

# OTARC ANNUAL REPORT 2016

Australia's first dedicated centre for autism research



The Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre

# OUR MISSION

**The Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre's mission is to advance knowledge of Autism, and to study and develop evidence-based strategies for supporting affected individuals and families.**

Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre (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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Cover image:  
Prue Stevenson "Expend"  
Acrylic on Wall (Mural)  
240cm x 180cm ©2014

# MESSAGE FROM PROFESSOR JOHN DEWAR

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**“OTARC staff have developed an autism-specific undergraduate subject at La Trobe University, and their work increases knowledge and capacity amongst researchers and professionals.”**

The Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre (OTARC) provides 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 impact should not be underestimated, given that between 1 to 2 per cent of the population has Autism.

Named for its generous and magnanimous benefactor, the extraordinary Olga Tennison, OTARC is Australia's first centre dedicated to research on Autism. Since its establishment in 2008, OTARC has generated a very impressive catalogue of achievements and evidence-based interventions. OTARC researchers have developed highly effective early identification strategies and tools to facilitate earlier diagnoses of children, and have played an important role in improving collaboration between autism researchers nationally through the Australasian Society for Autism Research.

OTARC staff have also developed an autism-specific undergraduate subject at La Trobe University, and their work increases knowledge and capacity amongst researchers and professionals.

OTARC celebrates its 10th anniversary next year, and its staff are showing no signs of slowing down. During 2016, OTARC was one of the country's leading research centres in terms of its innovative approach to developing and implementing programs, and in collaborating with industry partners. OTARC's partnership with the Salesforce Foundation produced an extraordinarily successful app that will now be translated into several languages for use overseas, and fittingly was one of 10 finalists for the 2016 Google Impact Challenge.

I congratulate the staff, supporters and partners of the Olga Tennison Research Centre on their life-changing work during 2016, and look forward to celebrating the tenth anniversary of this unique research centre next year.



**Professor John Dewar**  
Vice-Chancellor, La Trobe University

## DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

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**“The last year has been a year of awards for our free mobile app ASDetect which detects autism in toddlers aged 11 to 30 months.”**

We have completed nine years at OTARC, and this year's Annual General Meeting launches us into celebrating our tenth year! Thus it was ten years ago that I met the extraordinary Mrs Olga Tennison who made possible Australia's first dedicated centre for autism research. Her decade of generosity and support has meant that we have been able to increase autism research capacity in Australia, which would not have otherwise been possible.

The last year has been a year of awards for our free mobile app ASDetect which detects autism in toddlers aged 11 to 30 months. To date, the app has been downloaded over 15 000 times, and won both the Victorian and National iAwards for Research and Development Project of the Year. As one of ten finalists in the Google Impact Challenge, work is underway to translate ASDetect into Spanish and Mandarin, two of the most common world languages. And Dr Josephine Barbaro, upon whose work the app is based, won the Autism CRC Research Translation Award, for the second time!

Our work with the Autism Cooperative Research Centre progresses well, with one of its signature projects, the Australian Autism Biobank, being extended to enable the collection of biological materials (hair, urine, faeces) in addition to phenotypic data and blood – and not only in children with autism

and their parents, but also their siblings, as well as children without autism. This database will be a unique research resource for Australia and beyond.

Our research on employment of people with autism, in partnership with Hewlett Packard Enterprises, has continued to grow, with the Dandelion Program having been extended in 2016 to include the Australian Department of Defence (with a focus on border security), in addition to the Department of Human Services. Adjunct Professor Michael Fieldhouse from HPE has been leading the charge to ensure that people with autism have career opportunities afforded to them within corporate organisations in Australia.

In conclusion, OTARC has had another successful year thanks to the stellar efforts of our staff and students, and our partners who collaborate with us to achieve better outcomes for people with autism and their families. I hope you enjoy reading this Annual Report which charts our activities, research and otherwise, throughout 2016.



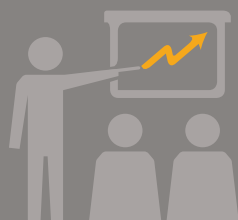
**Professor Cheryl Dissanayake, PhD MAPS**  
Director, Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre

# OTARC AT A GLANCE

## Engagement



39  
OTARC  
researcher  
publications



51  
Conference  
presentations  
and posters



102  
Research  
collaborations  
and partnerships



47  
Media appearances  
and mentions

## Volunteers and study participants

40

New volunteers registered



300

Total volunteers registered



People on  
Participant Registry

3160

## Media profile



4500

Newsletter subscribers



3700

Social media  
followers/likes



15,000

Downloads of mobile  
app ASDetect



22,700

Podcast downloads



60

Questions answered via  
Ask a Researcher service



OTARC  
website  
statistics

15,848

SESSIONS

50,206

PAGEVIEWS

8897

NEW USERS

## Top five downloaded podcasts

1

Sleep and Autism

2

Autism detection? There's an app for that

3

Early detection of Autism

4

Stress and anxiety in adolescents with ASD

5

Developments in Autism research

## Total donations



\$722,662 in donations



# HIGHLIGHTS

## AUTISM AWARENESS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### World Autism Awareness Month: April

We screened AMAZE's short film 'Spectroscopic' on campus to raise awareness amongst La Trobe staff and students.

We also held an art exhibition at Writer's Block, Borchardt Library, featuring artists on the autism spectrum.

In addition, OTARC's work in autism early detection was featured in the La Trobe University brand campaign 'This is what we're working on', including a video and billboards.

[latrobe.edu.au/our-work](http://latrobe.edu.au/our-work)

## AUTISM AND EMPLOYMENT WORKSHOP

As preparation for developing the virtual employment hub funded by a Salesforce.org Force for Change grant, OTARC held a stakeholder workshop.

With over 40 attendees representing employers, disability employment services, government agencies and jobseekers on the autism spectrum, this workshop provided invaluable input into the development of our employment portal, due for launch in 2017.



**“ASDetect won the Victorian state and National iAwards for Research and Development Project of the Year.”**

## World-first early detection of autism app launched

**In February 2016, our early detection of autism app ASDetect was released.**

It was built in 12 months with the support of Salesforce.org's 1-1-1 integrated philanthropy model, where the company donates 1% of its employee's time, its products and its equity to support the not-for-profit sector. A team of Salesforce engineers, designers and developers volunteered their time to build the app on the Salesforce platform.

With an intense media campaign by La Trobe's Media and Communication team, the launch received widespread coverage in radio, television and print media. To date, there have been 15,000 downloads across both iOS and Android versions, in 26 countries, with 7,000 children registered, and 5,000 assessments conducted. Two surveys of users (n = 208) indicated that 60% of parents whose children returned a 'high-likelihood' result arranged a follow-up appointment with their doctor, highlighting its immediate impact on families.

ASDetect has also raised awareness about early social-communication milestones, educating thousands of people in the community. User surveys revealed that 97% of caregivers reported ASDetect's videos were helpful in illustrating the behaviours, 90% knew more about social-communication milestones following its use, and 96% would recommend ASDetect to other parents.

ASDetect won the Victorian state and National iAward for Research and Development Project of the Year, was presented at Salesforce's Dreamforce event, attended by more than 70,000 people and was also one of 10 finalists in the Google Impact Challenge Australia receiving \$250,000 to translate ASDetect, expanding its reach to an additional 81 million children globally.



## GRANDPARENTS MORNING AND RESEARCH FOCUS AFTERNOON

These two events form part of our commitment to disseminate our research findings to the community. Consisting of research presentations followed by a lengthy question and answer session, these sessions are held biennially.

The Grandparents Morning featured the Chair of our Advisory Committee, Dr Sylvia Walton, Professor Cheryl Dissanayake, Director of OTARC, and Dr Nancy Sadka, who is both an OTARC staff member and parent of two children with autism.

The event was well received, with 72% of respondents rating it 'Excellent', and a further 32% rating it 'Good'.



“OTARC’s work in autism early detection was featured in the La Trobe University brand campaign.”

## Autism Research Focus Afternoon

The Research Focus Afternoon was attended by researchers, adults with autism, their families and service providers. It featured these presentations by OTARC staff and students:

Ms Cathy Bent, PhD Candidate:  
*Barriers to the Early Identification of Autism in Australia.*

Dr Mirko Uljarević, Autism CRC Fellow:  
*Transition from secondary school for students with Autism (an Autism CRC project).*

Dr Darren Hedley, Research Fellow:  
*The Dandelion Program: Employment of Adults with Autism funded by Hewlett-Packard Enterprises.*

Ms Ru Cai, Autism CRC Fellow:  
*Emotional regulation in Adults with Autism. 'Good'.*



# 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 Themes and 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. *Note: Current student projects are listed under Objective 3: Train the next generation of researchers.*

### RESEARCH THEME 1: EARLY IDENTIFICATION AND DIAGNOSIS OF AUTISM

Our work on Social Attention and Communication Surveillance (SACS) continues locally and overseas, with increased attention on how to scale this work to promote earlier identification and diagnosis in both high and low resource settings.

