THE OLGA TENNISON AUTISM RESEARCH CENTRE ANNUAL REPORT 2017

Australia’s first dedicated centre for autism research
OUR MISSION

Our mission is to advance knowledge of the nature and causes of Autism and to develop and study evidence-based strategies that support affected children, families and individuals.

OTARC is situated in the School of Psychology and Public Health within the College of Science, Health and Engineering at La Trobe University in Melbourne, Australia.

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MESSAGE FROM PROFESSOR JOHN DEWAR

For ten years the Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre (OTARC) has provided a remarkable example of the ways in which university research can be translated into programs that provide profound and tangible benefits for members of the community. Its magnanimous benefactor, the extraordinary Olga Tennison, is a modest person whose generosity has provided the platform for research that has a striking impact on health and wellbeing.

While the data on the number of OTARC research publications, conference presentations and research student completions over the last decade is impressive, it is the impact of this work which is most telling. Behind every research paper or invited address is a dedicated researcher whose first priority is developing evidence-based interventions, strategies and tools to improve diagnosis and early intervention for people with Autism, which helps them contribute to workplaces and communities around the country.

OTARC staff had a characteristically busy year in 2017, and I was especially pleased to see the Centre continue in its work with industry partners and with collaborators in Australia and abroad. OTARC was also subject to cyclical review during the year, and what stood out in the review recommendations was the way in which OTARC has advanced knowledge to directly support those affected by Autism and their families.

I congratulate the staff, supporters and partners of the Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre on their achievements during 2017 and over the last ten years. I look forward to another decade of life-changing work from this unique research centre.

Professor John Dewar
Vice-Chancellor, La Trobe University

DIRECTOR’S MESSAGE

Our 2018 Annual General Meeting, and this 2017 Annual Report of the Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre (OTARC), mark completion of a decade of research. Realised by the extraordinary generosity of Mrs Olga Tennison, our namesake, and facilitated by support from La Trobe University, OTARC has grown and established itself as Australia’s leading centre in research on autism spectrum conditions.

Our work across the lifespan, from infancy and toddlerhood to adolescence and adulthood, has meant that our understanding of autism and how best to support those affected and their families has grown each year. With 245 research publications, 387 conference presentations, 169 invited addresses, and 30 postgraduate completions over the last decade, our research has had a significant impact in increasing knowledge about autism and translating this knowledge into evidence-based practice within the community, both in Australia and overseas.

In 2017, we have continued to work in partnership with several industry partners and numerous national and international collaborators, facilitated by our involvement with the Autism CRC, to extend our research on early identification and diagnosis, early intervention, transition into adulthood and employment, and associated features that accompany a diagnosis of autism. The centre was reviewed in 2017, with the objective of informing the development of a new strategic approach to ensure OTARC and La Trobe University continue as leaders in autism research and education. I am confident that achievement of the 32 recommendations will enhance our operational efficiency and strategic position to ensure another 10 years of research excellence.

I would like to acknowledge the commitment and dedication of our research and professional staff together with our students and volunteers, our research and industry partners who all work with us to achieve our research mission.

Professor Cheryl Dissanayake, PhD MAPS Director, Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre
### OTARC AT A GLANCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engagement</th>
<th>Participant Registry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>People on Participant Registry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTARC researcher publications</td>
<td>2,859</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>Of these, those with a diagnosis of autism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference presentations and posters</td>
<td>1,017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>105</td>
<td>Of these, those aged 18 or older</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research collaborations and partnerships</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Media appearances and mentions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
OTARC website statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media profile</th>
<th>Top five downloaded podcasts</th>
<th>Total donations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30.2% e-Newsletter open rate (Non-profit industry average 18.9%)</td>
<td>Autism detection? There's an app for that</td>
<td>$792,736 in donations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23,900 Podcast downloads</td>
<td>Sleep and Autism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,439 Social media followers</td>
<td>Stress and anxiety in adolescents with ASD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20,000 Downloads of mobile app ASDetect</td>
<td>Early detection of Autism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23,488 PAGEVIEWS</td>
<td>Developments in Autism research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FUNDING RECEIVED TO TRANSLATE ASDETECT INTO MANDARIN AND SPANISH

As one of 10 finalists for the Google Impact Challenge Australia, OTARC received $250,000 for a project to extend the reach of its award-winning early detection of autism app ASDetect by translating it into two major world languages.

“One of 10 finalists for the Google Impact Challenge Australia”

AUTISM AWARENESS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Public Talk: Community Involvement in Autism Research

As part of our commitment to sharing autism research findings with the broader community, this talk saw over 100 attendees listen to a wide variety of speakers. With a keynote address by Professor Liz Pellicano of Macquarie University, six speakers also related their experiences with autism research. Three of these speakers were parents and three were people with autism.

Art, Knitting and Tae Kwon Do: Exhibition and Artist’s Talk

In conjunction with the La Trobe Art Institute in Bendigo and Writer’s Block café, this exhibition and artist’s talk focused on the work of Prue Stevenson, who uses performance art to manage the sensory challenges posed by her autism.

OTARC also consulted with Northland Shopping Centre on the planning of their first Sensory Shopping Day.
In November OTARC co-hosted the inaugural State conference for ASFAR. The keynote address was delivered by Professor Sally Rogers of the UC Davis MIND Institute. More than 70 delegates, from students to leading autism researchers, participated in a dual-stream program that included sessions on early detection; gender, communication and romance; adulthood and wellbeing, and biological mechanisms.

“The keynote address was delivered by Professor Sally Rogers of the UC Davis MIND Institute”
OBJECTIVE 1

Contribute to knowledge about autism through high-quality research and scholarship

OTARC continues to undertake a range of research studies that cover the developmental period from infancy through to adolescence and adulthood, with a number of longitudinal investigations underway. Our research projects are outlined here, including our research outputs which illustrate the breadth of our research program as well as our national and international research collaborations, which serve to extend our reach.

RESEARCH THEME 1: EARLY IDENTIFICATION AND DIAGNOSIS OF AUTISM

Our work to promote earlier identification and diagnosis in both high and low-resource settings in Australia and elsewhere continues in earnest. Enabling early identification and diagnosis is also key to our contribution to the Australian Autism Biobank and the evaluation of our mobile app, ASDetect.

