

MENTAL MOMENTS

Member Newsletter of the Margaret Roderick
Centre for Mental Health Research

SEPTEMBER 2026



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This Issue:

Centre Head:
[PAGE 02](#)

MRCMHR
Announcements
[PAGE 03](#)

MRCMHR Events and
Engagement
[PAGE 07](#)

Member Highlights
and Achievements
[PAGE 10](#)

Next Generation of
Researchers
[PAGE 14](#)

Introduction of our
Community Advisory
Group
[PAGE 16](#)

Member Publications
[PAGE 19](#)

Centre Head

PROFESSOR ZOLTAN SARNYAI

As we move into the final months of 2026, it is a pleasure to reflect on how far our Centre has come. The momentum we have built together is evident throughout this issue, and I hope you enjoy reading it as much as I have.

There is much to celebrate. Our inaugural Competitive Research Grant recipients and 2026 Seed Grant recipients are announced in this issue, representing a significant investment in research that will improve mental health outcomes across regional, rural and remote communities. Our members continue to be recognised for excellence. Congratulations to Dr Sam Teague on her Queensland Young Tall Poppy Award, Dr Amanda Krause on the JCU Research Mentoring and Culture Award, and our many colleagues who were finalists at the JCU Research Awards. We also celebrate our next generation of researchers, including Dr Natalie Conley on her PhD graduation and Alyssia Merrick as a FameLab Australia National Finalist.

Our July Research Symposium was a wonderful opportunity to share ideas and strengthen connections, while our engagement activities continue to expand from Lockhart River on Cape York to new international partnerships with the Duke Center for Global Mental Health and BION, the BlueMind Inter-Ocean Network. We have also launched our new website and welcomed the members of our Community Advisory Group, whose guidance will help keep our work relevant, inclusive and grounded in the communities we serve.

There is even more to look forward to. October is Mental Health Month, and we have an exciting program of events across Townsville and online, including public lectures with Prof Simon Rosenbaum and A/Prof Rachel Hill, as well as the *Which Way? Youth Mental Health* Public Forum. I warmly encourage you to attend, register early and share these opportunities with your colleagues, students and networks.

We will also be opening the second round of our 2026 Seed Grants, the 2027 Competitive Research Grants and our MRCMHR PhD Scholarships, so please stay tuned. If you have not yet joined the Centre, I encourage you to apply for membership.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this issue and to the achievements within it. It is a privilege to work alongside you as we build research that is rigorous, innovative and deeply relevant to our communities and the global tropics. Here's to the exciting months ahead!

Mental Health Month October 2026

Be part of the conversation this Mental Health Month. Join us at the below events across Townsville and online to hear from leaders in mental health research, advocacy and support.

12 Oct

Public Lecture with Prof Simon Rosenbaum

Professor - Psychiatry and Mental Health, UNSW

5:30 - 7pm | Townsville TBA

[Register here](#)

***Which Way?* Youth Mental Health Public Forum**

5:30 - 9pm

St James' Cathedral, Townsville

[Register here](#)



TAIHS

20 Oct

28 Oct

Public Lecture with A/Prof Rachel Hill,

President - Biological Psychiatry Australia

5:30 - 7pm | Townsville TBA

[Register here](#)

MRCMHR Announcements



Congratulations to our inaugural Competitive Research Grant recipients

This funding marks a major investment in research with the potential to improve mental health outcomes for people living in regional, rural and remote communities. We congratulate the successful teams and look forward to the impact their projects will have in addressing some of the most pressing mental health challenges facing our communities.

Sleep First: Co-designing and Evaluating Sleep Screening Pathways for Young People Receiving Mental Health Care

Andrew Livingstone, Suzy Munns, Jasneek Chawla, Fiona Hudson, Susannah Bond, Yaqoot Fatima, David Cunningham, Isha Shin, Ajay Kevat, Dustin Mills, Andrew Collaro

Growing Strong Together: A First Nations Implementation Science Framework for Expanding Social and Emotional Wellbeing Services Across the Lifecourse

Kris McBain-Rigg, Lorelle Benson, Tracy Tyching-Byquar

Predicting Mental Health Risk in Young Adults: An Accelerated Longitudinal Study to Develop Clinical Screening Tools

Liza van Eijk, Lena Oestreich, Cassandar Wannan, Lucy Albertella, Euijoon Ahn, Katie McMahon, Donna Rudd, Marc Chao, Been Suvarna, Lara Weirenga, Omer Shareef, Zoltan Sarnyai

Growing Up North (GROW-NQ): Establishing infrastructure for a digital pregnancy cohort for regional, rural, and remote child mental health

Sam Teague, Adrian Shatte, Klaire Somoray, Delyse Hutchinson, Stephanie Aarsman, Vicki Clifton, Kacey Lynch, Navjot Bhullar, Kendall George, Daniel Miller, Yoga Kandasamy, Jessica Muller, Helen Petsky

Congratulations to our 2026 Seed Grant recipients

This round of Seed Grants attracted a strong field of applications, highlighting the diverse and innovative research being undertaken by members. We extend our congratulations to this year's successful recipients and look forward to seeing these projects develop.