#### 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. Early identification of Autism in Tianjin, China

**Funding:** Australia-China Scientific Research Fund

Cheryl Dissanayake, Josephine Barbaro, Chongying Wang (Nankai University), Gongshu Liu and Jing Wang (Tianjin Women and Child Health Centre)

#### 3. Barriers and enablers to the early identification of Autism in Australia

Cathy Bent, Cheryl Dissanayake, Josephine Barbaro

#### 4. Reducing the age of diagnosis of Autism in Nepal: SACS-N

Rena Shrestha, Cheryl Dissanayake, Josephine Barbaro

#### 5. 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)

#### 6. Approach and withdrawal in toddlers with Autism and developmental delays: Unique behavioural profiles?

Darren Hedley, Mirko Uljarević, James A. Mulick (Ohio State University), Rose Nevill (Ohio State University and Nisonger Center, Ohio, USA)

#### 7. Developmental surveillance for Autism in early childhood education settings

Beth Mozolic-Staunton, Michelle Donnelly, Josephine Barbaro, Jacqui Yoxall (Southern Cross University)

#### 8. 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

#### 9. Social attention and communication surveillance in Japan

Emiko Kesuka (Gunma Prefectural Women's University), Hiroshi Miyauti (Takasaki University of Health and Welfare), Midori Okuno (Gunma Paz College), Cheryl Dissanayake, Josephine Barbaro

#### 10. Early identification of Autism in Japan

Emiko Kesuka (Gunma Prefectural Women's University), Hiroshi Miyauti (Takasaki University of Health and Welfare), Midori Okuno (Gunma Paz College), Cheryl Dissanayake, Robyn Young (Flinders University), Alison Lane (University of Newcastle), Darren Hedley, Josephine Barbaro

#### 11. Universal surveillance and early identification of developmental disorders

**Funding:** National Health and Medical Research Council

Valsamma Eapen (University of New South Wales), Katrina Williams (Royal Children's Hospital, Department of Developmental Medicine), Bin Jaludin (University of New South Wales), Cheryl Dissanayake, Sue Woolfenden (Sydney Children's Hospitals Network)



## RESEARCH THEME 2: BEHAVIOURAL AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

Our longitudinal studies illustrate the impact of early developmental processes on later behavioural and cognitive outcomes. This area also encompasses studies of emotional development (including temperament), social cognition and adaptive behaviour from early childhood to school age.

### 1. School-age outcomes of children with Autism who received the group-based early intervention ESDM program

Zoe Vinen, Cheryl Dissanayake, Giacomo Vivanti

### 2. School-age outcomes of children with an ASD diagnosed at age 2 years

Megan Clark, Cheryl Dissanayake, Josephine Barbaro

### 3. Comparing longitudinal outcomes of children with Autism diagnosed in toddlerhood and their families via two different referral systems

Felicity Peel, Deniz Obligin, Cheryl Dissanayake

### 4. Acoustic analysis of vocalisations of toddlers with Autism and developmental delay

Darren Hedley, Neil McLachlan (Music and Auditory Neuroscience Laboratory, University of Melbourne)

### 5. 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)

### 6. Verbal and non-verbal communication interaction in pretend play with children with Autism

Lesley Stirling (University of Melbourne), Cheryl Dissanayake

### 7. 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)



Drs Hedley and Vivanti present at IMFAR

## RESEARCH THEME 3: BIOLOGICAL MARKERS OF AUTISM: GENETIC MARKERS AND HORMONAL INFLUENCES

Data collection for the signature Autism CRC project, the Australian Autism Biobank, is progressing. OTARC is one of four sites nationally collecting phenotypic and genotypic data from children aged between 2 and 17 years and their parents. In addition, we are also involved in studies modelling features of autism in animals to better understand the genetic pathways involved in autism.

### 1. 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)*

### 2. Serotonergic systems, anxiety and insomnia in a mouse model of Autism

**Funding: La Trobe University Research  
Focus Area 'Living with 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. Prenatal and early postnatal risk factors in ASD

**Funding: National Health and Medical  
Research Council**

*Andrew Whitehouse (Telethon Kids Institute, University of Western Australia), Murray Maybery (University of Western Australia), Cheryl Dissanayake, Martha Hickey (Royal Women's Hospital, University of Melbourne), Craig Pennell (University of Western Australia)*



## RESEARCH THEME 4: FOCUS ON FAMILIES

Understanding families' experience of autism provides important information regarding how best to support affected families.

### 1. Development and evaluation of a Family Support Program for newly diagnosed children with an ASD

**Funding: Autism CRC**

*Stacey Rabba, Cheryl Dissanayake, Josephine Barbaro*

### 2. An exploratory study of the impact of autism symptoms on parenting

**Funding: Houston Fund**

*Cheryl Dissanayake, Amanda Richdale, Natasha Kolivas, Lindsay Pamment*

## RESEARCH THEME 5: LEARNING AND TEACHING: UNDERSTANDING LEARNING AND EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTIONS

The association between early social learning and non-social learning processes and later intellectual outcomes in typical and atypical development is poorly understood. As these processes are deeply intertwined in typical development, we are investigating and comparing two atypical populations – children with autism, who typically have reduced social learning capacity, and children with Williams Syndrome – whose engagement in social learning is usually enhanced.

A number of studies focus on early intervention for pre-school children with autism. We want to establish whether children receiving their Early Start Denver Model (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.

### 1. Early learning and intellectual development in Autism and Williams Syndrome

**Research Partners:** Macquarie University

*Peter Fanning, Giacomo Vivanti, Darren Hocking, Cheryl Dissanayake*

### 2. Social learning and imitation in children with Autism

**Funding:** Department of Social Services

*Giacomo Vivanti, Cheryl Dissanayake and the Victorian ASELCC team*

### 3. Evaluation of the Early Start Denver Model in a group setting

**Funding:** Department of Social Services

*Giacomo Vivanti, Cheryl Dissanayake, Kristelle Hudry, Sally Rogers (MIND Institute at UC Davis, USA) and the Victorian ASELCC Team*

### 4. Predictors of early intervention outcomes

**Funding:** Department of Social Services

*Giacomo Vivanti, Cheryl Dissanayake, David Trembath (Griffith University)*

### 5. What works for whom?

**Funding:** Department of Social Services

*Cheryl Dissanayake, Kristelle Hudry Karen McKinnon (Autism Partnership Australia), the Victorian ASELCC Team and Giacomo Vivanti*

### 6. Comparing learning outcomes of preschoolers with Autism in inclusive versus segregated settings: Testing a new model of early intervention delivery at the Victorian Autism Specific Early Learning and Care Centre

**Funding:** Department of Social Services

*Cheryl Dissanayake, Kristelle Hudry, Ed Duncan and the Victorian ASELCC Team*



## RESEARCH THEME 6: RELATED CONDITIONS: SLEEP AND OTHER DIFFICULTIES

Sleep difficulties and anxiety commonly occur in children and adults with ASD which can affect learning and behaviour and have a negative impact on family wellbeing. In adults these conditions impact on their everyday functioning in the community and work place. We aim to develop a better understanding of these comorbid conditions which will contribute to the development of better treatment approaches.

### 1. Exploration of the nature and development of clinical anxiety in individuals with Autism

*Lisa Coloca, Amanda Richdale, Mirko Uljarević*

### 2. Exploring the presentation and experience of anxiety in individuals with Autism in their transition from high school to adulthood: A qualitative study

*Andrew Halim, Amanda Richdale, Mirko Uljarević*

### 3. Does circadian rhythm disturbance explain insomnia in adults with high-functioning Autism?

*Emma Baker, Amanda Richdale, Agnes Hazi (School of Psychology and Public Health, La Trobe University)*

### 4. Emotion regulation in school leavers with Autism and its relationship with post-school outcomes

**Funding: Autism CRC**

*Ru Ying Cai, Amanda Richdale, Mirko Uljarević*

### 5. Factors affecting sleep in school leavers with Autism

*Kate Miller, Amanda Richdale, Mirko Uljarević*

### 6. Anxiety in school leavers: The role of intolerance of uncertainty, worry, Autism traits and repetitive behaviours

*Anshula Pem, Amanda Richdale, Mirko Uljarević*

## RESEARCH THEME 7: SUCCESS IN ADOLESCENCE AND ADULthood

A research program is underway on successful employment outcomes for adults with autism, being conducted in partnership with Hewlett Packard Australia, Specialisterne and the Australian departments of human services and defence. There are also a number of Autism CRC projects underway including the longitudinal project of school leavers with autism.