1. Social Attention and Communication Study-Revised (SACS-R)
   Funding: Autism CRC
   Josephine Barbaro, Lael Ridgway (School of Nursing and Midwifery, La Trobe University), Cheryl Dissanayake

2. Barriers and enablers to the early identification of Autism in Australia
   Funding: School of Psychology and Public Health, La Trobe University
   Cathy Bent, Cheryl Dissanayake, Josephine Barbaro

3. Reducing the age of diagnosis of Autism in Nepal: SACS-N
   Funding: School of Psychology and Public Health, La Trobe University
   Rena Shrestra, Cheryl Dissanayake, Josephine Barbaro

4. Clinician confidence during screening for Autism in toddlers
   Darren Hedley, Neil Brewer (Flinders University), Rose Nevill (Ohio State University and Nisonger Center, Ohio, USA); Elizabeth Kryszak, Jonathan Wilkins, Eric Butler, James A. Mulick (Nationwide Children’s Hospital and Ohio State University, USA)

5. Approach and withdrawal in toddlers with Autism and developmental delays: Unique behavioural profiles?
   Darren Hedley, Mirko Ulijarevic, James A. Mulick (Ohio State University), Rose Nevill (Ohio State University and Nisonger Center, Ohio, USA)

6. Developmental surveillance for Autism in early childhood education settings
   Beth Mozolic-Staunton, Michelle Donelly, Josephine Barbaro, Jacqui Yoxall (Southern Cross University)

7. Social attention and communication surveillance in Warsaw, Poland
   Joanna Kwarsiborska-Dudek (Academy of Special Education), Przemyslaw Tomalski (Faculty of Psychology, University of Warsaw), Cheryl Dissanayake, Josephine Barbaro

8. Early identification of Autism in Japan
   Funding: School of Psychology and Public Health, La Trobe University
   Hiroko Kawashima, Cheryl Dissanayake, Darren Hedley & Emiko Kesuka (Gunma Prefectural Women’s University)

9. School-age outcomes of children with an ASD diagnosed at age 2 years
   Funding: School of Psychology and Public Health, La Trobe University
   Megan Clark, Cheryl Dissanayake, Josephine Barbaro

10. Comparing longitudinal outcomes of children with Autism diagnosed in toddlerhood and their families via two different referral systems
    Funding: APEX Trust for Autism and School of Psychology and Public Health, La Trobe University
    Felicity Peel, Deniz Obligin, Cheryl Dissanayake

11. Australian Autism Biobank
    An Autism CRC Project
    Andrew Whitehouse (Telethon Kids Institute, University of Western Australia), Cheryl Dissanayake, Valsamma Eapen (University of New South Wales) and Honey Heussler (University of Queensland)

12. 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

13. Evaluation of ASDetect, a mobile application for autism
    Funding: School of Psychology and Public Health, La Trobe University
    Josephine Barbaro, Cheryl Dissanayake, Nancy Sadka, Lael Ridgway (La Trobe University)
RESEARCH THEME 2: INTERVENTIONS FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM AND THEIR FAMILIES

A number of studies focus on early intervention for pre-school children with autism and building supports for their families. We want to establish whether children receiving their Group Early Start Denver Model (G-ESDM) intervention while integrated within a mainstream childcare setting make more or less gains than children receiving the ESDM in a childcare setting including other children with autism. Examining different models of early intervention (EI) delivery also allows us to match children to specific EI programs. Moreover, understanding families’ experience of autism provides important information regarding how best to support them.

   Funding: Department of Social Services
   Cathy Bent, Cheryl Dissanayake, Kristelle Hudry, Katherine Pye, the Victorian ASELCC Team, Giacomo Vivanti (Drexel University), Karen McKinnon and Susan Glenross (Autism Partnership Australia)

2. School-age outcomes of children with Autism who received ESDM
   Funding: School of Psychology and Public Health, La Trobe University
   Zoe Vinen, Cheryl Dissanayake, & Giacomo Vivanti

3. Comparing learning and social outcomes of preschoolers with Autism in inclusive versus segregated settings: A Randomized Control Trial to test a new model of early intervention delivery
   Funding: Department of Social Services
   Researchers: Cheryl Dissanayake, Kristelle Hudry, Alan Shiel, Cathy Bent, Giacomo Vivanti (Drexel University) & the Victorian ASELCC Team

4. How does parent coaching add value to evidence-based autism intervention?
   Funding: Department of Social Services
   Kristelle Hudry, Katherine Pye, Xia Li, Cathy Bent, the Victorian ASELCC team, Giacomo Vivanti (Drexel University) & Mirko Ujharavic (Stanford University)

5. Acoustic analysis of vocalisations of toddlers with Autism and developmental delay
   Darren Hedley, Neil McLachlan (Music and Auditory Neuroscience Laboratory, University of Melbourne)

6. Neurodevelopmental profiles of toddlers with Autism and developmental delay
   Darren Hedley, Rose Nevill (Ohio State University and Nisonger Center, Ohio, USA), Jonathan Wilkins, Eric Butter, James A. Mullick (Nationwide Children’s Hospital and Ohio State University, Ohio, USA)

7. Supporting Best Practice in the Assessment and Treatment of Minimally Verbal Children with Autism
   Funding: Department of Social Services

   Funding: Autism CRC
   Stacey Rabba, Cheryl Dissanayake, Josephine Barbaro

9. How was your day?
   Funding: Autism CRC
   Lesley Stirling (University of Melbourne), Cheryl Dissanayake, Kate Soffronoff (University of Queensland), David Trembath, Marleen Westerveld (Griffith University)
RESEARCH THEME 3: SUCCESS IN ADOLESCENCE AND ADULTHOOD: TRANSITION TO TERTIARY EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

To date, there has been limited research on adolescence and adulthood. Understanding transitions into these life stages is critical to enhancing success in educational and employment outcomes.