Improving Parental Mental Health and Engagement in Neonatal MRI: A Co-Designed Study:

Liza van Eijk, Katie Headrick, Margot Bosanquet, Anya Gordon, Pieta Shakes, Giovanna Iglesias

Salivary microRNA biomarkers for brain health in female rugby league athletes

Catherine de Hollander, Anthony Leicht, Jonathan Connor, Matthew Hiskens, Helen Anscomb, David Maiden

Mindful Ageing: A Control-Enhancement Mindfulness Pilot Intervention for Regional Australian Older Adults

Marc Chao, Wendy Li, Josephine Pryce, Timothy Leow, Fanny Yeung

Beyond 'Screen Time': Towards mechanism-informed digital media guidance for children's mental health

Sam Teague, Adrian Shatte, Daniel Miller, Klaire Somoray, Brian Law, Kristiana Pederick

How Are We Doing? Evidence Mapping Mental Distress in North Queensland

Daniel Miller, Amanda Krause, Navjot Bhullar, Debra Rickwood, Vidula Garde, Monique Du'cane, Abdul-Aziz Seidu

Cord blood screening for adverse in-utero neurodevelopmental outcomes

Donna Rudd, Liza van Eijk, Cassandra Wannan, Toni Merritt, Bruce Tonge, Christos Pantelis, Yoga Kandasamy, Rachel Hill, Suresh Sundram, Helena McInnes

Mapping Indigenous men/father focused mental health/CSEWB services and supports in remote Mount Isa: Foundational evidence for the NWQICSS Men's Place

Richard Violette, Catherine Season, Shaun Solomon, Rory Busch, Katlin Daley

MRCMHR Announcements

About MRCMHR >

Our People >

Our Research >

Funding Opportunities >

Margaret Roderick Centre for Mental Health Research

We're live! The Margaret Roderick Centre for Mental Health Research is excited to launch our new website!

www.jcu.edu.au/mrcmhr

Explore the latest Centre news, research highlights, events, funding rounds, and opportunities to connect with our researchers and community. Visit the site to learn more about our work and the impact we're making in mental health research across northern Australia and beyond.

Upcoming internal funding calls

This funding made possible through the generosity of the Margaret Roderick Trust. This support enables the Centre to develop capacity for mental health researchers and contribute to improved mental health outcomes for people in regional, rural and remote Australia.

While details are still being finalised, we encourage members to stay tuned for updates throughout the rest of the year. Keep an eye out for announcements in your inbox and future newsletters. To apply for most grants, you must be an MRCMHR member, so submit your membership application ([pg 21](#)) today!

2026 Seed Grants, round 2

For innovative mental health projects, helping researchers generate preliminary data and strengthen future external grant applications.

2027 Competitive Research Grants

To support substantial research projects tackling mental health challenges in regional and remote areas, fostering strong collaborations and delivering community impact, publications, and future funding opportunities.

MRCMHR PhD Scholarships

To support future leaders in mental health research, providing mentorship by leading researchers, access to multidisciplinary research networks, and opportunities to contribute to research that makes a real difference in mental health outcome.

Check out our currently funded projects here:

<https://www.jcu.edu.au/mrcmhr/our-research/currently-funded-projects>

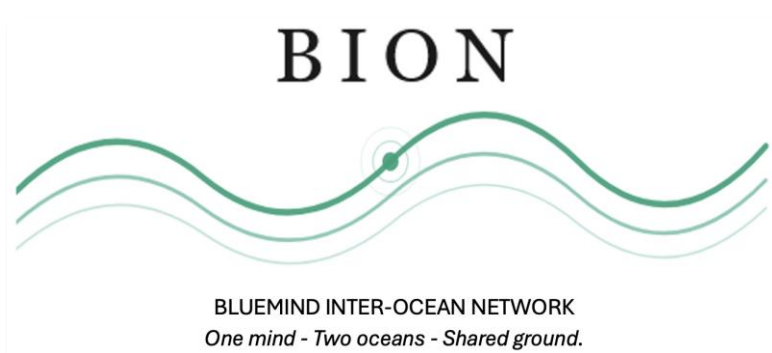
MRCMHR Announcements

Introducing BION: Connecting Mental Health Across Two Oceans

The Margaret Roderick Centre for Mental Health Research is pleased to support the development of BION, the **BlueMind Inter-Ocean Network**.

