



# 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.

# CONTENTS

---

2	OTARC AT A GLANCE
4	HIGHLIGHTS
6	OBJECTIVE 1: CURRENT STUDIES
10	PUBLICATIONS AND OUTPUTS
15	SOURCES OF FUNDING
17	OBJECTIVE 2: COLLABORATION
20	INDUSTRY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS
21	OBJECTIVE 3: TRAIN THE NEXT GENERATION OF RESEARCHERS
22	VISITORS
25	MONTHLY RESEARCH SEMINARS
26	OBJECTIVE 4: EVIDENCE-BASED TOOLS
27	PROFESSIONAL PARTICIPATION
28	APPOINTMENTS
29	FINANCIAL REPORT
30	STAFF
31	GOVERNANCE

# MESSAGE FROM PROFESSOR JOHN DEWAR

---



“Olga Tennison is a modest person whose generosity has provided the platform for research that has a striking impact on health and wellbeing.”

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

---



“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.”

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.



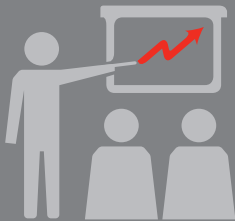
**Professor Cheryl Dissanayake,**  
PhD MAPS Director, Olga Tennison  
Autism Research Centre

# OTARC AT A GLANCE

## Engagement



40  
OTARC  
researcher  
publications



61  
Conference  
presentations  
and posters



105  
Research  
collaborations  
and partnerships



17  
Media appearances  
and mentions

## Participant Registry



People on  
Participant Registry  
2,859



1,017  
Those with a diagnosis of autism

315  
Of these, those aged 18 or older

## Media profile



30.2%

e-Newsletter open rate  
(Non-profit industry  
average 18.9%)



23,900

Podcast downloads



OTARC  
website  
statistics

10,488

SESSIONS



3,439

Social media  
followers



20,000

Downloads of mobile  
app ASDetect

23,488

PAGEVIEWS

9,477

NEW USERS

## Top five downloaded podcasts

- 1 Autism detection? There's an app for that
- 2 Sleep and Autism
- 3 Stress and anxiety in adolescents with ASD
- 4 Early detection of Autism
- 5 Developments in Autism research

## Total donations

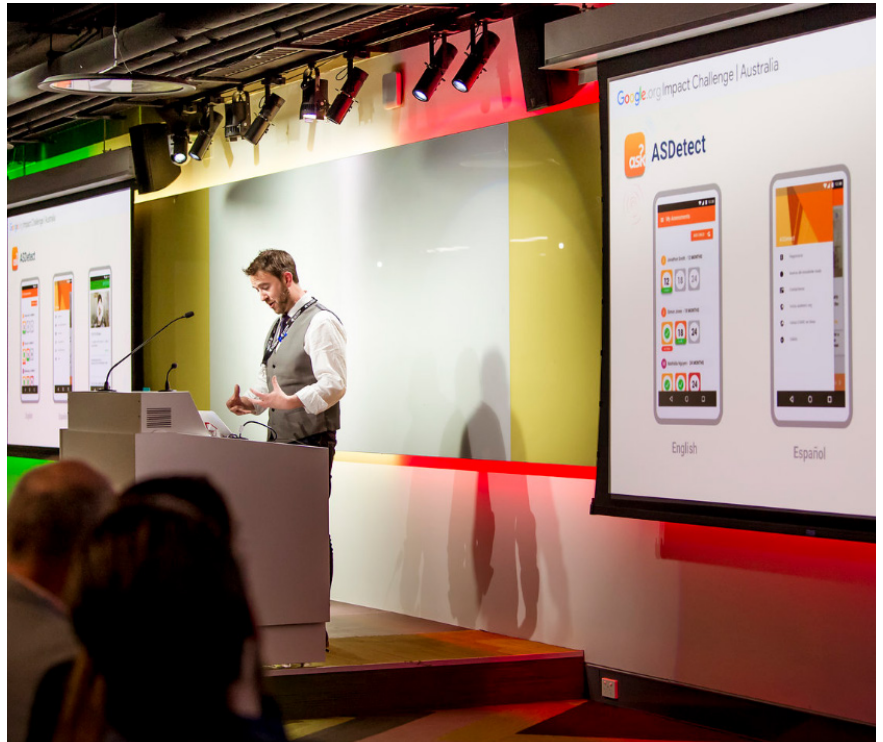


\$792,736 in donations

# HIGHLIGHTS

## 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.



# INAUGURAL STATE CONFERENCE: AUSTRALASIAN SOCIETY FOR AUTISM RESEARCH

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”



Dr Sally Rogers presents the keynote address at the ASfAR State conference at La Trobe University

# 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.



Prof. Adam Guastella, Dr Geraldine Dawson, Prof. Sally Rogers & Prof Cheryl Dissanayake, collaborators on a new NHMRC grant

- 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 Shrestha**, **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 Butter, 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 Uljarevic, 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 Donnelly, **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.

- 1. Early Intensive Behavioural Intervention for Autism: Understanding 'What Works for Whom?'**  
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 Shiell, 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 Uljaravic (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. Mulick (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  
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, D. Eapen, S. Riley, T. Iacano, & Cheryl Dissanayake**
- 8. Development and evaluation of a Family Support Program for newly diagnosed children with an ASD**  
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 Sofronoff** (University of Queensland), David Trembath, Marleen Westerveld (Griffith University)



Prof. Dissanayake presented to the Philippine Society for Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics



### 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 Halim, 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 Kazantsis** (Monash University).