1. Longitudinal Study of Australian School Leavers with Autism
   An Autism CRC Project
   Amanda Richdale, Lauren Hollier, Alex Haschek, Ru Ying Cai and Mirko Uljarevic, Torbjorn Falkmer (Curtin University), Nick Lennox (The University of Queensland), Julian Trollor (University of New South Wales)

2. Australian Longitudinal Study of Adults with Autism
   Julian Trollor (The University of New South Wales), Nick Lennox (The University of Queensland), Torbjorn Falkmer (Curtin University), Amanda Richdale, Mirko Uljarevic, Lauren Hollier

3. Finding a place in the workplace and in the community: Development and testing of an Educational Vocational Assessment Protocol (EVAP) and an Integrated Employment Success Tool (IEST)
   Torbjorn Falkmer (Curtin University), Julian Trollor (The University of New South Wales), Nick Lennox (The University of Queensland), Amanda Richdale, Mirko Uljarevic

4. Tools, strategies and techniques developed to improve the health and wellbeing for adults on the autism spectrum
   Nick Lennox (University of Queensland), Julian Trollor (University of New South Wales), Torbjorn Falkmer (Curtin University), David Harley, Amanda Richdale, Mirko Uljarevic

5. Emotion regulation in school leavers with Autism and its relationship with post-school outcomes
   Funding: Autism CRC
   Ru Ying Cai, Amanda Richdale, Mirko Uljarevic & Cheryl Dissanayake

6. Enhancing successful employment outcomes for people with autism
   Funding: DXC Technology, Departments of Human Services and Defence
   Darren Hedley, Cheryl Dissanayake, Amanda Richdale, & Mirko Uljarevic

7. Hiring people with Autism: Examining the impact on the person and their workplace
   Funding: La Trobe University School of Psychology and Public Health Engagement Income Growth Grants Scheme
   Darren Hedley, Rebecca Flower, Jennifer Spoor, Tim Bartram & Cheryl Dissanayake.
RESEARCH THEME 4: RELATED CONDITIONS: SLEEP AND OTHER DIFFICULTIES

We aim to develop a better understanding of comorbid conditions which impact the well-being and daily functioning of people with autism. This understanding contributes to the development of better treatment approaches.

1. Exploring the presentation and experience of anxiety in individuals with Autism in their transition from high school to adulthood: A qualitative study
   Funding: School of Psychology and Public Health
   Andrew Hallim, Amanda Richdale, Mirko Uljarević

2. Serotonergic systems, anxiety and insomnia in a mouse model of Autism
   Funding: La Trobe University Research Focus Area 'Understanding Disease' grant
   Matthew Hale (School of Psychology and Public Health, La Trobe University), John Lesku (School of Life Sciences, La Trobe University), Amanda Richdale, Stephen Kent (School of Psychology and Public Health, La Trobe University), Cheryl Dissanayake

3. Typical and severe sleep problems and related behaviour in young children with ASD
   Stephanie Roussis, Amanda Richdale

4. Cognitive profiles associated with STEM occupations in ASD: Characterising the ‘autism advantage’
   Funding: School of Psychology and Public Health
   Eva Laurent, Amanda Richdale, Darren Hedley

5. Does circadian rhythm disturbance explain insomnia in adults with high-functioning Autism?
   Funding: School of Psychology and Public Health
   Emma Baker, Amanda Richdale, Agnes Hazi (School of Psychology and Public Health, La Trobe University)

6. Client aptitude for cognitive behaviour therapy: the development and evaluation of a new measure
   Maria Lambrou, Amanda Richdale, Nick Kazantzis (Monash University).
PUBLICATIONS AND OUTPUTS

JOURNAL ARTICLES


BOOK CHAPTERS


CLINICAL TRIAL PROTOCOL


CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS


Dissanayake, C., & Hedley, D. The Dandelion Program: Oral presentation at the Autism at Work Summit, Stanford University, Stanford, CA. 12-14 April.
Spoor, J. R., Canton, E., & Hedley, D. The stereotype content and subgroups of people with disabilities. Oral presentation at the annual meeting of the Society for Australasian Social Psychologists (SASP) in Melbourne, VIC. 21 April.


Hudry, K., Maye, M., Bent, C., & Vivanti, G. Co-convenors/co-chairs of 3rd Special Interest Group (SIG) on Implementing and Evaluating Community-Based Early Intervention, 2017 International Meeting for Autism Research, San Francisco, CA. 10-13 May.


Hollier, L. Session Chair: Perspectives on Early Identification and Intervention. Community perspectives on autism research. Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre (OTARC), Melbourne. 9 November.


Hedley, D. Symposium co-chair: Mental health and ASD. Asia-Pacific Regional Congress of the International Association for the Sciences of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IASSIDD), Bangkok. 13-16 November.

Hedley, D. Suicide in adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Symposium presentation at the Asia-Pacific Regional Congress of the International Association for the Sciences of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IASSIDD), Bangkok. 13-16 November.


The following presentation was inadvertently omitted from the 2016 Annual Report:


POSTER PRESENTATIONS


Laurent, E., Richdale, A., Hedley, D. The effects of physiological arousal on cognitive performance in neuro-typical adults with high level of autistic traits: Datablitz and Poster at the 4th annual AS4San Conference. Melbourne. 15-16 May.


The following posters were inadvertently omitted from the 2016 Annual Report:


MEDIA ACTIVITY


Barbaro, J. (2017, 14 February) “How reliable are the early signs of autism?” ABC Goulburn Murray Radio

Barbaro, J. (2017, February/March) “How reliable are the early signs of autism?” VicDoc, Magazine of the Australian Medical Association


Dissanayake, C. (2017, 22 May) Late/line ABC Television


Dissanayake, C. (2017, 13 August) ABC Television


Dissanayake, C. (2017, October) HCF member publication Health Agenda Australian researchers at the cutting edge.


NEW MAJOR RESEARCH GRANTS

In 2017, OTARC researchers were awarded two major new grants from the Department of Social Services, together worth more than $500,000.

One project will focus on parent coaching in early intervention, and the other will support best practice assessment of minimally verbal children with autism.

DONATIONS

We are immensely grateful to all of our wonderful donors, whose significant support enhances our work.

A total of $792,736 was received in donations.