Guided by the theme “*One mind, two oceans, shared ground*”, BION is an emerging collaborative network connecting mental health researchers, practitioners and organisations across the Indian Ocean and Pacific regions. The network grew from conversations and workshops at the Oevaru Conference in the Maldives, where participants expressed strong interest in continuing collaboration across regions.

BION brings together representatives from Australia, the Maldives, Seychelles, Fiji, Papua New Guinea and the broader Pacific. Its members are connected with universities, mental health services and regional organisations, bringing diverse experience in mental health research, service delivery, education, training and community engagement.



The network aims to strengthen regional connections, share knowledge and opportunities, build research capacity and support collaborative projects that respond to the priorities of participating communities. Early areas of interest include climate change and mental health, regional training and professional development, research collaboration and stronger pathways for sharing local experience across island nations.

The MRCMHR will initially provide a digital home for BION. Planned activities include regular communications, shared resources, regional updates, publications and small starter grants supporting locally determined initiatives across participating sites.

Through BION, the Centre looks forward to helping build meaningful and lasting connections between people and organisations working to improve mental health across our shared ocean regions.

Keep an eye out for future communications regarding this initiative on MRCMHR channels.



MRCMHR Events and Engagement

Research Symposium 2026

In July, we welcomed researchers, clinicians, students and community members to the 2026 Margaret Roderick Centre Research Symposium. The symposium showcased innovative mental health research spanning nutritional psychiatry, global mental health, child development, sleep health, predictive modelling, psychosis research, and the wellbeing of transnational families.

We were privileged to hear from our keynote speakers, A/Prof **Wolfgang Marx**, and Prof **Bruce Tonge AO**, whose presentations highlighted emerging areas of mental health research and the opportunities to translate knowledge into meaningful impact.

The day also featured Early Career Researcher short talks, a poster session, and presentations from our invaluable community members, Uncle **Randal Ross** and Mrs **Wendy Fox**, bringing lived experience and community perspectives to the conversation. We are grateful to Dr **Emily Cherenack, PhD** from Duke University



(featured on [pg 9](#)), who joined us online to bring an excellent presentation on the cross-section of mental health and chronic disease.

A special congratulations to PhD candidate **Catherine de Hollander**, whose outstanding poster presentation was recognised with the Best Poster Award.

Most importantly, the symposium provided an opportunity to connect, share ideas, celebrate achievements, and strengthen collaborations across our growing mental health research community. As a virtual centre, these opportunities to come together in person are especially valuable.

A sincere thank you to all presenters, attendees, and organisers who contributed to making the day such a success.



MRCMHR Events and Engagement

Building connections in Lockhart River

Centre Director Professor Zoltan Sarnyai recently visited Lockhart River in remote eastern Cape York with the [Schools Up North \(SUN+\)](#) project.

The visiting team included Professor Ernest Hunter, a psychiatrist with a long history of working across Cape York and a scientific adviser to the Centre; SUN+ Project Manager Helen Travers; SUN+ education consultant and



Education Queensland school leader Danielle Williams; and the Centre's Dr Veronica Graham, who also works with the [University of Queensland's Brain Healthy Schools Project](#).

The visit provided valuable insight into the strengths, needs and context of Cape York communities. The team met with staff from the [Puuya Foundation's](#) early childhood centre, the principal and teachers of [Lockhart River State School](#), Lockhart River Council members, local store manager, and mental health clinicians visiting the community.

Professor Sarnyai presented a masterclass on the neuroscience of stress and brain energetics at Lockhart River State School, the second of such sessions in Cape York having [presented previously in Kowanyama](#). These sessions have been well attended by local teachers and representatives



from several community services, providing an opportunity to share knowledge and discuss its relevance within the local context.

The team also had an opportunity to spend time in the remarkable surrounds of Kutini-Payamu (Iron Range) National Park.

SUN+ continues to strengthen local partnerships between the school and the council-run [Lockhart River Art Centre](#). This work aims to create meaningful opportunities for young people to engage with Elders and local artists from the internationally recognised Lockhart River Art Gang—supporting connection, learning, culture and wellbeing.