# PUBLICATIONS AND OUTPUTS

## JOURNAL ARTICLES

- Baker, E.M., & Richdale, A.L. (2017). Examining the behavioural sleep-wake rhythm in adults with autism spectrum disorder and no comorbid intellectual disability. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 47, 1207-1222. DOI 10.1007/s10803-017-3042-3
- Baker, E.K., Richdale A.L, Hazi, A. & Prendergast, L. (2017). Assessing the dim light melatonin onset in adults with autism spectrum disorder and no comorbid intellectual disability. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 47, 2120-2137. DOI 10.1007/s10803-017-3122-4
- Cai, R. Y., Richdale, A. L., Dissanayake, C., & Uljarević, M. (2017). Brief report: Inter-relationship between emotion regulation, intolerance of uncertainty, anxiety, and depression in youth with autism spectrum disorder. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*. DOI 10.1007/s10803-017-3318-7
- Cai, R. Y., Richdale, A. L., Foley, K-R., Trollor, J., & Uljarević, M. (2017). Brief report: Cross-sectional interactions between expression and cognitive reappraisal and its relationship with depressive symptoms in autism spectrum disorder. *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders*, 45, 1-8. DOI 10.1016/j.rasd.2017.10.002
- Chetcuti, L., Hudry, K., Grant, M., & Vivanti, G. (2017). Object-directed imitation in autism spectrum disorder is differentially influenced by motoric task complexity, but not social contextual cues. *Autism: The International Journal of Research and Practice*. DOI 10.1177/1362361317734063
- Clark, M., Barbaro, J. & Dissanayake, C. (2017). Continuity and change in cognition and autism severity from toddlerhood to school age. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 47, 328-339. DOI 10.1007/s10803-016-2954-7
- Clark, M.C., Barbaro, J., & Dissanayake, C. (2017). School age outcomes of children diagnosed early and later with Autism Spectrum Disorder. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*. DOI 10.1007/s10803-017-3279-x
- Eapen, V., Grove, R., Aylward, E., Joosten, A. V., Miller, S. I., Van Der Watt, G., Fordyce, K., Dissanayake, C., Maya, J., Tucker, M., & DeBlasio, A. (2017). Transition from early intervention program to primary school in children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. *World Journal of Clinical Pediatrics*, 6, 169-175. DOI 10.5409/wjcp.v6.i4.169
- Eapen, V., Walter, A., Guan, J., Descallar, J., Axelsson, E., Einfeld, S., Eastwood, J., Murphy, E., Beasley, D., Silove, N., Dissanayake, C., Woolfenden, S., Williams, K., Jalaludin, B., and the 'Watch Me Grow' study group. (2017). Maternal help-seeking intentions for child developmental concerns: Associations with sociodemographic factors. *Journal of Pediatric Child Health*, 53, 963-969. DOI 10.1111/jpc.13607
- Evans, D. W., Lusk, L. G., Slane, M. M., Michael, A. M., Myers, S. M., Uljarević, M., Mason, O., Claridge, G., & Frazier, T. (2017, in press). Dimensional assessment of schizotypal, psychotic, and other psychiatric traits in children and their parents: development and validation of childhood Oxford-Liverpool inventory of feelings and experiences on a representative US sample. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 59(5), 574-585. DOI 10.1111/jcpp.12827
- Fanning, P.A.J., Hocking, D. R., Dissanayake, C., & Vivanti, G. (2017). Delineation of a spatial working memory profile using a non-verbal eye-tracking paradigm in young children with autism and Williams syndrome. *Child Neuropsychology*, 24(4), 469-489. DOI 10.1080/09297049.2017.1284776
- Garg, P., Ha, M., Eastwood, J., Harvey, S., Woolfenden, S., Murphy, E., Dissanayake, C., Jalaludin, B., Williams, K., Mckenzie, A. et al. (2017). Explaining culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) parents' access of healthcare services for developmental surveillance and anticipatory guidance: Qualitative findings from the 'Watch Me Grow' study. *BMC Health Services Research*, 17(1), 288. DOI 10.1186/s12913-017-2143-1
- Hedley, D., Cai, R., Uljarević, M., Wilmot, M., Spoor, J., Richdale, A., & Dissanayake, C. (2017). Transition to work: Perspectives from the Autism Spectrum. *Autism*. DOI 10.1177/1362361316687697
- Hedley, D., Nevill, R., Uljarević, M., Butter, E., & Mulick, J. A. (2017). Corrigendum to "ADOS-2 Toddler and Module 1 Standardized Severity Scores as Used by Community Practitioners". *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders*, 32, 84-95. DOI 10.1016/j.rasd.2017.07.004
- Hedley, D., Spoor, J., Uljarević, M., Wilmot, M., Cai, R., Moss, S., Richdale, A., Bartram, T., & Dissanayake, C. (2017). Work experiences and well-being in employees with Autism Spectrum Disorder. *Academy of Management Proceedings*, 1, 14563. DOI 10.5465/AMBPP.2017.14563abstract
- Hedley, D., Uljarević, M., Wilmot, M., Richdale, A., & Dissanayake, C. (2017). Brief Report: Social support, depression and suicidal ideation in adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 47, 3669-3677. DOI 10.1007/s10803-017-3274-2
- Hudry, K. & Dimov, S. (2017). Spoken language shows some improvement following intervention for children with autism: but for which children and why? *Evidence Based Mental Health*, 20, e16. DOI 10.1136/eb-2016-102435
- Hudry, K., Rumney, L., Pitt, N., Barbaro, J. & Vivanti, G. (2017). Brief Report: Interaction behaviours by bilingual parents with their young children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*, 21, 1-8. DOI 10.1080/15374416.2017.1286592
- Harrop, C., Green, J., Hudry, K. & the PACT Consortium (2017). Play complexity and toy engagement in pre-schoolers with Autism Spectrum Disorder: Do girls and boys differ? *Autism: The International Journal of Research and Practice*, 21, 37-50. DOI 10.1177/1362361315622410.
- Iacano, T., Dissanayake, C., Hudry, K., Trembath, D., Erickson, S., & Spong, J. (2017). Translating research into practice in low-resource settings: An Australian case study of early autism service provision in a regional town. *Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disability*, 1-9. DOI 10.3109/13668250.2017.1310819
- Keelan, J. A., Hickey, M., Hollier, L. P. (2017). Cord blood androgen measurements: the importance of assay validation, *Human Reproduction*, 32(6), 1360. DOI 10.1093/humrep/dex075
- Moss, S., Vemuri, R., Hedley, D., & Uljarević, M. (2017). Initiatives that diminish the biases of recruiters against people who disclose or demonstrate a diagnosed mental disorder. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, 36, 2-16. DOI 10.1108/EDI-05-2016-0037