Principal Individual Donor
Mrs Olga Tennison OAM

Peer to peer Fundraiser
A special thanks to Barry Dickeson and his son Liam, who held a golf day to raise funds for us.
### RESEARCH GRANTS

#### NEW GRANTS

A. Guastella, G. Dawson, C. Dissanayake, V. Eapen, Y. J. Song, R. Feldman, & N. Silove  
**National Health and Medical Research Council Project Grant (2017 – 2020)**  
Oxytocin enhancement of social learning in the treatment of toddlers with autism

Hedley, D., Flower, R., Spoor, J., Bartram, T., & Dissanayake, C.  
**La Trobe University School of Psychology and Public Health Engagement Income Growth Grants Scheme (2017)**  
Hiring people with Autism: Examining the impact on the person and their workplace.

**Department of Social Services (2017-2019). How does Parent Coaching Add Value to Evidence-Based Autism Intervention?**

Hudry, K., & Whitehouse, A.  
**JVC Kenwood Corporation (2017). Early Using Eye-Tracking Technology.**

Hudry, K., & Whitehouse, A.  
**School of Psychology and Public Health Engagement Grant (2017). Gazefinder: Identifying Autism Early Using Eye-Tracking Technology.**


Pye, K., Pye, J., Capes, K., Upson, S., Ujarevic, M., Bent, C., Hudry, K., & the Victorian ASELCC Team.  
**National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) Information, Linkages and Capacity Building Grant (2017). The Fostering Inclusion and Participation Program.**

Schulz, A., Hocking, D. R., Alahakoon, D., Dissanayake, C., & Hedley, D.  
**La Trobe University Research Infrastructure Capital Funding (2017). Biological and eye tracking systems for decision making in complex environments.**

**Department of Social Services (2017-2019). Supporting Best Practice in the Assessment and Treatment of Minimally Verbal Children with Autism.**

Ujarevic, M.  
**Australian Research Council (2017). Discovery Early Career Researcher (DECRA) fellowship.**

#### ONGOING GRANTS

Dissanayake, C., & Barbaro, J.  

Dissanayake, C., Hudry, K., Shiell, A., & Vivanti, G. (Drexel University) and the Victorian ASELCC Team.  

Dissanayake, C., Hudry, K., & Vivanti, G. (Drexel University) and the Victorian ASELCC Team.  
**Department of Social Services (2016–2019). Early intensive behavioural intervention for autism Understanding ‘what works for whom?’**

Dissanayake, C., Richdale, A., Hedley, D., & Ujarevic, M.  

Dissanayake, C., Richdale, A., Hedley, D., & Ujarevic, M.  
**Hewlett Packard Enterprise and the Australian Government Department of Defense (2016–2018). The Dandelion program.**

Hudry, K., Barbaro, J., Iacono, T., Dissanayake, C., Maybery, M., (University of Western Australia) & Whitehouse, A. (Telethon Kids Institute).  
**Autism CRC (2016–2019). A randomised-controlled trial of a parent-mediated therapy for infants showing early social-communication delays.**

Richdale, A., Falkmer, T., Lennox, N., & Troller, J.  

Richdale, A., Falkmer, T., Lennox, N., & Troller, J.  

Whitehouse, A., Dissanayake, C., Eapen, V., & Heussler, H.  
**Autism CRC Core Program 1 (2014–2017). Project 1.001RC, Base Resources Project.**
OBJECTIVE 2

Engage in collaborations with other researchers, research centres, industry and community partnerships

In addition to our national collaborations within the Autism CRC, we continue to work with many researchers located elsewhere in Australia and overseas. The varied areas of research expertise of our staff also ensure regular visitors to OTARC.

RESEARCHER COLLABORATIONS

La Trobe University

Professor Tim Bartram
La Trobe Business School
Dr Alana Hulme Chambers
La Trobe Rural Health School
Ms Agnes Hazi
School of Psychology and Public Health
Professor Teresa Iacono
Head of La Trobe Rural Health School
Associate Professor Stephen Kent
School of Psychology and Public Health
Dr John Lesku
School of Life Sciences
Dr Jennifer Spoor
La Trobe Business School
Dr Matt Hale
School of Psychology and Public Health
Professor Damminda Alahakoon
School of Business

Victoria

Dr Angelika Anderson
Faculty of Education, Monash University
Associate Professor Jeffrey Craig
Early Life Epigenetics, Department of Paediatrics, University of Melbourne
Professor Lesley Stirling
School of Languages and Linguistics, University of Melbourne
Dr Diane Jacobs
School of Allied Health, Australian Catholic University
Dr Jordy Kaufman
Swinburne Brain Sciences Institute, Swinburne University of Technology
Associate Professor Neil McLachlan
School of Psychological Sciences, University of Melbourne
Professor Dennis Moore
Faculty of Education, Monash University
Professor Svetha Venkatesh
Director of the Centre for Pattern Recognition and Data Analytics, Deakin University
Dr Cathy Marraffa, Professor Katrina Williams and Professor Jill Sewell
The Royal Children’s Hospital (Centre for Community Child Health and Department of Developmental Medicine)
Ms Karen McKinnon, Ms Chris Stoc, Ms Kathleen Franks and Ms Susan Glenross
Autism Partnerships

National

Dr Jill Ashburner
Autism Queensland
Ms Kate Bowen
Liverpool Hospital, Sydney
Professor Neil Brewer
School of Psychology, Flinders University
Professor Valsamma Eapen
Chair of Infant, Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, University of New South Wales
Professor Torbjorn Falkmer
School of Occupational Therapy and Social Work, Curtin University
Dr Michael Gradisar
Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, School of Psychology, Flinders University
Professor Adam Guastella
Brain and Mind Centre, University of Sydney
Associate Professor Alison Lane
School of Health Sciences, The University of Newcastle
Professor Nick Lennox
Director, Queensland Centre for Intellectual and Developmental Disability, Faculty of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, University of QLD

Associate Professor Murray Maybery
School of Psychology, University of Western Australia
Associate Professor Simon Moss
Charles Darwin University
Dr Jessica Paynter
AEIOU Foundation, Queenslend
Associate Professor Melanie Porter, Department of Psychology, Macquarie University
Dr Lyndsay Quarmby
Centre for Rural Health (CRH), School of Health Sciences, University of Tasmania
Dr Michelle Short
Centre for Sleep Research, University of South Australia
Associate Professor Kate Sofronoff
School of Psychology, University of Queensland