More broadly, these local partnerships present opportunities to develop embodied, place-based approaches that support brain health through meaningful engagement, good nutrition and stress management.

By drawing on local relationships, knowledge, culture and place, such approaches can be grounded in the strengths and everyday realities of the community. For more information about SUN+ contact Helen (schoolsupnorth@gmail.com).



MRCMHR Events and Engagement

Duke Center for Global Mental Health

The MRCMHR is grateful to connect with The Duke Center for Global Mental Health (CGMH). We were lucky enough to have CGMH member Dr Emily Cherenack speak at our Research Symposium this year (featured on [pg 7](#)), and look forward to many more connections and collaborations in the future. We encourage our members to explore the CGMH's wide range of research projects, partnerships and training opportunities. From CGMH Clinical Research Coordinator, Ryan Parker:

“The CGMH is an interdisciplinary centre within the Duke Global Health Institute focused on reducing global mental health disparities through research, education, training, and partnership. The CGMH has more than 70 faculty affiliates based in departments throughout Duke University, conducting research and implementation programs across more than 40 countries, with particular emphasis on developing, adapting, and evaluating scalable and sustainable approaches to mental health care in diverse and resource-limited settings. You can learn more about our partners and projects [here](#)!

To get involved with the Duke CGMH, we encourage you to sign up for our general newsletter [here](#). Students and trainees can join our Global Mental Health Trainee group by filling out [this link](#), a growing network of over 200 trainees at all levels – from undergraduates to postdocs – all over the world. Collaboration requests or additional inquiries can be sent to dukegmh@duke.edu.”



Duke CGMH students, staff, and faculty



Members of the Duke East African Mental Health Collaborative in Kigali, Rwanda — July 2026

Member Highlights and Achievements

We are proud to celebrate the outstanding accomplishments of our MRCMHR members. This section showcases recent successes across research publications, media features, grant awards, and professional recognitions. These achievements reflect the dedication, innovation, and impact of our community in advancing mental health research and practice.

Spotlight



Dr Sam Teague recognised with Queensland Young Tall Poppy Award

Congratulations to Dr Sam Teague on being named a recipient of the [2026 Queensland Young Tall Poppy Award](#), recognising her outstanding contributions to research and science communication. The award celebrates early-career researchers who are making significant impacts through their research while engaging with the broader community.

In 2026, Sam has also secured substantial funding to advance research into child and adolescent mental health. This included major funding through the MRCMHR Competitive Research Grants and the JCU Grant Submission

Support Scheme to establish *GROW-NQ*, North Queensland's first longitudinal pregnancy and child development cohort. Sam also received an MRCMHR Seed Grant for *Beyond 'Screen Time': Towards mechanism-informed digital media guidance for children's mental health*, as well as

Further highlighting her growing international impact, Sam was invited to deliver a 'State of the Science' presentation to Canadian federal and provincial policymakers at a [Best Brains Exchange](#) on addressing screen use-related harms for children and young people. Her presentation informed discussions that contributed to the Canadian Government's announcement of the 'Safe Social Media Act' for children under 16.

An emerging leader in digital mental health research, these achievements highlight Sam's commitment to improving outcomes for children, young people and families. Congrats, Sam!

MRCMHR Members at JCU Research Awards

We also congratulate **Dr Amanda Krause** and **Professor Zoltan Sarnyai** on their outstanding achievements at the 2026 JCU Research Awards. Amanda received the Research Mentoring and Culture Award in recognition of her exceptional commitment to mentoring and supporting researchers, while Zoltan was awarded the Award for Research Excellence for his internationally recognised contributions to psychiatric neuroscience research.

Congratulations also to **A/Prof Wendy Li**, **Dr Marc Chao**, and **A/Prof Josephine Pryce**, who were finalists for the Research Impact Award, and **Dr Rachel Quigley**, who was a finalist for the Early Career Researcher Award.



Member Highlights and Achievements

CALD Lunch & Learn: Building Connection and Confidence

At JCU, students from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, including Indigenous students and other NESB students, comprise over 30% of the Fee Free University Ready (FFUR) (in the JCU context, Pathways) cohort. Although the diverse learner needs were clearly recognised, there were no program-specific activities to engage these students. The CALD Student Lunch & Learn (L&L) workshop series was developed with culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP), with the aim to build learner confidence and enhance students' connection with peers, the university, and the broader community, and hence academic success.