- Mozolic-Staunton, B., Donnelly, M., Barbaro, J., & Yoxall, J. (2017). Interrater reliability of early childhood education professionals involved in developmental surveillance for autism spectrum disorder and related conditions. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood*, 42. DOI 10.23965/AJEC.42.2.08
- Nevill, R., Hedley, D., Uljarević, M., Butter, E., & Mulick, J. A. (2017). Adaptive behaviour profiles and subtypes in young children with Autism Spectrum Disorder under DSM-5 criteria. *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders*, 43-44, 53-66. DOI 10.1016/j.rasd.2017.09.006
- Nevill, R., Hedley, D., Uljarević, M., Sahin, E., Zadek, J., Butter, E., & Mulick, J. A. (2017). Language profiles in young children with Autism Spectrum Disorder: A community sample using multiple assessment instruments. *Autism*. DOI 10.1177/1362361317726245
- Nuske, H. J., Hedley, D., Tseng, H. C., Begeer, S., & Dissanayake, C. (2017). Emotion regulation strategies in pre-schoolers with autism: Associations with parental quality of life and family functioning. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, Special Issue: Parenting Children with ASD, 48(4), 1287-1300. DOI 10.1007/s10803-017-3391-y
- Nuske, H. J., Hedley, D., Woollacott, A., Thomson, P., Macari, S., & Dissanayake, C. (2017). Developmental delays in emotion regulation strategies in pre-schoolers with Autism. *Autism Research*, 10, 1808-1822. DOI 10.1002/aur.1827
- Uljarević, M., Arnott, B., Carrington, S. J., Meins, E., Fernyhough, C., McConachie, H., Le Couteur, A., & Leekam S. R. (2017). Development of restricted and repetitive behaviors from 15 to 77 Months: Stability of two distinct subtypes? *Developmental Psychology*, 53(10), 1859-1868. DOI 10.1037/dev0000324
- Uljarević, M., Baranek, G., Vivanti, G., Hedley, D., Hudry, K., & Lane, A. (2017). Heterogeneity of sensory features in Autism Spectrum Disorder: A roadmap for future research. *Autism Research*, 10(5), 703-710. DOI 10.1002/aur.1747
- Uljarević, M., Hedley, D., Alvares, G. A., Varcin, K. J., & Whitehouse, A. J. O. (2017). Relationship between early motor milestones and severity of restricted and repetitive behaviours in children and adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). *Autism Research*, 10, 1163-1168. DOI 10.1002/aur.1763
- Uljarević, M., Richdale, A.L., Evans, D.W., Cai, R.Y., & Leekam, S.R. (2017). Interrelationship between insistence on sameness, effortful control and anxiety in adolescents and young adults with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). *Molecular Autism*, 8, 36. DOI 10.1186/s13229-017-0158-4
- Uljarević, M., Richdale, A.L., McConachie, M., Hedley, D., Cai, R.Y., Merrick, H., Parr, J. R., Le Couteur, A. (2017). The Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale: Factor structure and psychometric properties in older adolescents and young adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). *Autism Research*. DOI 10.1002/aur.1872
- Unwin, L., Bruz, I., Maybery, M., Reynolds, V., Ciccone, N., Dissanayake, C., Hickey, M., & Whitehouse, A.J.O. (2017). Acoustic properties of cries in 12-month old infants at high-risk of Autism Spectrum Disorder. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 47, 2108-2119. DOI 10.1007/s10803-017-3119-z
- Vivanti, G., Fanning, P., Hocking, D., Sievers, S., & Dissanayake, C. (2017). Social attention, joint attention and sustained attention in Autism Spectrum Disorder and Williams Syndrome: Convergences and divergences. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 47(6), 1866-1877. DOI 10.1007/s10803-017-3106-4
- Vivanti, G., Hocking, D., Fanning, P., & Dissanayake, C. (2017). The social nature of over-imitation: Insights from Autism and Williams syndrome. *Cognition*, 161, 10-18. DOI 10.1016/j.cognition.2017.01.008
- Vivanti, G., Hocking, D., Fanning, P., Postorino, V., Mazzone, L., & Dissanayake, C. (2017). Attention to novelty versus repetition: Contrasting habituation profiles in Autism and Williams syndrome. *Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience*, 16, S1878-9293(16)30167-0. DOI 10.1016/j.dcn.2017.01.006
- Vinen, Z., Clark, M., Paynter, J., & Dissanayake, C. (2017). School age outcomes of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder who received community-based early interventions. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 48(5), 1673-1683. DOI 10.1007/s10803-017-3414-8
- Vivanti, G., Kasari, C., Green, J., Mandell, D., Maye, M., & Hudry, K. (2017). Implementing and evaluating early intervention for children with autism: Where are the gaps and what should we do? *Autism Research*. DOI 10.1002/aur.1900
- Whitehouse, A. J. O., Granich, J., Alvares, G., Busacca, M., Cooper, M. N., Dass, A., Duong, T., Harper, R., Marshall, W., Richdale, A., Anderson, A., et al. (2017). A randomised-controlled trial of an iPad-based application to complement early behavioural intervention in Autism Spectrum Disorder. *Journal of Child Psychology & Psychiatry*, 9, 1042-1052. DOI 10.1111/jcpp.12752