### 1. Comprehensive and unique profile of Australian school leavers with Autism

**An Autism CRC Project**

*Amanda Richdale, Ru Ying Cai and Mirko Uljarević, Torbjorn Falkmer (Curtin University), Nick Lennox (The University of Queensland), Julian Trollor (University of New South Wales)*

### 2. Successful employment outcomes for people with Autism

**Funding: HPE**

*Darren Hedley, Cheryl Dissanayake, Amanda Richdale, Mirko Uljarević*

### 3. Longitudinal study of adults with Autism

**Funding: Autism CRC**

*Julian Trollor (The University of New South Wales), Nick Lennox (The University of Queensland), Torbjorn Falkmer (Curtin University), Amanda Richdale, Mirko Uljarević*

### 4. 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)

**Funding: Autism CRC**

*Torbjorn Falkmer (Curtin University), Julian Trollor (The University of New South Wales), Nick Lennox (The University of Queensland), Amanda Richdale, Mirko Uljarević*

### 5. Health and wellbeing for adults

**Funding: Autism CRC**

*Nick Lennox (University of Queensland), Julian Trollor (University of New South Wales), Torbjorn Falkmer (Curtin University), Amanda Richdale, Mirko Uljarević*

### 6. Painting a picture: Profiles of school leavers with Autism

*Ru Ying Cai, Amanda Richdale, Cheryl Dissanayake*

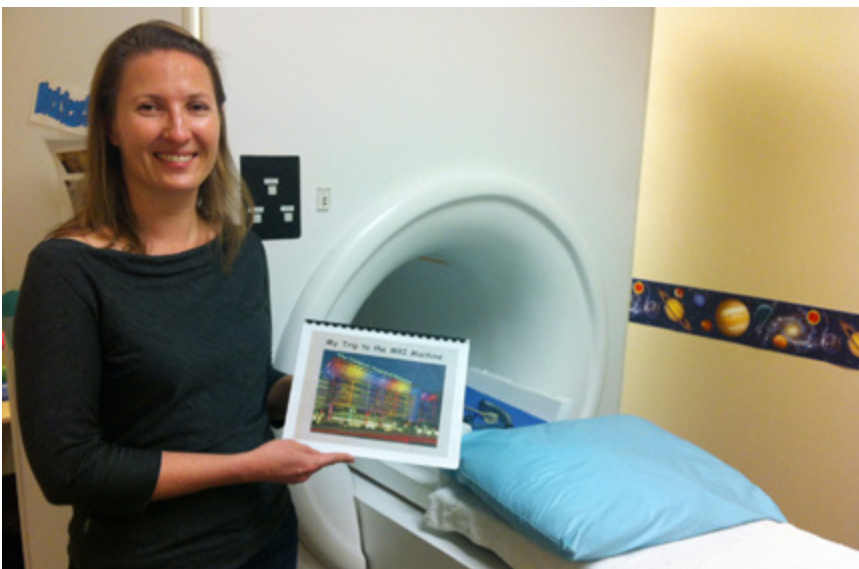
### 7. Transition from school to adult life for young people with Autism and their families

*Mirko Uljarević, Ru Ying Cai, Amanda Richdale*





**OTARC Staff and students with visitors.**  
Front, L to R: Michelle Hoogenhout, Dr Birgitta Spout Jansson, Dr Pat Howlin. Far right: Prof Kimberley Schreck



Dr Kristelle Hudry visited the Centre for Autism Research, UK

# PUBLICATIONS AND OUTPUTS

## JOURNAL ARTICLES

- Barbaro, J., and Dissanayake, C. (2016). Diagnostic stability of Autism Spectrum Disorder in toddlers prospectively identified in a community-based setting: Behavioural characteristics and predictors of change over time. *Autism*. DOI 10.1177/1362361316654084
- Barbaro, J and Halder, S. (2016). Early identification of Autism Spectrum Disorder: Current challenges and future global directions. *Current Developmental Disorders Reports*, 3, 67-74. DOI 10.1007/s40474-016-0078-6
- Bavin, E., Kidd, E., Prendergast, L., Baker, E., Dissanayake, C. (2016). Online processing of sentences containing noun modification in young children with high functioning autism. *International Journal of Language and Communication Disorders*, 51, 137-147. DOI 10.1111/1460-6984.12191
- Bent, C., Barbaro, J. and Dissanayake, C. (2016). Change in autism diagnoses prior to and following introduction of DSM-5. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*. DOI 10.1007/s10803-016-2942-y
- Birch, R.C., Hocking, D.R., and Trollor, J.N. (2016). Prevalence and predictors of subjective memory complaints in adult male carriers of the FMR1 premutation. *The Clinical Neuropsychologist*, 30, 834-848. DOI 10.1080/13854046.2016.1145905
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- Cai, R. Y. and Richdale, A. L. (2016). Educational experiences and needs of higher education students with Autism Spectrum Disorder. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 46, 31-41. DOI 10.1007/s10803-015-2535-1
- Carrington, S. J., Uljarević, M., Roberts, A., White, L. J., Morgan, L., Wimpory, D., Ramsden, C., and Leekam, S. R. (2016). Knowledge acquisition and research evidence in autism: Researcher and practitioner perspectives and engagement. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, 51-52, 126-134. DOI 10.1016/j.ridd.2016.01.011
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- Clark, M., Barbaro, J. and Dissanayake, C. (2016). Continuity and change in cognition and autism severity from toddlerhood to school age. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*. DOI 10.1007/s10803-016-2954-7
- Crea, K., Dissanayake, C., and Hudry, K. (2016). Proband mental health difficulties and parental stress predict mental health in toddlers at high-risk for Autism Spectrum Disorders. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*. DOI 10.1007/s10803-016-2861-y
- Evans, D. W., Michael, A. M., Uljarević, M., Lusk, L. G., Buirke, J. M., and Moore, G. J. (2016). Neural substrates of a schizotypal in typically-developing children: Further evidence of a normal-pathological continuum. *Behavioral Brain Research*, 315, 141-146. DOI 10.1016/j.bbr.2016.08.034
- Evans, D. W., Uljarević, M., Lusk, L. G., Loth, E., and Frazer, T. (2016). Development of two new dimensional measures of restricted and repetitive behaviors in parents and children. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*. <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0890856716318901>.
- Granich, J., Dass, A., Busacca, M., Moore, D., Anderson, A., Venkatesh, S., Duong, T., Vellanki, P., Richdale, A., Trembath, D., Cairns, D., Marshall, W., Rodwell, T., Rayner, M. and Whitehouse, A.J.O. (2016). Randomised controlled trial of an iPad based early intervention for autism: TOBY playpad study protocol. *BMC Pediatrics*, 16:167 DOI 10.1186/s12887-016-0704-9
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- Uljarević, M., Nuske, H., and Vivanti, G. (2016). Anxiety in Autism Spectrum Disorder (pp. 21-38). In L. Mazonne and B. Vitiello (Eds.). *Psychiatry symptoms and comorbidity in autism spectrum disorder* (pp.21-38). Springer. DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-29695-1
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## CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- Barbaro, J. *Utilising technology for the early identification of Autism in infants and toddler*. Invited keynote address at Autism New Zealand Conference, Wellington, New Zealand. 19 August.
- Barbaro, J. and Dissanayake, C. *Utilising technology for the early identification of Autism: Introducing ASDetect an early detection tool for parents*. Australasian Society for Autism Research Conference, Perth. 8 December.
- Dissanayake, C. *Autism in Australia: We can do better!* Invited Keynote Address at Australian Psychological Society Congress 2016. 14 September.
- Dissanayake, C., Barbaro, J. and Dan Bognar. *Early Detection of Autism via ASDetect*. Dreamforce Salesforce IT Conference, San Francisco, USA. 5 October.
- Cai, R., Richdale, A. and Uljarević, M. *Education and employment outcomes of an Australian cohort of young adults on the autism spectrum*. Australasian Society for Autism Research Conference, Perth. 8 December.
- Cai, R. Y., Uljarević, M., and Richdale, A. *The relationship between habitual emotion regulation, anxiety, and depression in adolescents and young adults on the autism spectrum*. World Congress of the International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Melbourne. 15 August.
- Chetcuti, L., Hudry, K., Grant, M. and Vivanti, G. *Imitation impairments in Autism Spectrum Disorder: A social motivation or motor-execution problem?* Australasian Society for Autism Research Conference, Perth. 8 December.
- Clark, M., Barbaro, J. and Dissanayake, C. *Does age of diagnosis contribute to differential cognitive and behavioural outcomes at school age?* Australasian Society for Autism Research Conference, Perth. 8 December.
- Dissanayake, C., *Early identification and Early Intervention for Autism in Infants and Toddlers*. Invited address at Second International Conference on Autism Rehabilitation in Beijing, China. 16 April.
- Dissanayake, C., *How best to facilitate educational transitions for children with autism? Earlier is better to smooth the journey*. Invited Address at Aspect Autism in Education Conference, Melbourne. 5 May.
- Dissanayake, C., Richdale, A., Kolivas, N. and Pamment, L. *An exploratory study of the impact of autism traits on parenting*. Australasian Society for Autism Research Conference, Perth. 8 December.
- Upson, S., Vivanti, G., Capes, K., Duncan, E., Feary, J., Pye, K., Rodset, D., Dissanayake, C., Hudry, K. and the Victorian ASELCC Team. *Early Start Denver Model (ESDM) delivered within a universal early childhood setting: A feasibility study with random assignment*. Australasian Society for Autism Research Conference, Perth. 8 December.
- Grant, M. and Hudry, K. *Predictors for parent wellbeing around the time of young child ASD diagnosis*. Australasian Society for Autism Research Conference, Perth. 8 December.
- Spoor, J. R., Hedley, D., Dissanayake, C., Richdale, A., and Uljarević, M. *The Dandelion program: Supporting meaningful work for individuals with Autism*. Invited panel at Academy of Management Annual Meeting: Making Organizations Meaningful. Anaheim, CA. 5 August.
- Hedley, D., Dissanayake, C., Richdale, A., Spoor, J., and Uljarević, M. *Long-term benefits of supported employment for adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)*. World Congress of the International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Melbourne. 15 August.
- Hedley, D., Dissanayake, C., Richdale, A., Uljarević, M., and Spoor, J. (2016). *Psychological and social impact of transition to employment in Autism*. SAP Autism at Work Summit: Academic Research Meeting. Pennsylvania, USA. 23 March.