Dr Lauren Taylor
School of Psychology, University of Western Australia
Professor Julian Trollor
Chair of Intellectual Disability Mental Health, Head, Department of Developmental Disability Neuropsychiatry, School of Psychiatry, University of New South Wales
Dr Marleen Westerveld
School of Allied Health Sciences, Griffith University
Professor Andrew Whitehouse
Telethon Institute for Child Health Research and University of Western Australia
Associate Professor Robyn Young
School of Psychology, Flinders University, SA

Autism Specific Early Learning and Child Care National Clinical Evaluation Group, includes researchers from University of New South Wales, University of Queensland, Flinders University, Curtin University, and the University of Tasmania
International

Dr Rachael Bedford
Institute of Psychiatry,
Kings College London, UK

Dr Sander Begeer
Developmental Psychology, VU University
Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Dr Eric Butter
Nationwide Children’s Hospital and
The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH, USA

Dr Sarah Carrington
School of Life and Health Sciences,
Aston University, Birmingham, UK

Professor Tony Charman
Institute of Psychiatry,
Kings College London, UK

Professor Geraldine Dawson
Duke University, USA

Dr Kate Ellis-Davies
Department of Psychology,
University of Cambridge, UK

Dr Mayada Elsabbagh
Department of Psychiatry,
McGill University, Montreal, Canada

Professor David Evans
Department of Psychology,
Bucknell University, Lewisburg, USA

Dr Eynat Gal
University of Haifa, Israel

Professor Jonathan Green
School of Medicine, University of Manchester, UK

Dr Teodora Gliga
Centre for Brain and Cognitive Development,
Birkbeck, University of London, UK

Dr Robert Hepach
Department of Developmental and
Comparative Psychology, Max Planck
Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology,
Germany

Professor Pat Howlin
Institute of Psychiatry,
King’s College, London, UK

Professor Mark Johnson
Centre for Brain and Cognitive Development,
School of Psychology, Birkbeck College,
London, UK

Dr Emily Jones
Centre for Brain and Cognitive Development,
Birkbeck College, London, UK

Dr Noomi Katz
Ono Academic College, Israel

Dr Terry Katz
Department of Pediatrics, University of
Colorado School of Medicine, Denver, USA

Professor Emiko Kezuka
Gunma Prefectural Women’s University,
Japan

Dr Joanna Kwasiborska
Speech Therapist (Adesse); Lecturer,
Department of Speech Therapy, Academy
of Special Education, Warsaw, Poland

Professor Susan Leekam
Chair of Autism & Director of the Wales
Autism Research Centre, Cardiff University, Wales

Associate Professor Hiroshi Miyauchi
Takasaki University of Health and Welfare,
Japan

Dr Midori Okuno
Gunma Paz College, Japan

Dr Elizabeth Kryszak
Nationwide Children’s Hospital and
The Ohio State University, Columbus, USA

Dr Joanna Kwasiborska-Dudek
Department of Speech Therapy, Academy
of Special Education, Warsaw, Poland

Professor Ann Le Couteur
Institute of Health and Society, Newcastle
University, UK

Professor Sue Leekam
Chair of Autism Research, The Wales Autism
Research Centre, Cardiff University, UK

Dr Gongsiu Liu
Director of Child Health, Tiangin Women
and Children’s Health Centre, Tiangin, China

Dr Iliana Magiati
Department of Psychology, National
University of Singapore, Singapore

Professor Beth Malow
Kennedy Center, Vanderbilt University,
Nashville, USA

Professor Helen McConachie
Institute of Health and Society, Newcastle
University, UK

Professor James A. Mulick
Nationwide Children’s Hospital and The Ohio
State University, Columbus, OH, USA

Dr Greg Pasco
Institute of Psychiatry, King’s College,
London, UK

Professor Andrew Pickles
Institute of Psychiatry, King’s College,
London, UK

Professor Sally Rogers
MIND Institute, University of California,
Davis in Sacramento, USA

Dr Atsushi Senju
Centre for Brain and Cognitive Development,
Birkbeck College, London, UK

Dr Naomi Schreuer
University of Haifa, Israel

Professor Kimberley Schreck
School of Behavioral Sciences and
Education, Pennsylvania State University,
Harrisburgh, USA

Dr Vicky Slonims
Guy’s and St Thomas’ Hospital, London, UK

Associate Professor Mikle South
Emotion and Decision Making Laboratory,
Brigham Young University, Utah, USA

Professor Elizabeth Starr
Faculty of Education, University of Windsor,
Ontario Canada

Dr Ming Wai Wan
School of Medicine,
University of Manchester, UK

Associate Professor Chongying Wang
Director of the Center for Behavioural
Science, Medical School, Nankai University,
Tianjin, China

Dr Jonathan Wilkins
Nationwide Children’s Hospital and The Ohio
State University, Columbus, OH, USA

Dr Kent Williams
Nationwide Children’s Hospital,
Columbus, Ohio, USA
CO-OPERATIVE RESEARCH CENTRE FOR LIVING WITH AUTISM

OTARC is an Essential Participant in the Cooperative Research Centre for Living with Autism (Autism CRC) which is the world’s first national, cooperative research effort focused on Autism. Other participants include government, researchers from other universities and research centres, and not-for-profit organizations. The Federal Government and 56 participants have committed $104.6 million over 8 years to provide lifetime solutions for individuals living with this complex and challenging condition. The CRC and the outcomes from its three core research programs will ensure individuals with Autism:

1. have a definitive diagnosis at an early age that can be coupled with a targeted early intervention strategy,
2. will be educated in an appropriate environment by skilled professionals,
3. will be given the best chance to find a meaningful and fulfilling place in society through higher education, employment and better opportunities for long term social relationships.

The CRC is based at Long Pocket in Brisbane in association with the University of Queensland. While research occurs at various centres across Australia, OTARC is coordinating two programs:

- Professor Cheryl Dissanayake and Dr Josephine Barbaro lead work on developmental surveillance and early diagnosis of autism
- Associate Professor Amanda Richdale and Dr Lauren Hollier are studying assistance for post-school students with autism to succeed in tertiary education.
Google.org
As one of 10 finalists in the Google Impact Challenge Australia, OTARC accessed invaluable expertise from Google and from their partners Social Ventures Australia. This input is continuing to contribute to the project to translate ASDetect into Mandarin Chinese and Spanish, thus extending the impact of our early detection work to children globally.