#### BOOK CHAPTERS

Hedley, D., Uljarević, M., & Hedley, D. F. E. (2017). Employment and living with Autism: Personal, social and economic impact (pp 295-311). In S. Halder & L. C. Assaf (Eds.), *Inclusion, Disability and Culture: An Auto-Ethnographic Perspective Traversing Abilities and Challenges*. New York: Springer. DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-55224-8\_19

Spoor, J. R., Hedley, D., & Bartram, T. (due 2018). Supporting meaningful employment for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder. In S. Fielden, M. Moore, & G. Wright (Eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Disability at Work*. UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

#### CLINICAL TRIAL PROTOCOL

Hudry, K., Bent, C., Pye, K., Feary, J., Toscano, G., Uljarević, M. (2017). *The Victorian ASELCC (ESDM) Parent Coaching Trial*. Clinical Trial Protocol registered with Australian and New Zealand Clinical Trials Registry (ANZCTR) Ref: ACTRN12617001282370

#### CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Dissanayake, C. *Promoting the identification of autism in infancy and toddlerhood: Social Attention and Communication Surveillance*. Invited workshop presented at the International Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders Conference, Thimpu, Bhutan. 19-21 April.

Dissanayake, C., & Hedley, D. *The Dandelion Program*. Oral presentation at the Autism at Work Summit, Stanford University, Stanford, CA. 12-14 April.



Researchers at the International Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders Conference, Thimpu, Bhutan

**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) Melbourne, VIC. 21 April.

**Bent, C., Barbaro, J., & Dissanayake, C.**

*Change over time in the age and number of children accessing autism specific funding in Australia.* Paper presented at the 2017 International Meeting For Autism Research, San Francisco, CA. 10-13 May.

**Grant, M., & Hudry, K.**

Predictors for Parent Wellbeing around the Time of Young Child ASD Diagnosis. Poster presented at the 2017 International Meeting for Autism Research, San Francisco, CA. 10-13 May.

**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.*

**Slonims, V., Hudry, K., & the PACT Consortium.**

*Exploration of Prognostic and Predictive Factors of Outcome in Participants in the Preschool Autism Communication Trial.* Paper presented at the 2017 International Meeting for Autism Research, San Francisco, CA. 10-13 May.

**Vivanti, G., Hocking, D., Fanning, P., & Dissanayake, C.**

*Imitation of socially rewarding and non-rewarding actions in pre-schoolers with ASD.* Paper presented at the 2017 International Meeting For Autism Research, San Francisco, CA. 10-13 May.

**Hedley, D., Spoor, J. R., Uljarević, M., Wilmot, M., Cai, R., Moss, S., Richdale, A., Bartram, T., & Dissanayake, C.**

*Work experiences and well-being in employees with Autism Spectrum Disorder.* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management (AOM), Atlanta, Georgia. August.

**Dissanayake, C. & Barbaro, J.** *Identification and Diagnosis of Autism in Australia: Driving change in developmental outcomes through Social Attention and Communication Surveillance (SACS).* Invited Keynote at Asia Pacific Autism Conference (APAC), Sydney. 7 September.

**Hudry, K., Bent, C., Upson, S., Pye, K., Capes, K., Duncan, E., Feary, J., Marshall, A., Rodset, D., Dissanayake, C., Vivanti, G., & the Victorian ASELCC Team.** *Early Start Denver Model (ESDM) Delivery within a Universal Early Childhood Setting: A Feasibility Study with Random Assignment to Inclusive vs. Autism-Specific Classrooms.* Oral presentation at the Asia Pacific Autism Conference, Sydney. 7 September.

**Hudry, K., Rumney, L., Pitt, N., Barbaro, J., & Vivanti, G.**

*Dyadic Interaction between Bilingual Parents and their Young Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders.* Oral presentation at the Asia Pacific Autism Conference, Sydney. 7 September.

**Hedley, D.** Session Chair: *Autism in Adolescents and Adulthood: Transition and Employment.*

Community perspectives on autism research, Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre, Melbourne. 9 November.

**Hollier, L.** Session Chair: *Perspectives on Early Identification and Intervention.*

Community perspectives on autism research. Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre (OTARC), Melbourne. 9 November.

**Barbaro, J.** Session Chair: *Early signs, cognitive and behaviour, intervention and parenting.* Australasian Society for Autism Research (ASfAR) Inaugural Victorian conference, Melbourne. 10 November.

**Barbaro, J., Sadka, N., Nadachowski, W., Burnside, M., Burnside, L., Dissanayake, C., Leahy, M., Denham, M., & the ASDetect team.** *Early detection of autism using a mobile application: ASDetect.* Presentation within the Australian Society for Autism Research (ASfAR) Inaugural Victorian conference, Melbourne. 10 November.