Hedley, D., Dissanayake, C., Spoor, J., Uljarević, M., Richdale, A., Bartram, T., Moss, S., and Wilmot, M. *Long-term benefits of supported employment for adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)*. Australasian Society for Autism Research Conference, Perth. 8 December.

Hedley, D., Uljarević, M., Nevill, R., Brewer, N., Butter, E. and Mulick, J.A. *Challenging diagnostic classification in research and practice: Where to next?* Australasian Society for Autism Research Conference, Perth. 8 December.

Hollier, L., Dissanayake, C. and Barbaro, J. *Behavioural markers of Autism Spectrum Disorders identified in the Social Attention and Communication Study – Revised*. Australasian Society for Autism Research Conference, Perth. 8 December.

Hudry, K. and Vivanti, G.; Co-Leader (ECR): Melissa Maye. *Implementing and Evaluating Community-Based Early Intervention*. Session Chairs of Special Interest Groups at International Meeting for Autism Research, Maryland, USA. 11 May.

Hudry, K., Crea, K., and Dissanayake, C. (2016). *Parent stress and proband mental health as predictors of mental health in toddlers at high-risk for Autism Spectrum Disorders*. International Conference on Infant Studies, New Orleans, USA 26 May

Hudry, K. Invited panel at Victorian Autism Conference, Melbourne. 1 September.

Hudry, K., Maye, M., Green, J., Kasari, C., Mandell, D. and Vivanti, G. *Evaluating autism intervention: Where are the gaps and what should we do?* Australasian Society for Autism Research Conference, Perth. 8 December.

Hudry, K., Invited chair of symposium on *Innovating in Autism Intervention Research*. Australasian Society for Autism Research Conference, Perth. 8 December.

Iacono, T., Hudry, K., Spong, J., Dissanayake, C., Trembath, D. and Erickson, S. *Challenges for translating early intervention evidence into practice in autism community settings*. Australasian Society for Autism Research Conference, Perth. 8 December.

Richdale, A., Uljarević, M., Cai, R. Y., et al. *Autism in Adulthood*. Invited panel at Victorian Autism Conference, Melbourne. 1 September.

Richdale, A. *Autism CRC Core Program 3 update*. Invited panel at Victorian Autism Conference, Melbourne. 1 September.

Richdale, A., and Uljarević, M. *Does intolerance of uncertainty contribute to insomnia symptoms in young people with autism?* World Congress of the International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Melbourne. 15 August.

Oliver, C., Richdale, A., Totsika, V., Schreck, K., Uljarević, M., and Richards, C. *Sleep*

*Disorders*. Panel at World Congress of the International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Melbourne. 15 August.

Foley, K.-R., Uljarević, M., Richdale, A., and Trollor, J. *Self-reported quality of life of autistic adults living in Australia compared to non-autistic adults*. World Congress of the International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Melbourne. 15 August.

Uljarević, M., Cai, R. Y., Hedley, D., Foley, K. R., and Richdale, A. *Autism Spectrum Disorder in Adulthood*. Panel at World Congress of the International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Melbourne. 15 August.

Foley, K., Uljarević, M., Richdale, A and Trollor, J. *Autism symptoms are not associated with self-reported quality of life for adults on the autism spectrum in Australia*. Australasian Society for Autism Research Conference, Perth. 8 December.

Magiati, I., Lerh, J., Hollocks, M., Uljarević, M., Rodgers, J., McConachie, H., Ozsivadjian, A., South, M., Van Hecke, A., Hardan, A., Libove, R., Leekam, S., and Simonoff, E. *The measurement properties of the Spence Children's Anxiety Scale – Parent version in a large international pooled sample of young people with Autism Spectrum Disorder*. Australasian Society for Autism Research Conference, Perth. 8 December.

Richdale, A., Uljarević, M., Foley, K. and Trollor, J. *Does intolerance of uncertainty contribute to insomnia symptoms in adults on the autism spectrum?* Australasian Society for Autism Research Conference, Perth. 8 December.

Uljarević, M., Cai, R. and Richdale, A. *Sources of individual variability in well-being of parents of adolescents and young adults on the autism spectrum*. Australasian Society for Autism Research Conference, Perth. 8 December.

## POSTER PRESENTATIONS

Bent, C.A., Barbaro, J. and Dissanayake, C. *The role of professional responses to parental concern in predicting the timeliness of Autism Spectrum Disorder diagnosis*. International Meeting for Autism Research, Maryland, USA. 11 May.

Bent, C.A., Barbaro, J. and Dissanayake, C. *Impact of the new DSM-5 criteria for ASD on the number of children receiving autism specific funding: An analysis of change in incidence over time*. International Meeting for Autism Research, Maryland, USA. 11 May.

Blanken, L.M., Dass, A., Alvares, G., van der Ende, J., Maybery, M., Dissanayake, C., Pennell, C., Hickey, M., Verhulst, F., Tiemeier, H., Whitehouse, A. and White, T.J. *Fetal head growth in children with autistic traits and Autism Spectrum Disorder*. International Meeting for Autism Research, Maryland, USA. 11 May.

Cai, R.Y., Uljarević, M. and Richdale, A.L. *The relationship between habitual emotion regulation, anxiety, and depression in adolescents and young adults on the autism spectrum*. International Meeting for Autism Research, Maryland, USA. 11 May.

Chetcuti, L., Hudry, K., Grant, M. and Vivanti, G. *Imitation impairments in Autism Spectrum Disorder: A social motivation or motor-execution problem?* International Meeting for Autism Research, Maryland, USA. 11 May.

Clark, M., Barbaro, J. and Dissanayake, C. *Parent and teacher reported social skills and problem behaviours in school-age children with ASD*. Australasian Society for Autism Research Conference, Perth. 8 December.

Hedley, D., Uljarević, M. and Nevill, R.E. *Restricted and repetitive behavior as predictors of diagnosis and clinician confidence in toddlers at risk of ASD*. International Meeting for Autism Research, Maryland, USA. 11 May.

Hedley, D., Brewer, N., Nevill, R.E., Uljarević, M., Butter, E. and Mulick, J.A. *Clinician confidence, child characteristics and accuracy: Screening for Autism Spectrum Disorder in toddlers*. International Meeting for Autism Research, Maryland, USA. 11 May.

Hedley, D., Nevill, R.E., Uljarević, M., Butter, E. and Mulick, J.A. *Standardized ADOS-2 Toddler and Module 1 severity scores in a clinical sample*. International Meeting for Autism Research, Maryland, USA. 11 May.

Hudry, K., Crea, K. and Dissanayake, C. *Parental stress and proband mental health as predictors of mental health in toddlers at high-risk for Autism Spectrum Disorders*. International Meeting for Autism Research, Maryland, USA. 11 May.

Iacono, T., Hudry, K., Spong, J. L., Dissanayake, C., Trembath, D. and Erickson, S. *Challenges for translating early intervention evidence into practice in ASD community settings*. International Meeting for Autism Research, Maryland, USA. 11 May.