Salesforce.com
Salesforce.com is the world’s leading CRM (Customer Relations Management) provider. Through its philanthropic arm, Salesforce.org, OTARC receives significantly price-reduced licences to a range of software.

DXC Technology Australia
In partnership with DXC Technology Australia, the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Department of Defence, the Dandelion Program provides skilled employment for people with Autism in Australia. OTARC continues to have a research partnership with these organisations to understand how having a job impacts the lives of those with Autism.

AMAZE (Autism Victoria)
The result of a Houston Trust-funded project, Amaze and OTARC collaborated on the production of the Parenting Skills Guide for Autistic Parents, released to the public via the Amaze website in 2017.

Specialisterne Australia
Originally a Danish company, Specialisterne Australia was established in 2014 to support and train adults with Autism to find meaningful and productive jobs in established industries. It is co-located at La Trobe University.

Victorian Maternal and Child Health Services
Work continued within the MCHS systems of Victoria and Tasmania to monitor the social-communication development of approximately 20,000 children aged between 11 and 30 months, as part of our early identification research theme.
OBJECTIVE 3

Train the next generation of researchers

A total of 25 students (Honours, Masters, Doctoral, and PhD candidates) undertook their research at the Centre during 2017.

SUCCESSFUL COMPLETIONS IN 2017

PhD
Cathy Bent
Supervisors: Professor Cheryl Dissanayake and Dr Josephine Barbaro
Megan Clark
Supervisors: Professor Cheryl Dissanayake and Dr Josephine Barbaro

Doctor of Clinical Psychology
Maria Lambrou
Supervisors: Associate Professor Amanda Richdale and Associate Professor Nick Kazantsis
Zoe Vinen
Supervisors: Professor Cheryl Dissanayake and Dr Giacomo Vivanti
Megan Grant
Supervisor: Dr Kristelle Hudry

Masters
Andrew Halim
Supervisors: Associate Professor Amanda Richdale and Dr Mirko Uljarević
Erin O’Connor
Supervisor: Dr Kristelle Hudry
Deniz Ozbilgin
Supervisor: Professor Cheryl Dissanayake
Felicity Peel
Supervisor: Professor Cheryl Dissanayake

Honours
All 2017 Honours candidates successfully completed.

CURRENT STUDENTS

Doctor of Clinical Neuropsychology
Peter Fanning
Early learning and intellectual development in Autism.
Supervisors: Dr Giacomo Vivanti, Dr Darren Hocking and Professor Cheryl Dissanayake

Master of Clinical Psychology
Ashlee Hancock
Supervisor: Dr Josephine Barbaro

Master of Science
Rachael Rankin
Supervisor: Dr Kristelle Hudry
Stefanie Dimov
Supervisors: Dr Kristelle Hudry and Professor Teresa Iacono

Honours
Daniel Berends
Emily Canton
Paula Grogan
Siobhan Korbut
Stephanie Roussis

PhD
Ru Ying Cai
Painting a picture: Profiles of school leavers with Autism Spectrum Disorder.
Supervisors: Associate Professor Amanda Richdale and Professor Cheryl Dissanayake
Lacey Chetcuti
Temperament among infants showing early signs of ASD.
Supervisors: Dr Kristelle Hudry and Dr Mirko Uljarević
Hiroko Kawashima
Promotion of early identification of ASD in rural Japan.
Supervisors: Professor Cheryl Dissanayake and Dr Darren Hedley
Eva Laurent
Cognitive profiles associated with STEM occupations in autism: Is there really an autism advantage?
Supervisors: Associate Professor Amanda Richdale, Dr Darren Hedley and Professor Cheryl Dissanayake
Joanne McIntyre
Decreasing defensive responses: an intervention study of emotional regulation, social engagement, and auditory processing in children with autism
Supervisors: Dr Darren Hedley and Dr Darren Hocking
Stacey Rabba
Development and evaluation of a Family Support Program for newly diagnosed children with an ASD.
Supervisors: Professor Cheryl Dissanayake and Dr Josephine Barbaro
Rena Shrestha
Reducing the age of diagnosis of ASD in Nepal: SACS-N.
Supervisors: Professor Cheryl Dissanayake and Dr Josephine Barbaro
Professor Sally Rogers
Professor Sally Rogers from the MIND Institute at UC Davis trained the team at the Victorian ASLECC on the Parent Early Start Denver Model (P-ESDM).

Masaru Ninomiya, Hirokazu Sekiguchi, Junichi Hasegawa
Masaru Ninomiya, Hirokazu Sekiguchi, Junichi Hasegawa from JVC Kenwood visited to inspect progress on the Gazefinder research project.

Ms Wang Ji
Ms Wang Ji, paediatrician and clinical researcher from Harbin Medical University and Hospital, China arrived in 2017 as a Fellow to learn about early identification and intervention, and is assisting us with the translation of ASDetect into Mandarin.
Dr Orit Hetzroni, University of Haifa, Israel, working on Structure-mapping: Analogical reasoning and the systematicity principle among children with HFASD.

Dr Maya Yaari, post-doctoral researcher from Hebrew University, is examining the early social-communication development of preterm infants.
THANKS TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

More than 300 volunteers are registered with OTARC for tasks ranging from research support and administration, to event planning and fundraising. We send a big vote of thanks to the following volunteers who provided significant support to a range of our studies during 2017.

