
8. **Dissanayake, C., Hedley, D., Bury, S., & Spoor, J.** (2019-2020). DXC Technology/ANZ Bank. *The Dandelion Program.* \$300,000
9. **Flower, R., Dissanayake, C., Bury, S., & Hedley, D.** (2019-2020). National Disability Insurance Agency: Information, Linkages and Capacity Building Economic Participation of People with Disability. *Improving employment opportunities and outcomes for autistic job seekers: Training Disability Employment Service providers.* \$296, 389
10. Guastella, A., Dawson, G., **Dissanayake, C.** et al. (2017-2021) National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) - Partnership Projects Grants. *Oxytocin enhancement of social learning in the treatment of toddlers with autism.* \$1,273,280
11. **Hedley, D.,** Spoor, J., **Bury, S., & Nicholas, D.** La Trobe University Building Health Communities Collaboration ready Scheme RFA #2000004415. *Promoting autism employment sustainability through improved workplace wellbeing of autistic employees.* \$10,000
12. **Richdale, A. L.,** Falkmer, T., Harley, D., & Trollor, J. (2014–2021). Autism CRC Core Program 3 Project 3.016RC, *Comprehensive and unique profile of Australian ASD school leavers - Extension.* \$358,420
13. **Richdale, A. L.,** Falkmer, T., Harley, D., & Trollor, J. (2017–2021). Autism CRC Core Program 3 Project 3.012RC *Base Resource Funding* \$935,000



STUDENTS

Sylvia Walton scholarship recipients

Lauren Sargeant and Helen Andrews (2020)

Being a scholarship recipient has given me greater confidence to approach my studies. As a person with a disability I felt more accepted and welcome within OTARC. I find it really exciting to see how research at OTARC is helping autistic individuals and their families to thrive.

Honours

Kate Gore, 2019 recipient

	Topic	Supervised by	Research theme
Shannon Elgar	Health, allied health, and education professional's current autism spectrum disorder knowledge and their needs regarding future autism training	Dr Melissa Gilbert Dr Josephine Barbaro	Early identification and diagnosis of autism
Jess Scaletti	Examining the role of parental background on the diagnosis of autism in 12-42-month-old children	Dr Ifrah Abdullahi Dr Josephine Barbaro Dr Nancy	Early identification and diagnosis of autism
Olivia Corrente	Interviewer perceptions of atypical workplace behaviours of an autistic jobseeker under disability disclosed or hidden conditions; evoking attribution and intergroup contact theory	Dr Rebecca Flower Dr Darren Hedley	Vocational pathways
Helen Andrews	Self-determination as a mediator between autistic traits and quality of life	Dr Simon Bury Dr Darren Hedley	Co-occurring conditions
Michael Glas	Does psychological flexibility predict sleep quality after accounting for processes known to influence sleep quality?	Dr Eric Morris Prof Amanda Richdale	Co-occurring conditions
Samantha Lewis	Sex differences in restricted and repetitive behaviours for adolescents and adults with autism spectrum disorder	Dr Lauren Lawson Prof Amanda Richdale	Cross theme research

Masters

	Topic	Supervised by	Research theme
Katherine (Kate) Gore Masters of Clin Psych	Understanding the Experience of Autistic Working Mothers in Australia: An Exploratory Study	Dr Josephine Barbaro Dr Melissa Gilbert Dr Rebecca Flower	Vocational pathways
Paula Grogan Masters of Clin Psych	Does parental resolution to the diagnosis of ASD impact on the fidelity of parent delivered intervention	Prof Cheryl Dissanayake	Interventions for children with autism and their families
Carol Bryden	Coping and Emotional Distress in Family Caregivers of Autistic Young Adults	Dr Eric Morris Prof Amanda Richdale Dr Lauren Lawson	Parents