Magiati, I., Lerh, J.W., Hollocks, M.J., Uljarević, M., Rodgers, J., McConachie, H., Ozsivadjian, A., South, M., Van Hecke, A.V., Hardan, A.Y., Libove, R.A., Leekam, S.R. and Simonoff, E. *Assessing anxiety symptomatology in children with ASD using existing measures: Is the Spence Children's Anxiety Scale – Parent Version a useful tool?* International Meeting for Autism Research, Maryland, USA. 11 May.

Mozolic-Staunton, B., Barbaro, J., Donnelly, M. and Yoxall, J. *Right kids, right time, right services: Developmental surveillance in early childhood education settings*. International Meeting for Autism Research, Maryland, USA. 11 May.

Nuske, H.J., Hedley, D. and Dissanayake, C. *Atypical relationship between anxiety and approach-withdrawal behavior in young children with autism*. International Meeting for Autism Research, Maryland, USA. 11 May.



Uljarević, M., Crea, K., Dissanayake, C. and Hudry, K. *The role of temperament and broader autism phenotype in the prediction of toddlerhood externalising and internalising symptoms*. International Meeting for Autism Research, Maryland, USA. 11 May.

Uljarević, M., Cai, R.Y. and Richdale, A.L. *Predictors of somatic problems in parents of adolescents and young adults with autism*. International Meeting for Autism Research, Maryland, USA. 11 May.

## MEDIA ACTIVITY

**Dissanayake, C.**  
(2016, 19 January)  
*Alarm at autism doctor shopping for diagnoses*  
The Australian.  
<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/health/alarm-at-autism-doctor-shopping-for-diagnoses/news-story/688477e7b600bd9de7c51f36078a843a>

**Dissanayake, C.**  
(2016, 28 January)  
*Autistic students bullied with death threats, physical abuse: survey*  
ABC News.  
<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-01-28/autistic-students-bullied-survey/7119602>

**Dissanayake, C.**  
(2016, 28 January)  
*Autistic students easy prey for bullies, surveyed parents say*  
AM Program ABC Radio Melbourne.  
<http://www.abc.net.au/am/content/2015/s4395695.htm>

February 2016  
*ASDetect launch, Dr Barbaro interviewed for:*

- ABC Radio and TV news and current affairs shows in all capital cities and some regional centres.
- SBS TV news
- Commercial Radio and TV news and current affairs shows
- Newspapers in capital cities and regional centres, including;

*The Sunday Herald Sun, The Australian Financial Review, Brisbane Courier Mail, Sunday Mail in Brisbane and Adelaide, Geelong Advertiser, Sunraysia Daily, Mildura, Illawarra Mercury, Wollongong, Newcastle Herald, Newcastle, Barrier Daily Truth, Broken Hill, Launceston Examiner, Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga, Burnie Advocate, Burnie, Ballarat Courier, Bendigo Advertiser*

- Various online forums, such as;  
Kidspot Australia, Lifehacker – Life Australia – Health, Pulse IT, Science Meets Business, Your Tech Life, Tech Story, Openforum.org, MumLifeAustralia

**Barbaro, J.**  
(2016, 24 March)  
*Diagnosing Autism*  
Health Times  
<http://healthtimes.com.au/hub/autism-spectrum/63/practice/kk1/diagnosing-autism/1500/>

**Dissanayake, C.**  
(2016, 1 July)  
Interviewed about ASDetect winning iAward.  
774 ABC Radio Melbourne.

**Dissanayake, C.**  
(2016, 4 July)  
Interviewed about ASDetect winning iAward.  
2SER Radio Sydney.  
<https://www.2ser.com/component/k2/item/23507-asdetect-app>

**Barbaro, J.**  
(2016, 5 July)  
*Article about ASDetect winning iAward.*  
Preston and other Leader newspapers.  
(2016, 6 July)  
*Award-winning app gives early alerts about autism*  
Education Review.  
<http://www.educationreview.com.au/2016/07/award-winning-app-alerts-about-autism-early/>

**Dissanayake, C. and Bent, C.**  
(2016, 19 July)  
*Autism App a winner for kids on the spectrum*  
The Heidelberg Leader.

**Dissanayake, C.**  
(2016, 22 July)  
*Interviewed about ASDetect*  
Channel 10: Everyday Health (TV afternoon program)

**Barbaro, J.**  
(2016, 5 August)  
*Interviewed about early detection of autism*  
ABC Mildura Swan Hill Radio

**Barbaro, J.**  
(2016, 12 August)  
*Award winning Autism researcher visits Mildura*  
Mildura Weekly Newspaper

**Cai, R. and Richdale, A.**  
(2016, 13 September)  
*Mentions OTARC research. Students on the Spectrum*  
Inside Higher Ed.  
<https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2016/09/13/making-college-work-students-autism-essay>

**Dissanayake, C. and Barbaro, J.**  
(2016, 11 October)  
*This app wants to help parents diagnose autism early*  
Fast Company.  
<https://www.fastcoexist.com/3064455/this-app-wants-to-help-parents-diagnose-autism-early>

**Dissanayake, C. and Barbaro, J.**  
(2016, 1 December)  
*Early autism detection: How one cloud-based mobile app made a difference*  
Asia Cloud Forum.  
<http://www.networksasia.net/article/early-autism-detection-how-one-cloud-based-mobile-app-made-difference.1480557953>

**Dissanayake, C. and Barbaro, J.**  
(2016, December)  
*Early Detection for Autism in China*

Asia Rising (newsletter)  
[http://www.latrobe.edu.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/766637/asia-rising-3.pdf](http://www.latrobe.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/766637/asia-rising-3.pdf)

**Sadka, N.**  
(2016, 2 December)  
*ASDetect: an award winning smartphone app*  
Open Forum.  
<http://openforum.com.au/asdetect-award-winning-smartphone-app-early-detection-autism>

# SOURCES OF FUNDING

*We are immensely thankful to all of our wonderful donors, who support our work in such a significant way.*

## Donations

A total of **\$722,622** was received in donations

### Principal individual donor

Mrs Olga Tennison OAM

### Organisational donor

The APEX Foundation, chaired by Mr Stephen Bigarelli of the City of Ballarat, awarded OTARC a grant of \$7,000 from its Charitable Trust for Autism Research.

### Other individual donors

Dr Sylvia Walton AO  
Ms Jaclyn Mitchell  
Miss My-Nhan Nguyen  
Mr Benjamin Turner  
Ms Angela Smith  
Mr John Aitken  
Mr Andrew Eddy  
Dr Madeleine Hamilton  
Ms Melanie Wheeler  
Mr Carmelo Imbesi



Mr Stephen Bigarelli, (fourth from right) Chairman of the Apex Foundation visited the ASELCC (Vic) and OTARC.

## RESEARCH GRANTS

### NEW RESEARCH GRANTS

Hocking, D **Australian Research Council DECRA fellowship** (2016–2018) *Multitasking effects on motor control in childhood through adolescence.*

Uljarević, M **College of Science, Health and Engineering Fellowship for Early Career Researchers Award** (2016) *Exploring patterns and heritability of different types of restricted and repetitive behaviours in families with and without neurodevelopmental disorders.*

Hudry, K **La Trobe University Research Focus Area 'Building Healthy Communities'** (2016) *Building local research expertise for community-based early autism intervention.*

Spoor, J., Hedley, D., Dissanayake, C., Richdale, A., Bartram, T., and Uljarević, M. **La Trobe University Research Focus Area 'Building Healthy Communities'** (2016) *Employee support for workplace inclusion of adults with Autism.*

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

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?'*

Hudry, K., Barbaro, J., Iacono, T., Dissanayake, C. Maybery, M. (University of Western Australia) and 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.*

Hudry, K., Barbaro, J., Iacono, T., Dissanayake, C., Slonims, V. (Kings College London), Green, J. (University of Manchester) and Whitehouse, A. (Telethon Kids Institute). **La Trobe University Research Focus Area 'Understanding Disease' Partnership Grant** (2016) *Randomised-controlled trial of very early intervention for infants showing early social-communication delays.*

Hedley, D., Richdale, A., Dissanayake, C., and Uljarević, M. **La Trobe University Research Infrastructure Capital Funding** (2016) *Equipment grant*

Hackworth, N., Nicholson, J., Dissanayake, C., Hudry, K. and Buzhardt, J. **La Trobe University Research Focus Area 'Transforming Human Societies'** (2016) *Visiting Research Fellowship for A/Prof. Buzhardt to La Trobe University.*

Dissanayake, C., Stirling, L., Sofronoff, K., Trembath, D., and Westerveld, M. **Autism CRC** (2016) *How was your day?*

Dissanayake, C., Richdale, A., Hudry, K., and Uljarević, M. **La Trobe SHE College Funds.** *Visiting scholar Dr Illiana Magiati*