**Bent, C., Hudry, K., Dissanayake, C., Glencross, S., McKinnon, K., & Vivanti, G.** *Understanding what works for whom? Toward theory-driven predictors of intervention outcomes.*

Presentation within symposium on Advancing Early Intervention Research at the Australasian Society for Autism Research (ASfAR) Inaugural Victorian conference, Melbourne. 10 November.

**Berends, D., Dissanayake, C., & Hollier, L.** *Differences between Multiple and Simplex Autism: Does Parent Experience Contribute to Cognitive and Behavioural Development?* Oral presentation at the Australasian Society for Autism Research (ASfAR) Inaugural Victorian conference, Melbourne. 10 November.

**Bischof, N., Rapee, R., Hudry, K., & Bayer, J.** *Pilot research prevents anxiety problems in young children with autism.* Presentation within symposium on Advancing Early Intervention Research at the Australasian Society for Autism Research (ASfAR) Inaugural Victorian conference, Melbourne. 10 November.

**Dissanayake, C.** Session Chair: *Autism symptoms in infants: what should we professionals do?* Australasian Society for Autism Research (ASfAR) Inaugural Victorian conference, Melbourne. 10 November.

**Dissanayake, C., Searles, J., Barbaro, J., & Sadka, N.** *Cognitive and behavioural differences in toddlers with Autism Spectrum Disorder from multiplex and simplex families.* Oral presentation at the Australian Society for Autism Research (ASfAR) Inaugural Victorian conference, Melbourne. 10 November.

**Hedley, D.** Session Chair: *Adulthood, well-being, life satisfaction and employment.* Australasian Society for Autism Research (ASfAR) Inaugural Victorian conference, Melbourne. 10 November.

**Hedley, D.** *Suicidal ideation & behaviour in autism: Different mechanisms or amplified risk?* Oral presentation at the Australasian Society for Autism Research (ASfAR) Inaugural Victorian conference, Melbourne. 10 November.

**Hedley, D. & Uljarević, M.** *Mechanisms underlying depression and self-harm in adults with autism.* Oral presentation at the Australasian Society for Autism Research (ASfAR) Inaugural Victorian conference, Melbourne. 10 November.

**Hollier, L. & Richdale, A.** *School and Job Satisfaction among Young People on the Autism Spectrum.* Oral presentation at the Australasian Society for Autism Research (ASfAR) Inaugural Victorian conference, Melbourne. 10 November.

**Hollier, L., Barbaro, J., & Dissanayake, C.** *Gender Differences during Toddlerhood in Autism Spectrum Disorders: A Longitudinal Follow-up Study.* Oral presentation at the La Trobe University Early Career Networking Conference, Melbourne. 2017

**Hudry, K.** Symposium convener and chair: *Advancing Early Intervention Research.* The Australasian Society for Autism Research (ASfAR) Inaugural Victorian conference, Melbourne. 10 November.

**Hudry, K., Bent, C., Pye, K., Capes, K., Feary, J., Ma, B., Shiell, A., & the Victorian ASELCC Team.** *Making community-based early intervention work for children and families.* Presentation within symposium on Advancing Early Intervention Research at the Australasian Society for Autism Research (ASfAR) Inaugural Victorian conference, Melbourne. 10 November.

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

**Hedley, D.** *Job satisfaction and quality of life in Autism*. Symposium presentation at the Asia-Pacific Regional Congress of the International Association for the Scientific Study 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 Scientific Study of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IASSIDD), Bangkok. 13-16 November.

**Rabba, A. S., Dissanayake, C., & Barbaro, J.** *The development of a Family Support Package for parents following a child's diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder: What do parents want?* Oral presentation at the Australasian Society for Autism Research (ASfAR) Inaugural Victorian conference, Melbourne. 10 November.

**Richdale, A. & Uljarevic, M.** *Arousal and the prediction of insomnia symptoms in young people on the autism spectrum*. Oral presentation at the Australasian Society for Autism Research (ASfAR) Inaugural Victorian conference, Melbourne. 10 November.

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

**Richdale, A., & Mertins, S.** *Relationships between sleep, behaviour and diet in children with and without autism spectrum disorder*. Oral presentation, International Pediatric Sleep Association Congress, Taipei, Taiwan. 10-13 March.

## POSTER PRESENTATIONS

**Barbaro, J., Nadachowski, W., Burnside, M., Dissanayake, C., Leahy, M., Denham, M. & the ASDetect team.** *Utilising Technology for the Early Detection of Autism: Introducing Asdetect, an Early Detection Mobile Application for Caregivers*. Poster presented at the 2017 International Meeting for Autism Research, San Francisco, CA. 10-13 May.

**Cai, R., Richdale, A. & Uljarević, M.** *Effects of emotion regulation and intolerance of uncertainty on anxiety and depression in adolescents and young adults with autism*. Poster presented at the 2017 International Meeting For Autism Research, San Francisco, CA. 10-13 May.

**Dissanayake, C., Richdale, A., Kolivas, N., & Pamment, L.** *An exploratory study of the impact of autism traits on parenting*. Poster presented at the 2017 International Meeting For Autism Research, San Francisco, CA. 10-13 May.

**Fanning, P., Vivanti, G., Dissanayake, C., & Hocking, D.** *Early learning processes in autism and William's syndrome: Commonalities and differences in relation to cognitive and adaptive functioning*. Poster presented at the 2017 International Meeting For Autism Research, San Francisco, CA. 10-13 May.

**Hedley, D., Cai, R. Y., Uljarević, M., Wilmot, M., Spoor, J., Richdale, A. L., & Dissanayake, C.** *Barriers and enablers to success at work: The Dandelion Program*. Poster presented at the 2017 International Meeting For Autism Research, San Francisco, CA. 10-13 May.