STUDENTS

PhD's

	Topic	Supervised by	Research theme
Hiroko Kawashima	Promotion of early identification of ASD in rural Japan	Prof Cheryl Dissanayake Dr Darren Hedley	Early identification and diagnosis of autism
Gemma Davy	Parental outcomes of school aged children with autism	Prof Cheryl Dissanayake Dr Josephine Barbaro Dr Rachel Jellett Dr Katy Unwin	Cross theme research
Robyn Ball	Improving the competence of mental health practitioners in providing care to their autistic clients	Prof Amanda Richdale Dr Lauren Lawson Dr Eric Morris	Co-occurring conditions
Lyndel Kennedy	Factors contributing to higher education success for neurodiverse students	Prof Amanda Richdale Dr Lauren Lawson	Vocational pathways
Melanie Muniandy	Social Support, coping, and resilience in adolescents and young adults on the autism spectrum	Prof Amanda Richdale Dr Lauren Lawson	Cross theme research
Beth Radulski	In partnership with La Trobe University's Department of Social Inquiry: #TakeTheMaskOff: Autistic Performativity and the Neurodiversity Movement	Associate Prof Katie Wright Prof Cheryl Dissanayake	Cross theme research
Jane Mantzalas	Characterising autistic burnout and its underlying mechanisms: An exploratory investigation	Prof Amanda Richdale Prof Cheryl Dissanayake	Cross theme research
Jennifer Lowe	End-of-Life Service Experiences and Autism Spectrum Disorder	Assoc. Prof Bruce Rumbold Prof Cheryl Dissanayake	Cross theme research
Eva Laurent	Cognitive Profiles associated with STEM occupations in autism: Is there really an autism advantage? Submitted	Prof Amanda Richdale Prof Cheryl Dissanayake	Co-occurring conditions

STUDENTS

PhD's

	Topic	Supervised by	Research theme
Joanne McIntyre	Decreasing defensive responses: an intervention study of emotional regulation, social engagement, auditory processing and motor skills in children with Autism	Dr Darren Hocking Dr Darren Hedley	Interventions for children with autism and their families
Elly Greenwood	In partnership with La Trobe University's School of Nursing: Autism Coming to Hospital: Optimising the care for Inpatients with Autism Spectrum Disorder	Associate Prof Louise Ward Dr Ruby Walter Dr Josephine Barbaro	Cross theme research
Ali Morse (University of Tasmania)	Developmental Surveillance of Autism in Tasmania	Dr Tony Barnett Dr Pauline Marsh Dr Josephine Barbaro	Early identification and diagnosis of autism
Alison Nuske (Flinders University)	Exploring the facilitators and barriers to successful transition to university for students on the autism spectrum.	Prof Amanda Richdale Dr Fiona Rilotta (Primary, Flinders University) Dr Michelle Bellon (Flinders University)	Vocational pathways

FINANCIAL REPORT

Income: for the period 1st January to 31st Dec 2020		2019 Total	2020 Total
Research grants		1,540,958	771,148
Research donations		500,000	250,000
Commercial income		119,728	24,878
Other grants		-	-
Other donations		16,499	51,392
Foundation transfers		-	228,879
Internal income/transfers		226,200	346,720
In-kind contributions		165,619	362,122
Investment income		85,881	38,434
Other income		362,301	173,933
Total income		3,017,186	2,247,508

Expenditure: for the period 1st January to 31st Dec 2020			
Employee salaries and on costs		2,600,036	2,355,196
Academic (continuing and fixed-term staff)		1,537,737	1,531,861
Academic (casual)		701	40,051
Administrative (fixed-term staff)		891,645	731,372
Administrative (casual)		163,702	51,710
Other salary costs		6,252	203

Non-salary costs		665,860	305,921
Infrastructure	IT, maintenance, services	48,464	17,234
Depreciation		30,076	17,942
Professional fees	Externally contracted services	115,475	-20,538
Student related	Scholarships, stipends, training	103,621	82,406
General operating	Consumables, stationery, minor equipment	52,646	75,025
Staff (non-salary) costs	Incl. travel, accommodation and incidentals	261,826	33,589
Sundry items and other expenses		53,752	100,263
Total Expenses		3,265,896	2,661,118
Yearly Operating Result		(248,710)	(413,609)
Prior Year Carry-Forward		274,551	25,841
Net Operating Result		25,841	(387,768)

La Trobe in-kind contributions		2019 Total	YTD December 2020
School Support		225,193	200,158
Research Focus Area support		1,490	10,000
Operating deficit/School contribution		104,128	151,964
Total		286,683	362,122

Contact us



CONTACT DETAILS

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