### PHILANTHROPIC GRANTS

**Salesforce.org:** \$215,000 to build a digital employment hub for adults with Autism

**Google.org:** \$250,000 to translate ASDetect in two languages

### ONGOING RESEARCH GRANTS

Dissanayake, C., Richdale, A., Hedley, D. and Uljarević, M. **Hewlett Packard Australia** (2015–2018) *Successful employment outcomes for people with Autism Spectrum Disorder.*

Cornish, K., Gray, K., Hocking, D., Ellis, K., Harcourt, J. and McIntosh, K. **Australian Research Council Linkage Projects Scheme** (2012–2016) *Enhancing learning capacity and academic outcomes using novel game technology in primary school children with developmental disabilities*

Trembath, D. **National Health and Medical Research Council Early Career Fellowship** (2014–2016) *Improving Treatment Outcomes for Children with Autism: Translating Intensive 1:1 Treatment into a Group-Based Community Model*

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

Richdale, A., Falkmer, T., Lennox, N. and Troller, J. **Autism CRC Core Program 3** (2014–2017) *Project 3.016RC, Unique ASD Profile School Leavers.*

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

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

Hocking, D., Vivanti, G., Bishop, N., Iacono, T., Dissanayake, C. and Kent, S. **La Trobe University Research Focus Area 'Understanding Disease'** (2015–2016) *Understanding the role of oxytocin in shaping social affiliation and social processing in young children with autism and Williams syndrome.*

Vivanti, G., Dissanayake, C. **National Disability Insurance Scheme** (2015–2016) *Benefits of inclusion for children with ASD.*

# 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 in 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*

**Professor Edith Bavin**

*School of Psychology and Public Health*

**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 Torab Torabi**

*School of Engineering and Mathematical Sciences*

#### Victoria

**Dr Angelika Anderson**

*Faculty of Education, Monash University*

**Associate Professor Jeffrey Craig**

*Early Life Epigenetics, Department of Paediatrics, University of Melbourne*

**Dr Susan Douglas**

*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*

**Dr Cathy Marraffa**

**Professor Katrina Williams**

**Professor Jill Sewell**

*The Royal Children's Hospital (Centre for Community Child Health and Department of Developmental Medicine)*

**Ms Karen McKinnon**

**Ms Chris Stocco**

**Ms Kathleen Franks**

*Autism Partnership Australia*

**Dr David Godler**

**Associate Professor Howard Slater**

*Murdoch Children's Research Institute, University of Melbourne*

#### National

Australasian Society for Autism Research (ASfAR) ASfAR was formally established in 2011 as a result of an OTARC initiative. Its membership has steadily grown and now includes international members from the Asia Pacific Region.

**Dr Jill Ashburner**

*Autism Queensland*

**Ms Kate Bowen**

*Liverpool Hospital, Sydney*

**Professor Neil Brewer**

*School of Psychology, Flinders University*

**Dr Debra Costley**

*Aspect NSW*

**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*

**Dr Evan Kidd**

*Department of Psychology, The Australian National University*

**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*

**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*

**Australian Council of Educational Research (ACER), including Dr Julie Kos****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*

**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*

**Professor Jonathan Green**

*School of Medicine, University of Manchester, UK*

**Dr Teodora Gliga**

*Centre for Brain and Cognitive Development, Birkbeck, University of London, UK*

**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 Terry Katz**

*Department of Pediatrics, University of Colorado School of Medicine, Denver, USA*

**Professor Emiko Kezuka**

*Gunma Prefectural Women's University, Japan*

**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**

*Autism Treatment Network and Vanderbilt University, 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*

**Professor Kimberley Schreck**

*School of Behavioral Sciences and Education, Pennsylvania State University, Harrisburg, 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 organisations. 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 diagnosis and identification of pathways to autism
- Associate Professor Amanda Richdale and Dr Mirko Uljarević are studying assistance for post-school students with autism to succeed in tertiary education.



# INDUSTRY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

## Salesforce.com

*Salesforce.com is the world's leading CRM (Customer Relations Management) provider*

Through its philanthropic arm, Salesforce.org, OTARC received:

- significantly price-reduced licences to a range of software;
- donated time by a team of 11 engineers and developers across four continents to build Android and iOS versions of ASDetect, our early detection of autism app
- \$215,000 to build a digital employment hub for adults with Autism. This award was part of Salesforce.org Force for Change Grant Program. 136 organisations from around the world applied, 22 were shortlisted, with 8 making it through to the finals. OTARC was the only Australian finalist.

## Hewlett-Packard Australia

*Sites at Department of Human Services and Department of Defence*

In partnership with Hewlett-Packard Australia, the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Department of Defence, the Dandelion Program provides skilled employment for people with Autism in Australia. In a world first, OTARC has signed a research partnership with Hewlett Packard Australia and DHS to understand how having a job impacts the lives of those with Autism.

## 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 OTARC.

## AMAZE (Autism Victoria)

We have been working with AMAZE on a project funded by the Houston Trust to develop a support package for parents with Autism.

## Victorian and Tasmanian Maternal and Child Health Services

We have been working within the Victorian MCHS and Tasmanian CHaPS systems to monitor the social-communication development of approximately 20,000 children aged between 11 and 30 months to further our work in the early identification of autism.



# VISITORS



OTARC Staff with members of SEAMEO SEN, including Dr Yasmin Hussein (front, second from right)

“SEAMEO SEN is based in Malaysia with a widespread membership from 11 countries in the region.”

## SOUTHEAST ASIAN MINISTERS OF EDUCATION ORGANIZATION (SEAMEO SEN)

Six representatives from the Regional Centre for Special Education visited to learn about our research and programs of assessment, diagnosis, and intervention.

SEAMEO SEN is based in Malaysia with a widespread membership from 11 countries in the region.



Professor Dissanayake receives a gift from Dr Yasmin Hussain

## Victorian State Government, Family and Community Development Committee for the Parliamentary Enquiry into Autism

Ms Maree Edwards (Chair) MLA for Bendigo West, Ms Cindy McLeish (Deputy Chair) MLA for Eildon, and three Departmental staff visited to learn about early identification and diagnosis of autism, early intervention and the Early Start Denver Model.



## TIANJIN WOMEN AND CHILD HEALTH SERVICE, CHINA

Jing Wang and Dr Gongshu Liu – our Chinese collaborators, visited to analyse the data we have collected to date on over 10,000 babies monitored on the SACS-C.





## TOYOTA CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER, TOYOTA, AICHI PREFECTURE, JAPAN

Professor Osamu Takahashi led a delegation of psychiatrists, psychologists and other service providers from Aichi, Tottori and Okinawa Prefectures.

### Associate Professor Jeffrey Craig

Honorary Principal Research Fellow and Deputy Director, Australian Twin Registry, Murdoch Children's Research Institute and University of Melbourne Early Life Epigenetics, Environmental and Genetic Epidemiology Research Group.

### María Magán Maganto

PhD candidate Grupo Infoautismo, Universidad de Salamanca, Spain visited to discuss with Dr Josephine Barbaro collaboration on early detection of autism.

### Dr Simon Moss

School of Psychological Sciences, Charles Darwin University, visited to plan studies on employment and adults with ASD. Dr Moss is interested in the theoretical underpinnings of bias associated with employing people with disabilities, so his interests overlap with the aims and goals of our Success in Adulthood research team.

### Dr Ingalll Gimbler-Berglund

Lecturer, Jonkoping University, Sweden: discussed preoperative procedures for children with Autism.

### Dr Santoshi Halder

Assistant Professor in the Department of Education University of Calcutta, India: visited for four months as an Endeavour Australia-India Education Council Research Fellow, during which time she wrote a number of review papers, visited local autism services and presented at other tertiary institutions.

### Michelle Hoogenhout

University of Cape Town, South Africa, PhD Candidate.

### Professor Pat Howlin

Professor of Clinical Child Psychology at the Institute of Psychiatry, London and the University of Sydney.

### Dr Sofia Mavropoulou

Senior Lecturer in Special and Inclusive Education. University of New England, Armidale.

### Dr Birgitta Spout Jansson

University of Gothenburg, Sweden: Senior Lecturer, Department of Social Work.

# OBJECTIVE 3

## Train the next generation of researchers

A total of 27 students (Honours, Masters, Doctoral, and PhD candidates) undertook their research at the Centre during 2016, with eight successfully completing their research studies.

### SUCCESSFUL COMPLETIONS IN 2016

#### PhD

**Emma Baker**

Supervisors: Associate Professor Amanda Richdale and Agnes Hazi.

#### Doctor of Clinical Psychology

**Rebecca Kam**

Supervisors: Dr Kristelle Hudry and Dr Annukka Lindell.

#### Honours

All 2016 Honours students successfully completed.

### CURRENT STUDENTS

#### PhD Candidates

**Cathy Bent**

Supervisors: Professor Cheryl Dissanayake and Dr Josephine Barbaro.