**Hedley, D., Uljarević, M., Wilmot, M., Spoor, J., Richdale, A. L., & Dissanayake, C.** *Self-reported suicidal ideation, depression and loneliness in adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)*. Poster presented at the 2017 International Meeting For Autism Research, San Francisco, CA. 10-13 May.

**Hedley, D., Uljarević, M., Wilmot, M., Spoor, J., Richdale, A. L., & Dissanayake, C.** *Job satisfaction and quality of life in adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Participating in the Dandelion Program*. Poster presented at the 2017 International Meeting For Autism Research, San Francisco, CA. 10-13 May.

**Hollier, L., Dissanayake, C., & Barbaro, J.** *Using the Social Attention and Communication Surveillance – Revised (SACS-R) in a community-based setting*. Poster presented at the 2017 International Meeting For Autism Research, San Francisco, CA. 10-13 May.

**Hudry, K., Rumney, L., Pitt, N., Barbaro, J. & Vivanti, G.** *Dyadic Interaction between Bilingual Parents and their Young Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders*. Poster presented at the 2017 International Meeting for Autism Research, San Francisco, CA. 10-13 May.

**Mozolic-Staunton, B., Barbaro, J., Donnelly, M., & Yoxall, J.** *Right Kids, Right Time, Right Services: Translating Research to Practice in Early Detection of Developmental Challenges in Early Childhood Education Settings*. Poster presented at the 2017 International Meeting for Autism Research, San Francisco, CA. 10-13 May.

**Nuske, H. J., Finkel, E., Pellecchia, M., Herrington, J. D., Parma, V., Hedley, D., & Dissanayake, C.** *A window of opportunity for preventing challenging behavior: Increase in heartrate prior to episodes of challenging behavior in pre-schoolers with autism*. Poster presented at the 2017 International Meeting For Autism Research, San Francisco, CA. 10-13 May.

**Nuske, H. J., Hedley, D., Woollacott, A., Thomson, P., & Dissanayake, C.** *Emotion regulation strategies in pre-schoolers with Autism Spectrum Disorder: Associations with wellbeing, sleep and temperament*. Poster presented at the 2017 International Meeting For Autism Research, San Francisco, CA 10-13 May.

**Rabba, S., Dissanayake, C., & Barbaro, J.** *The development of a Family Support Package for parents following a child's diagnosis of ASD: What do parents want?* Poster presented at the 2017 International Meeting For Autism Research, San Francisco, CA. 10-13 May.

**Richdale, A., Uljarević, M. & Cai, R.** *Predicting insomnia in young adults: The role of autism symptom severity, sensory atypicality and intolerance of uncertainty*. Poster presented at the 2017 International Meeting For Autism Research, San Francisco, CA. 10-13 May.

**Shrestha, R., Dissanayake, C., & Barbaro, J.** *An exploratory study of the epidemiology of ASD in Nepal*. Poster presented at the 2017 International Meeting For Autism Research, San Francisco, CA. 10-13 May.

**Vivanti, G., Duncan, E., Hudry, K., & Dissanayake, C.** *Outcomes for children receiving the Early Start Denver Model in a mainstream versus autism specific setting: A pilot randomized controlled trial*. Poster presented at the 2017 International Meeting For Autism Research, San Francisco, CA. 10-13 May.

**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.

**Hudry, K., & Bent, C.** *Early intensive behavioural intervention for autism: Understanding what works for whom*. Oral presentation at the ABA Today Conference, Melbourne. 22 April.

**Hudry, K., Pye, K., Feary, J., Capes, K., Upson, S., Bajwa, H., Bent, C., Jones, C., Marshall, A., Reynolds, J., Rodset, D., Toscano, G., Duncan, E., Dissanayake, C., Rogers, S., & Vivanti, G.** *Social Participation Trial: Outcomes for children with autism receiving intervention in mainstream vs. autism-specific playrooms*. Poster presented at the La Trobe University Research Showcase, Melbourne. 31 August.

**Hudry, K., Varcin, K., Chetcuti, L., Boutrus, M. & Whitehouse, A.J.O.** *Gazefinder: Identifying autism early using eye-tracking technology*. Poster presented at the La Trobe University Research Showcase, Melbourne. 31 August.

Chetcuti, L., Uljarevic, M., Hudry, K., & Putnam S. *Temperament in individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD): A systematic review*. Poster presented at the Australasian Society for Autism Research (ASfAR) Victorian State-Based meeting, Melbourne. 10 November.

Hudry, K., Pye, K., Feary, J., Capes, K., Upson, S., Bajwa, H., Bent, C., Jones, C., Marshall, A., Reynolds, J., Rodset, D., Toscano, G., Duncan, E., Dissanayake, C., Rogers, S., & Vivanti, G. *Social Participation Trial: Outcomes for children with autism receiving intervention in mainstream vs. autism-specific playrooms*. Poster presented at the Australasian Society for Autism Research (ASfAR) Inaugural Victorian conference, Melbourne. 10 November.

Hudry, K., Varcin, K., Chetcuti, L., Boutrus, M. & Whitehouse, A.J.O. *Gazefinder: Identifying autism early using eye-tracking technology*. Poster presented at the Australasian Society for Autism Research (ASfAR) Inaugural Victorian conference, Melbourne. 10 November.

Rankin, R., Bent, C., & Hudry, K. *Extending the Autism Treatment Philosophy Questionnaire to include the Early Start Denver Model*. Poster presented at the Australasian Society for Autism Research (ASfAR) Inaugural Victorian conference, Melbourne. 10 November.