Erin Beattie
Joanna Bennet
Olivia Digiglio
Rebecca Fakhri
Dina Farag
Sarah Fritsche
Rhylee Hardiman
Azul Hussain
George Karambelas
Ruth Lewis
Jessica Mitsch
Natalie Mizzi
Katherine Natoli
Sarah Petruszyn

Artist Prue Stevenson after her talk at La Trobe Art Institute in Bendigo
MONTHLY RESEARCH SEMINARS

Intended as a professional development opportunity for both students and staff, as well as the wider La Trobe University community of researchers, these monthly seminars cover a wide range of topics in autism research. They run for 2 hours, with ample time for interaction following the formal presentation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr Tania Pietrzak</td>
<td>Clinical Psychologist and OTARC Adjunct</td>
<td>ASD with and without co-occurring alexithymia: treatment effects of interoceptive embodiment interventions on adults' emotional identification and regulation</td>
<td>February</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Maya Yaari</td>
<td>Hebrew University</td>
<td>Early social-communication development of preterm infants</td>
<td>March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Rebecca Flower</td>
<td>Specialisterre</td>
<td>Recognising suspicious behaviour: The role of theory of mind and circumscribed interests</td>
<td>April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Various Researchers</td>
<td>OTARC</td>
<td>Highlights from the International Meeting for Autism Research</td>
<td>May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Katy Unwin</td>
<td>Wales Autism Research Centre</td>
<td>Understanding the use and efficacy of Multi-Sensory Environments (MSEs) with children on the autism spectrum</td>
<td>June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Kristelle Hudry</td>
<td>OTARC Research Fellow</td>
<td>Early intervention research underway at Autism Specific and Early Learning Care Centre</td>
<td>July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Orit Hetzroni</td>
<td>University of Haifa, Israel</td>
<td>Structure-mapping: Analogical reasoning and the systematicity principle among children with HFASD</td>
<td>August</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Professor Jeff Craig</td>
<td>Senior Research Fellow, Murdoch Children's Research Institute</td>
<td>Epigenetics, early development and Autism</td>
<td>September</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor Jan Nicholson</td>
<td>Centre Director, Judith Lumley Centre, La Trobe University</td>
<td>Shaped by Our Parents? The impact of family and social challenges on children</td>
<td>October</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

OTARC Staff and Students at Dr Maya Yaari’s seminar (Dr Yaari far right)
OBJECTIVE 4

Develop and promote high-quality evidence-based practices as models for the community

One of our aims is to ensure that the benefits of our research are translated into practices, tools and information in the broader community. The ways we achieve this translation are summarised below.

AUTISM-SPECIFIC EARLY LEARNING AND CARE CENTRE

Dr Kristelle Hudry (Senior Research Fellow) and Katherine Pye (Senior Coordinator) continued to work on the three major studies which commenced in 2016. These studies examine various aspects of the delivery of evidence-based early intervention programs, with a focus on the Early Start Denver Model.

To facilitate these studies and to build the Centre’s capacity for service provision, a number of ASELCC staff underwent ESDM Trainer apprenticeships with Professor Sally Rogers of the MIND Institute. This capacity will be fundamental in the ASELCC’s sustainability beyond the end of 2018, when the current operational funding will cease, and the Centre will move into our longer-term model of research and intervention.

AUTISM DIAGNOSTIC OBSERVATION SCHEDULE (ADOS) TRAINING

The ADOS is an assessment tool used for the diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorders. ADOS courses are offered for researchers and medical/allied health professionals. Course places are in high demand, with waitlist numbers regularly exceeding course capacity.

Dr Kristelle Hudry, Dr Cherie Green and Emma Baker delivered two ADOS training courses in 2017, each of which was sold out with 16 attendees.

Monthly coding reliability meetings were also held as professional development for clinicians and researchers who have already completed their initial ADOS training.

RAISING CHILDREN NETWORK

OTARC staff members continue to work with colleagues from the Parenting Research Centre to create, write and review up-to-date, evidence-based content for the Raising Children Network - Autism microsite.

ASDETECT

Our world-first early detection of autism app for parents and caregivers continued to grow, with a steady rate of increase in downloads and assessments performed. Work also began on producing two new versions of ASDetect, in Mandarin Chinese and Spanish, as fulfillment of our Google Impact Challenge grant.
PROFESSIONAL PARTICIPATION

Invited Talks and Workshops

Hudry, K. Parenting children with autism: From past demons to positive future directions. Seminar Series of the Judith Lumley Centre, La Trobe University, 1 February.

Barbaro, J. Autism: Advances in early detection through the Social Attention and Communication Surveillance (SACS) program. La Trobe University Albury-Wodonga Alumni Presentation, February.


Richdale, A. Autism: From child to adult. Invited talk Hawthorn University of the Third Age, April 27.

Smith, A, Richdale, A, Trollor, J, & Urbanowicz, A. Collaborative mental health care to support adults on the autism spectrum. Mental Health Professionals Network (MHPN) webinar, 5 June.


Richdale, A. Sleep difficulties in autism across the lifespan: Why be Concerned? Department of Psychiatry, Royal Melbourne Hospital, 10 July.


Richdale, A. Invited lecture to La Trobe’s third year Hallmark students: Why sleep is important 16 August.

Richdale, A. Invited talk at the Cairnmillar Institute: What do we know about adults with autism and what are the implications for psychologists? 18 August.


Barbaro, J. ‘Life Beyond a PhD’. Invited Panellist and Autism CRC Scholars Day, Sydney, 4 September.


APPOINTMENTS

PROFESSOR CHERYL DISSANAYAKE
- Editorial Board of the Journal of Neurodevelopmental Disorders
- Editorial Board of the Journal of Autism Research
- Executive Committee of the Australasian Society for Autism Research (ASfAR), Co-founder and Vice-President
- Research and Development Committee, CRC for Living with Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Biobank Operations Committee, CRC for Living with Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Scientific Advisory Board, Raising Children’s Network
- Clinical Evaluation Group of the National Autism Specific Early Learning and Care Centres

DR JOSEPHINE BARBARO
- Chair of the Australian Psychological Society (APS) Working Group National Diagnostic Guidelines for Autism
- APS Representative on Steering Committee Autism CRC National Diagnostic Guidelines for Autism
- Reviewer, Singapore Ministry of Health, National Medical Research Council (NMRC) Grant
- Member of Menzies Memorial Scholars Association Advisory Group
- Academic Board, La Trobe University

DR DARREN HEDLEY
- Guest Editor, Journal of Management and Organization’s Special Issue on Neurodiversity in Organisations
- Review Editor, Frontiers in Education: Special Educational Needs

DR KRISTELLE HUDRY
- Member of Grant Review Panel for the NHMRC Project Grants funding scheme
- Member of Editorial Board for Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Assistant Chair on a Grant Review Panel for the NHMRC Project Grants funding scheme
- Editorial Board as Associate Editor of Research in Developmental Disabilities