**Ru Ying Cai**

Supervisors: Associate Professor Amanda Richdale and Professor Cheryl Dissanayake.

**Lacey Chetcuti**

Supervisors: Dr Kristelle Hudry and Dr Mirko Uljarević.

**Megan Clark**

Supervisors: Professor Cheryl Dissanayake and Dr Josephine Barbaro.

**Lisa Coloca**

Supervisors: Associate Professor Amanda Richdale and Dr Mirko Uljarević.

**Hiroko Kawashima**

Supervisors: Professor Cheryl Dissanayake and Dr Darren Hedley.

**Eva Laurent**

Supervisors: Associate Professor Amanda Richdale, Dr Darren Hedley and Professor Cheryl Dissanayake.

**Stacey Rabba**

Supervisors: Professor Cheryl Dissanayake and Dr Josephine Barbaro.

**Rena Shrestha**

Supervisors: Professor Cheryl Dissanayake and Dr Josephine Barbaro.

#### Doctor of Clinical Neuropsychology Candidates

**Peter Fanning**

Supervisors: Dr Giacomo Vivanti, Dr Darren Hocking and Professor Cheryl Dissanayake.

#### Doctor of Clinical Psychology Candidates

**Megan Grant**

Supervisors: Dr Kristelle Hudry and Professor Cheryl Dissanayake

**Maria Lambrou**

Supervisors: Associate Professor Amanda Richdale and Associate Professor Nick Kazantsis.

**Zoe Vinen**

Supervisors: Professor Cheryl Dissanayake and Dr Giacomo Vivanti.

#### Masters of Science Candidate

**Stefanie Dimov**

Supervisors: Dr Kristelle Hudry and Professor Teresa Iacono.

#### Master of Clinical Psychology Candidates

**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.

**Emily Zou**

Supervisor: Dr Darren Hocking.

#### Honours Candidates 2016

**Rebecca Deverell**

Supervisor: Associate Professor Amanda Richdale.

**Itahiza Garcia**

*Parent influences in childhood internalising and externalising difficulties in children with ASD.*

Supervisor: Dr Kristelle Hudry.

**Katherine Natoli**

*Biases when hiring employees with a physical and/or mental disability.*

Supervisors: Dr Mirko Uljarević and Dr Darren Hedley.

**Ingrid Newman**

*Effects of arousal on face recognition performance in Autism.*

Supervisor: Dr Darren Hedley.

**Rachael Rankin**

*Barriers to parents of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder seeking support for themselves.*

Supervisor: Dr Kristelle Hudry.

**James Searles**

*An examination of the cognitive and behavioural differences in toddlers with ASD from multiplex and simplex families.*

Supervisor: Professor Cheryl Dissanayake.

#### Workplace Integrated Learning Student

**Olivia Digiglio**

La Trobe University Work Integrated Learning program student spent 12 weeks as an intern with OTARC. A third-year Public Health major, she worked on creating summaries and website articles on OTARC research.

## SUPPORTING SUCCESS FOR OUR STUDENTS

Laboratory Manager, Alexandra Aulich and other staff arrange regular meetings for OTARC students at all levels to receive training and information on relevant topics to support them in their research. Topics included Ethics, Statistics and analysis, Data collection and management, Writing up. Students also attend the OTARC Research Seminars.

### Thanks to our volunteers

A total of 300 volunteers registered for tasks ranging from administration and research support to event planning and fundraising. Volunteers support us in various capacities and we are very grateful to them all. We send a big vote of thanks to the following volunteers who provided significant support to a range of our studies during 2016.

Dilan Alakoc  
Coree Brewster-Devlin  
Danni Calafiore  
Lauren Cameron  
Jade Gatto  
Paula Grogan  
Lana Harris  
Maryam Haghiran  
Amanjit Kaur  
Siobhan Korbut  
Akenesi Lui  
Natalie Mizzi  
Julian Maccioni  
Andrea Mills  
Allison McBride  
Betty Nellanikat  
Vi Nguyen  
Elyse Profenna  
Imogen Redden  
Ensu Sahin  
Jessica Tsoutsoulis  
Phoebe Thomson  
Yvonne Tran  
Kylie Wood



PhD Student Cathy Bent presents her findings at IMFAR

# 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	
Emma Baker	OTARC PhD student	Does circadian rhythm disturbance explain insomnia in adults with high-functioning ASD?	January
Dr Kristelle Hudry	OTARC Research Fellow	How do parent behaviours help children with autism?	March
Dr Lauren Hollier and Eva Laurent	OTARC Research Fellow and OTARC PhD student	a. The importance of sex steroid research b. Cognitive profiles associated with STEM occupations in autism	April
Prof Teresa Iacono	Prof. of Rural and Regional Allied Health, La Trobe University	Translating evidence into low resource settings: Understanding the context and potential for telehealth	June
Dr Iliana Magiati	Assistant Professor, National University of Singapore	Anxiety, ASD and autistic traits: Phenomenology, measurement and mediators	July
Dr Phillippe Chouinard	Lecturer, La Trobe University	The use of the autism-spectrum quotient in typically developing individuals as a model for understanding visual cognition in ASD	August
Dr Sofia Mavropoulou Michelle Hoogenhout Dr Birgitta Jansson	Senior Lecturer in Special and Inclusive Education, University of New England, Armidale.; PhD Candidate, University of Cape Town; Senior Lecturer, University of Gothenburg, Sweden	Research round table	Special meeting: August
Prof Kimberly Scheck	Professor of Psychology, Penn State Harrisburg, USA	Propaganda and persuasion: The campaign against science in autism treatment	August
Dr Jonathan Delafield-Butt	Senior Lecturer in Early Years, University of Strathclyde, UK	Autism as a neuro-motor developmental disorder: New routes to therapeutic practice	September
Dr Jay Buzhardt	Associate Research Professor, LifeSpan Institute, Kansas City USA	Breaking down the distance barrier: Using technology to spread effective intervention practices to children and families in remote areas	October
Dr Matthew Hale and Dr Emma Sciberras	Lecturer, La Trobe University and Lecturer, Deakin University and Honorary Research Fellow at Murdoch Children's Research Institute	a. Comorbidities in ASD: Insight from preclinical models b. Understanding the relationship between ADHD and language difficulties	November



Nepalese Female Health Volunteers attend Dr Barbaro's early autism detection training.



# OBJECTIVE 4

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

We continue to engage in research translation and knowledge transfer. We offer training and information sessions to parents and practitioners as well as hosting events for the broader community.

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### ASDETECT LAUNCH

Our world-first early detection of autism app for parents and caregivers was launched in February 2016. For more details, see the Highlights section.

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### AUTISM-SPECIFIC EARLY LEARNING AND CARE CENTRE

2016 was another busy year at the Victorian Autism Specific Early Learning and Care Centre (ASELCC). We had some significant changes in staff, with both Dr Kristelle Hudry (Senior Research Fellow) and Katherine Pye (Senior Coordinator) settling into the vibrant and capable team. We were very pleased to be awarded funding for three years for two major studies, both of which are now underway. The first of these builds on the NDIS funded 2015 pilot of Social Participation, comparing outcomes of early intervention (Early Start Denver Model / ESDM) delivered within mainstream early childhood playrooms and autism-specific playrooms. The second funded study is designed to examine children's responses to the ESDM and Discrete Trial Training Applied Behaviour Analysis programs to determine whether we can predict which children will respond better to one or other program? Our partner in this *What works for whom?*

study is Autism Partnerships, who run the Little Learners programs in North Melbourne and Geelong. A third study was also approved for funding from the Department of Social Services (DSS), to investigate the value of parent coaching in ESDM as an addition to other interventions, to commence in 2017.

The ASELCC team continues to grow. Towards the end of the year, we submitted applications to the MIND Institute for our staff to undergo ESDM Trainer apprenticeships, which will increase our capacity for research and service provision. This capacity will be fundamental in the ASELCC's sustainability beyond the end of 2018, when the current operational funding will cease, and we will move into our longer term model of research and intervention. As always, there are exciting and innovative times ahead.

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### 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 three ADOS training courses in January (16 attendees), June (16 attendees) and September (9 attendees).

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

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### 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.

# PROFESSIONAL PARTICIPATION

## Invited Talks and Workshops

**Barbaro, J.**

**Social Attention and Communication Surveillance (SACS) workshops.**

Dalwood Children's Services, NSW.

27 June.

Mudgee Health Service, NSW,

28 June.

**Barbaro, J.**

**Autism: Advances in early detection through the Social Attention and Communication Surveillance (SACS) program.**

La Trobe University Mildura Alumni

Presentation and Stakeholder Luncheon.

4 August.

**Barbaro, J.**

**Identifying the signs of Autism Spectrum Disorder in infants and toddlers.**

Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal.