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

Baker, E., Richdale, A., Hazi, A., & Prendergast, L. *Hyperarousal Prior to Sleep in Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and No Comorbid Intellectual Impairment*. Poster presented at the European Sleep Research Society Congress, Bologna. 13-16 September.

Baker, E., Richdale, A., Hazi, A., & Prendergast, L. *The Relationship between Sleep and Evening Melatonin in Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and No Intellectual Impairment*. Poster presented at the European Sleep Research Society Congress, Bologna. 13-16 September.

Richdale, A., Baker, E., Hazi, A., Uljarevic, M., & Prendergast L. *Relationships between Morning Salivary Alpha-Amylase (sAA), Sleep and Anxiety in Adults with and without Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)*. Poster presented at the European Sleep Research Society Congress, Bologna. 13-16 September.

## MEDIA ACTIVITY

Barbaro, J. (2017, 13 February) *Researcher to outline app by Tara Whitsed*. Shepparton news. <http://www.sheppnews.com.au/2017/02/13/73572/researcher-to-outline-app>

Barbaro, J. (2017, 14 February) Interview and lecture *Early indicators of autism* by Joseph Thomsen ABC Goulburn Murray Radio

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

Richdale, A. (2017, April) *Adults with autism: What do we know and what are the implications for psychology?* InPsych Vol 39 Australian Psychological Society <https://www.psychology.org.au/inpsych/2017/april/richdale>

Denham, M. (2017, 19 May) *The wonderful side of autism* <http://www.upstart.net.au/the-wonderful-side-of-autism/>

Dissanayake, C. (2017, 22 May) *Lateline* ABC Television

Barbaro, J. (2017, June) *QANTAS Magazine "Trailblazers"* by Lucinda Schmidt <https://www.pressreader.com/australia/qantas/20170601/283158608553458>

Dissanayake, C. (2017, 24 July) *Australian Story "My Son Sam"* ABC Television

Barbaro, J. (2017, 9 September) *ASD and GP* Guest blogpost with Dr C. Edward Pitt <https://cedwardpitt.com/2017/09/>

Uljarevic, M \*mentioned (2017, 17 September) *Revolutionary New Way to Diagnose Autism Revealed* Autism Parenting Magazine, Issue 64 <https://www.autismparentingmagazine.com/new-way-diagnosing-autism/>

Richdale, A. (2017, 21 October) *Sleep in Special Needs children, Episode 23*. SleepTalk podcast <https://omny.fm/shows/sleep-hub/sleep-in-special-needs-children>

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

Richdale, A. (2017, 10 November) *Spectrum: Cross talk. Why it's difficult to study sleep in autism: Sleep problems in autism remain ill-defined and overlooked*. <https://spectrumnews.org/crosstalk/sleep-problems-autism-remain-ill-defined-overlooked/>

Hedley, D., & Dissanayake, C. (2017, November) *Social Relationships, Loneliness and Wellbeing in Autism. Industry Report for DXC Technology*. <http://www.dandelionprogram.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/31/2016/11/OTARC-Research-Update-November-2017.pdf>

Dissanayake, C. (2017, 4 December) *Workers with autism recognised for unique skill set, ANZ recruiting nine new employees* <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-12-04/autistic-workers-recognised-for-unique-skill-set-anz-recruiting/9207862>

Sadka, N. & Barbaro, J. (2017) *ASDetect. Blog of the day*. Open Forum <http://openforum.com.au/asdetect-award-winning-smartphone-app-early-detection-autism>



# SOURCES OF FUNDING

## 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.



Liam Dickeson presents his cheque to Lab Manager Alex Aulich

## 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.*

Hudry, K., Pye, K., Feary, J., Toscano, G., Li, X., Bent, C., Uljarevic, M., Vivanti, G. & the Victorian ASELCC Team. **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; Industry-funded contract)**. *Gazefinder: Identifying Autism 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.*

Krzeminska, A., Hartel, C., Paulsen, N., Fieldhouse, M., Dissanayake, C., Richdale, A., Hedley, D., Spoor, J., Houchin, V., Davies, L., Bruyere, S. M., & Austin, R. **Autism CRC Innovation Project # ZZ\_302RI (2017)**. *Challenges and best practices of sustaining and scaling autism employment.*

Pye, K., Feary, J., Capes, K., Upson, S., Uljarevic, 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.*

Trembath, D., Tucker, M., Hudry, K., Pye, K., Muckett, C., Fordyce, K., Hoppenbrouwers, G., DeBlasio, A., Webb, S., Joosten, A., Grove, R., J., Paynter, Westerveld, M., Maher, N., Rose, V., Keen, D., Eapen, D., Riley, S., Iacano, T., & Dissanayake, C. **Department of Social Services (2017-2019)**. *Supporting Best Practice in the Assessment and Treatment of Minimally Verbal Children with Autism.*

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

### ONGOING GRANTS

Dissanayake, C., & Barbaro, J. **Autism CRC Core Program 1 (2014–2017)**. *Project 1.005RC, Developmental Surveillance for ASD.*

Dissanayake, C., Hudry, K., Shiell, A., & Vivanti, G. (Drexel University) and the Victorian ASELCC Team. **Department of Social Services (2016–2019)**. *Comparing learning and social outcomes of pre-schoolers with autism in inclusive versus segregated settings: A randomized controlled trial to test a new model of early intervention delivery.*

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., & Uljarevic, M. **Hewlett Packard Australia (2015–2018)** *Successful employment outcomes for people with Autism Spectrum Disorder.*

Dissanayake, C., Richdale, A., Hedley, D., & Uljarevic, 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. **Autism CRC Core Program 3 (2014–2017)**. *Project 3.016RC, Unique ASD Profile School Leavers.*