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AMANDA RICHALE
- Autism Editor for Current Developmental Disorder Reports
- Member of Editorial Board for Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Chair of the EPIC Early Intervention Board of Management
- Member of APS Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities and Psychology Interest Group.
- Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) Special Provision Review consultant for Specific Learning Disorders (SLD)
The Financial Report of the Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre as at 31st December 2017

### Income: for the period 1st January to 31st December 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Grants</td>
<td>1,060,111</td>
<td>671,769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Donations</td>
<td>507,000</td>
<td>755,136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial income</td>
<td>12,633</td>
<td>198,192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Grants</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Donations</td>
<td>215,662</td>
<td>37,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal income/transfers</td>
<td>177,533</td>
<td>151,289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Kind Contributions</td>
<td>190,487</td>
<td>212,065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment income Interest on monies held (refer to notes)</td>
<td>190,803</td>
<td>103,114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other income</td>
<td>21,614</td>
<td>73,998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total income</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,375,843</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,203,163</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Expenditure: for the period 1st January to 31st December 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employee salaries and on costs</td>
<td>1,581,012</td>
<td>1,767,463</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic (continuing and fixed-term staff)</td>
<td>931,742</td>
<td>941,616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic (casual)</td>
<td>232,037</td>
<td>119,042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative (fixed-term staff)</td>
<td>217,461</td>
<td>463,959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative (casual)</td>
<td>215,772</td>
<td>244,846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other salary costs</td>
<td>-16,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-salary costs</strong></td>
<td><strong>342,612</strong></td>
<td><strong>622,690</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure IT, maintenance, services</td>
<td>19,687</td>
<td>66,213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depreciation</td>
<td>15,032</td>
<td>37,105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional fees Externally contracted services</td>
<td>93,270</td>
<td>127,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student related Scholarships, stipends, training</td>
<td>48,020</td>
<td>107,110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General operating Consumables, stationery, minor equipment</td>
<td>73,980</td>
<td>60,147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff (non-salary) costs Incl. travel, accommodation and incidentals</td>
<td>73,275</td>
<td>144,975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sundry items and other expenses</td>
<td>19,348</td>
<td>79,620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,923,624</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,392,153</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Operating Result</td>
<td><strong>452,219</strong></td>
<td><strong>(188,990)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016 carry-forward</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>452,219</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net operating result</strong></td>
<td><strong>(170,650)</strong></td>
<td><strong>263,229</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

La Trobe University also makes a significant in-kind contribution to OTARC in addition to providing financial support

### La Trobe in-kind contributions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research centre support</td>
<td>62,385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research focus area support</td>
<td>12,905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating deficit/School contribution</td>
<td>136,776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>212,065</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Notes

- OTARC Interest 2012: 28,022
- OTARC Interest 2013: 23,510
- OTARC Interest 2014: 23,911
- OTARC Interest 2015: 28,183
- OTARC Interest 2016: 87,176
- OTARC Interest 2017: 103,114
STAFF

Academic and Research Staff
Director
Professor Cheryl Dissanayake
Principal Research Fellow
Associate Professor Amanda Richdale
Senior Research Fellow, Victorian ASELCC
Dr Kristelle Hudry
Research Fellow
Dr Josephine Barbaro
CRC Postdoctoral Research Fellow
Dr Mirko Ujlarevic
CRC Postdoctoral Research Fellow
Dr Lauren Hollier
Research Fellow
Dr Darren Hedley
Research Officer, Early Identification and Assessment
Dr Nancy Sadka
BIOBANK Research Officer
Melanie Muniandy
BIOBANK Research Officer
Rachel Jellett
Research Officer
Alex Haschek

Administrative staff
Centre Manager
Doug Scobie
Laboratory Manager
Alexandra Aulich
Administrative Officer
Claire Hayden
Marketing Officer
Mick Leahy
Communications Coordinator
Melinda Denham
ASDetect Officer
Erin Beattie
Database Officer
Mithun Roy
ASDetect Project Manager
Radhika Nair

Research Assistants
Cathy Bent
Megan Clark
Lacey Chetcuti
Megan Grant
Natasha Kolivas
Eva Laurent
Rachael Rankin

Honorary members
Dr David Trembath
Senior Lecturer
Griffith University
Dr Giacomo Vivanti
Assistant Professor
Dr Cynthia Zierhut
Psychologist
MIND Institute
University of California, Davis, USA

Adjunct members
Dr Nusrat Ahmed
Shuchona Foundation Bangladesh
Dr Naomi Bishop
Lecturer, School of Life Sciences, La Trobe University
Dr Philippe Chouinard
Lecturer, School of Psychology and Public Health, La Trobe University
Dr Matthew Hale
Lecturer, School of Psychology and Public Health, La Trobe University
Dr Yuan Gao
Independent Consultant, Beijing, China
Amanda Golding, Autism Family Support Association
Dr Oriane Landry
Adjunct Associate Professor, School of Psychology and Public Health, La Trobe University
Dr Lesley Stirling
Associate Professor, University of Melbourne
Michael Fieldhouse
DXC Technology
GOVERNANCE

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

This committee met quarterly during 2017 to guide the direction and operation of OTARC.

Chair
Dr Sylvia Walton, AO
Former Chancellor of La Trobe University. Chair of Strategic Advisory Committee of the Autism Specific Early Learning and Care Centre.

Members
Professor Cheryl Dissanayake
Founder and Director of OTARC.

Professor Robert Pike
Pro Vice-Chancellor, College of Science, Health and Engineering, La Trobe University.

Professor Stephen Kent
Head of the School of Psychology and Public Health, La Trobe University.

Mr Doug Scobie
Centre Manager, OTARC

Mr Stephen May
Director of Alumni and Advancement at La Trobe University

Ms Fiona Sharkie
CEO of Amaze.

Mr Dan Bognar
Parent representative and Senior Vice President, Salesforce Asia-Pacific Region.
La Trobe University

PRINCIPAL DONOR
Mrs Olga Tennison AO has made generous donations to La Trobe University since 2008 to establish and continue our work. OTARC is named in recognition of her contribution.

PATRON
Professor David De Kretser (AC, AO, MD 1969, HonLLD 2006), medical researcher and former Governor of Victoria.