7 November.

**Barbaro, J. (co-authors: Shrestha, R., Dissanayake, C.)**

**Early identification of Autism in Nepal.**

Australia Awards South and West Asia Regional Alumni Workshop, AutismCare Nepal Society, Kathmandu, Nepal.

9 November.

**Dissanayake, C., Richdale, A**  
**Panel members**

**La Trobe University Bold Ideas Series: Autism: Disability or Ability?**

Hosted by former ABC journalist Francis Leach, this free public event concerned how to promote a meaningful life for people with autism.

24 February.

Video available:

[youtube.com/watch?v=ojwsDvMedTY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ojwsDvMedTY)

**Dissanayake, C., Barbaro, J.**

**Early Identification of Autism in Tianjin China: Rewards and Challenges.**

China Studies Centre, La Trobe University.

17 June.

**Dissanayake, C.**

**Early identification and diagnosis: A model for promoting better outcomes for 1–2 % of Victorian children.**

Presentation at the Parliamentary Inquiry into Services for Autism Spectrum Disorders.

29 August.

**Dissanayake, C.**

**Autism: Changing practice in the early years.**

La Trobe University Research Week.

5 September.

**Dissanayake, C.**

**Autism in early childhood: An Australian perspective.**

Stanford University, Autism Research Group, USA.

7 October.

MIND Institute, UC Davis Research Seminar Series, USA.

8 October.

**Dissanayake, C., Hudry, K.**

**Professional Development Workshop held by the Department of Psychology and Counselling on Childhood and Development Disorders.**

La Trobe University.

2 November.

Enhancing the developmental trajectories of children with Autism (CD); Intervening early for Autism Spectrum Disorders (KH).

**Dissanayake, C.**

**Early Identification of Autism in Tianjin, China. La Trobe Asia Science Seminar.**

La Trobe University.

3 November.

**Dissanayake, C.**

**Dandelion Research Program.**

Dandelion Defence Steering Group, Australian Department of Defence.

11 November.

**Hedley, D., Uljarević, M., Nevill, R.**

**The journey from screening to employment in Autism.**

TEACCH Center, Charlotte, NC, USA.

16 May.

Nationwide Children's Hospital Child Development Center, Ohio, USA.

19 May.

**Hedley, D.**

**The Dandelion Program: Transition to work.**

Autism CRC Program 3 meeting.

23 November.

**Hudry, K.**

**Informal presentation on research interests and career pathway.**

Deakin Child Study Centre Social Hub Series.

10 August.

**Hudry, K.**

**Parent-mediated therapy for early social-communication delays.**

Presentation at the Brainview Scientific Day, Centre for Brain and Cognitive Development, Birkbeck College, London, UK.

5 September.

**Hudry, K., Leslie Tucker, Dr Chloe Taylor**

**Early signs of autism in infancy and toddlerhood.**

Workshop for the BASIS/STAARS Team, Centre for Brain and Cognitive Development, Birkbeck College, London, UK.

7–8 September.

**Hudry, K.**

**How malleable is autism?**

La Trobe University Seminar Series, Department of Psychology and Counselling.

28 April.

School of Psychological Science Seminar Series, University of Melbourne.

20 September.

# APPOINTMENTS



## PROFESSOR CHERYL DISSANAYAKE

- Editorial Boards of the Autism Research and Journal of Neurodevelopmental Disorders
- Executive Committee of the Australasian Society for Autism Research (ASfAR), Vice President
- Convenor of the ASD Research Group in Victoria
- NDIA Autism Early Intervention Stakeholder Panel
- Research and Developmental 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
- Executive Committee of the Understanding Disease Research Focus Area, La Trobe University



## ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AMANDA RICHDALÉ

- 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
- APS Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities and Psychology Interest Group
- ASD Transition to Tertiary Studies Advisory Committee, funded by the NDCO Special Projects Funding from the Commonwealth Department of Education



## DR JOSEPHINE BARBARO

- Board of Directors of the Sir Robert Menzies Memorial Foundation Limited
- Secretary of the Menzies Memorial Scholars' Association



## DR KRISTELLE HUDRY

- 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

# FINANCIAL REPORT

The Financial Report of the  
Olga Tennison Autism Research  
Centre as at 31st December 2016

<b>Income: for the period 1st January to 31st December 2016</b>		<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
Research income		683,861	1,064,111
Commercial income		97,840	12,633
Grants and donations		605,748	722,662
Internal income/transfers		20,914	177,533
Investment income	<i>Interest on monies held – including interest income from 2012 to 2016 that was credited to OTARC accounts in 2016 (refer to notes)</i>	77,765	190,803
Other income		1,405	21,614
<b>Total income</b>		<b>1,524,943</b>	<b>2,189,356</b>

## **Expenditure: for the period 1st January to 31st December 2016**

Academic (continuing and fixed-term staff)		861,453	931,742
Academic (casual)		261,459	232,037
Administrative (fixed-term staff)		267,075	217,461
Administrative (casual)		97,890	215,772
Other salary costs		37,053	-16,000
<b>Employee salaries and on costs</b>		<b>1,524,930</b>	<b>1,581,012</b>

Infrastructure	IT, maintenance, services	8,634	19,687
Depreciation		11,546	15,032
Professional fees	Externally contracted services	24,813	93,270
Student related	Scholarships, stipends, training	9,314	48,020
General operating	Consumables, stationery, minor equipment	39,508	73,980
Staff (non-salary) costs	Incl. travel, accommodation and incidentals	47,357	73,275
Sundry items and other expenses		29,491	19,348
<b>Non-salary costs</b>		<b>170,664</b>	<b>342,612</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>		<b>1,695,594</b>	<b>1,923,624</b>
<b>2015 carry-forward</b>			<b>-170,650</b>
<b>Net Operating Result</b>		<b>(170,650)</b>	<b>91,082</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>2016</b>
Research centre support		48,318
Research focus area support		16,052
Internal contributions and awards		177,533
<b>Total</b>		<b>241,903</b>

## **Notes**

<b>Interest Breakdown</b>	<b>190,803</b>
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



# 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 Elfriede Ihnen**

Research Fellow

**Dr Josephine Barbaro**

CRC Postdoctoral Research Fellow

**Dr Mirko Uljarević**

CRC Postdoctoral Research Fellow

**Dr Lauren Hollier**

Research Fellow

**Dr Darren Hedley**

BIOBANK Research Officer

**Melanie Muniandy**

BIOBANK Research Officer

**Dr Rachel Jellett**

Research Officer Early

Identification and Assessment

**Dr Nancy Sadka**

Employment Research Officer

**Mathilda Wilmot**

Speech Pathologist

**Veronica Rose**

## Administrative staff

Centre Manager

**Doug Scobie**

*Replaced Wojciech Nadachowski*

*October 2016*

Laboratory Manager

**Alexandra Aulich**

Administrative Officer

**Lisbeth Wilks**

Marketing Officer

**Mick Leahy**

Communications Officer

**Melinda Denham**

ASDetect Officer

**Natasha Kolivas**

Database Officer

**Lachlan Burnside**

Project Manager

**Sanjay Gopal**



OTARC Administrative Staff

## Research Assistants

Emma Baker

Cathy Bent

Megan Clark

Lacey Chetcuti

Perrin Date

Samantha Galea

Megan Grant

Siobhan Korburt

Eva Laurent

Rachael Rankin

Ensu Sahin

Phoebe Thomson

## Honorary members

**Dr David Trembath**

Senior Lecturer

Griffith University

**Dr Giacomo Vivanti**

Assistant Professor

Early Detection and Intervention Program

Drexel University, USA

**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

**Michael Burnside**

Principal Sales Engineer

Salesforce.com

**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**

Amagol Consulting Services

and Autism Noticeboard

**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**

Hewlett-Packard Enterprises

# GOVERNANCE

## ADVISORY COMMITTEE

*This committee met quarterly during 2016 to guide the direction and operation of OTARC.*



Dr Sylvia Walton, AO

### 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.

### Immediate Past Chair

**Professor Margot Prior, AO**  
Honorary Research Professor  
at University of Melbourne  
Patron of Amaze

**Professor Cheryl Dissanayake**  
Founder and Director of OTARC

**Professor Keith Nugent**  
Deputy Vice Chancellor and Vice President  
(Research) at La Trobe University

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

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

**Mr Doug Scobie**  
Centre Manager, OTARC (by invitation only)

**Dr Alan Watkinson**  
Director of Alumni and Advancement at  
La Trobe University (by invitation only)

**Ms Fiona Sharkie**  
CEO of Amaze

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

**Prof David Finlay**  
Chair University Human Ethics Committee  
and Director, La Trobe University

**Mr Clifford Picton**  
University Ombudsman, La Trobe University

**Dr Catherine Marraffa**  
Senior Paediatrician Developmental Medicine,  
Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne



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)

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