Richdale, A., Falkmer, T., Lennox, N., & Troller, J. **Autism CRC Core Program 3 (2014–2017)**. *Project 3.012RC, Base Resources Project.*

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 Daminda 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 Stocc, Ms Kathleen Franks and Ms Sussan Glenross**  
*Autism Partnerships*

**Associate Professor David Godler, Associate Professor Howard Slater and Associate Professor Lesley Bretherton**  
*Murdoch Children's Research Institute, University of Melbourne*

**Dr Rebecca Flower**  
*Specialisterne Australia*

#### 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, Queensland*

**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 Gongsu 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.



# INDUSTRY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

## 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.



## 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.



## 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.



## 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

#### 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

#### 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

# VISITORS



Mr Feng Hongrong, Deputy Director-General, Beijing Municipal Education Commission, Mr Chen Deshi, Deputy Director, Division I for Basic Education, Beijing Municipal Education Commission, Ms. Li Jie, Director, Beijing Xicheng District Shiyan Kindergarten, Mr Lei Hong, Principal, Beijing No.171 High School, Mr Shang Xingsan, Vice Principal, Special Education School of Dongcheng District, Beijing, Mr Chen Zhiguo, Director, Division I of Test Question Setting Department, Beijing Education Examinations Authority, with staff members of the Autism-Specific Early Learning and Child Care Centre

## **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.





Mami Kamiya, Clinical psychologist at Toyota Child Development Center; Cheryl Dissanayake; Dr. Masako Nagata, Professor in Psychology at Nagoya University; Machiko Kawabe, Clinical psychologist at Aichi Children's Health and Medical Centre.



Dr Katy Unwin from the Wales Autism Research Centre at Cardiff University spent one month with us on an ESRC Overseas Institutional grant.

### Dr Orit Hetzroni

Dr Orit Hetzroni, University of Haifa, Israel, working on Structure-mapping: Analogical reasoning and the systematicity principle among children with HFASD.

### Dr Maya Yaari

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.*

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



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.



ASELCC staff members with ESDM trainer Professor Sally Rogers

# 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.

**Barbaro, J.** *Facilitating the Early Identification of Autism using Social Attention and Communication Surveillance (SACS).* Goulburn Valley Health Grand Rounds, February.

**Barbaro, J.** *Autism: Advances in early detection through the Social Attention and Communication Surveillance (SACS) program.* La Trobe University Shepparton Alumni Presentation, February 2017.

**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.

**Hudry, K.** *How malleable is autism?* Seminar Series of Clinical Sciences/Child Neuropsychology, Murdoch Children's Research Institute (MCRI), Melbourne, 13 June.

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

**Barbaro, J.** *Developmental surveillance for Autism from infancy to toddlerhood: Social Attention and Communication Surveillance (SACS).* Lecture and workshop at Department of Developmental Paediatrics, Child Development Unit. Adelaide, 2 August.



**Hudry, K., Varcin, K., Chetcuti, L., Boutrus, M., & Whitehouse, A.J.O.** *Gazefinder: Identifying autism early using eye-tracking technology.* Report on Trial Phase of Collaborative Research Agreement with JVC Kenwood. La Trobe University, Melbourne. 8 August. Industry Report supported by SPPH Engagement Grant.

**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.

**Hudry, K.** Invited talk at Melbourne Children's Clinical and Public Health Research Seminar, Murdoch Children's Research Institute (MCRI) and Royal Children's Hospital (RCH). *How malleable is autism?* 24 August.

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

**Hedley, D.** *Benefits of employing people on the Autism Spectrum.* Oral presentation at the Autism at Work Summit. Sydney, NSW, 6 September.

**Dissanayake, C.** Invited webinar at the Mental Health Super Summit. *Autism in Australia: We can do better,* 5 – 22 October. <https://www.mentalhealthacademy.com.au/summit/2017/>; Video: <https://www.mentalhealthacademy.com.au/catalogue/courses/autism-in-australia-we-can-do-better>

# 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 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



## 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



## ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AMANDA RICHDALE

- 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)



## 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

# FINANCIAL REPORT

The Financial Report of the  
Olga Tennison Autism Research  
Centre as at 31st December 2017

<b>Income: for the period 1st January to 31st December 2017</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>
Research Grants	1,060,111	671,769
Research Donations	507,000	755,136
Commercial income	12,633	198,192
Other Grants	–	–
Other Donations	215,662	37,600
Internal income/transfers	177,533	151,289
In-Kind Contributions	190,487	212,065
Investment income <i>Interest on monies held (refer to notes)</i>	190,803	103,114
Other income	21,614	73,998
<b>Total income</b>	<b>2,375,843</b>	<b>2,203,163</b>

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

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

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

<b>La Trobe in-kind contributions</b>	<b>2017</b>
Research centre support	62,385
Research focus area support	12,905
Operating deficit/School contribution	136,776
<b>Total</b>	<b>212,065</b>

## **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 Uljarevic

### 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



Alex Haschek, Dr Lauren Hollier, Assoc. Prof. Amanda Richdale & Ru Ying Cai

## 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.

**Ms Fiona Sharkie**  
CEO of Amaze.

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

### 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



Mrs Olga Tennison, AO

**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.*

**OTARC**


Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre

**General enquiries**

T +61 3 9479 2497

E [otarc@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:otarc@latrobe.edu.au)

[latrobe.edu.au/otarc](http://latrobe.edu.au/otarc)

 [facebook.com/OlgaTennisonAutismResearchCentre](https://facebook.com/OlgaTennisonAutismResearchCentre)

 [twitter.com/OlgaTennison](https://twitter.com/OlgaTennison)