This ongoing project has been running since Trimester 3, 2024. Until the end of Trimester 2, 2026, 52 sessions have been delivered, with over 350 attendances and strong returning participation. The participants have since extended from only Pathways students to students at all levels across the university. Attendance data reveal two major patterns: a strong returning participation, and participant diversity. Across the three years, 52 of the 92 students participated more than once, while repeat visits accounted for 74.8% of all attendance.

The findings draw on attendance data, semi-structured interviews, filming material, and field notes kept by the program team. We observed that the students were initially shy and quiet but gradually warmed up and became much more outspoken, asking questions and sharing knowledge and experiences, creating a nurturing learning community.

As one student explained, *“Every connections is really important, so you won't feel alone. Don't be lonely or even isolated.”* Another reflected, *“The lunch workshops have fewer people compared to the lecture, so I can know exactly who to talk with... making friends.”*

Our research also reveals that students prioritise family and friends over university for connectivity, which further indicates the value of personal connectivity over organisational. The CALD L&L sessions, providing such an opportunity for students to establish continued personal connection with peers and staff, emerged as an important component to build university connectivity and academic confidence.

The positioning of the program as a safe place for university connectivity is reflected through the returning participation and the deepening friendships that formed between students. As an institution, our job is to create equitable opportunities for students, not just to access resources and opportunities, but also to contribute their knowledge and expertise to the new knowledge community.

The CALD L&L continues to run weekly in trimester 3, thanks to funding from the DVE's office. Please encourage your CALD (including international) students to join us. [More details here](#), or for more information, contact Mei via mei.li1@jcu.edu.au



Member Highlights and Achievements



A/Prof Denise Dillon
Acting Dean of Research
JCU Singapore

Rooted in Nature: The Science of Human Flourishing in Urban Environments

I recently accepted an invitation from James Yin, MSID-AD to join the speaker panel at a public seminar hosted at the Singapore Sustainability Academy.

Rooted in Nature: The Science of Human Flourishing in Urban Environments brought together several advocates of human flourishing including myself, sharing some of my research on nature connectedness and wellness outcomes through activities such as forest bathing and community gardening. I can feel a groundswell of support for human-nature connections stemming from decades of research validation, both theoretical and empirical. It seems there are good times ahead in healthcare and human flourishing as more of these initiatives take hold.



Our panel:

- 🌱 *Esther An*, Chief Sustainability Officer, CDL — TIME100 Climate Leader, SDG Pioneer 2018
- 🌱 *A/Prof Gan Wee Hoe*, CEO Eastern General Hospital
- 🌱 *A/Prof Denise Dillon*, Acting Dean of Research, James Cook University
- 🌱 *James Yin*, Co-founder & Director, V-Plus Agritech

- A/Prof Denise Dillon



Member Highlights and Achievements

Presentation at the International Congress for Applied Psychology 2026

Dr Jessica Oliva presented her research on Animal Ambassador programs and conservation education at the 31st International Congress of Applied Psychology (ICAP 2026) in Florence, Italy, in July.

Her presentation, *“The Animal Ambassador Effect on Human Pro-Environmental Knowledge, Attitudes, and Behaviours: A Scoping Review,”* synthesised evidence from 28 studies examining the effectiveness of Animal Ambassador programs across conservation education settings.

The review found that Animal Ambassador programs can increase conservation knowledge in both the short and longer term, although evidence for changes in attitudes and behaviours was more mixed. Educational design was important, with interactive education and simple behavioural prompts associated with greater outcomes.

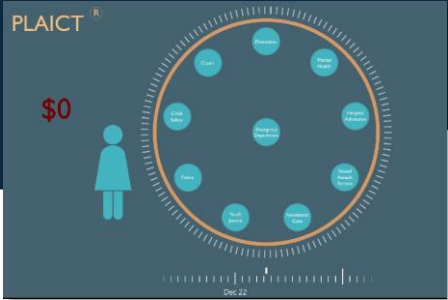
Dr Oliva was supported to attend ICAP 2026 through competitive College of Healthcare Sciences funding. The presentation forms part of her emerging research program in conservation psychology, with a particular focus on human–animal interactions and conservation behaviour.

Dr Oliva is now looking to extend this research within Far North Queensland, investigating how Animal Ambassador experiences can be designed to maximise lasting conservation outcomes and support positive human–animal relationships.



Dr Shane Pointing
Founder in Residence,
JCU Ideas Lab

Congratulations to **Dr Shane Pointing**, whose Societal Digital Twin project has been accepted for poster presentation at the Australia and New Zealand Society of Criminology Annual Conference in Adelaide this December. The project explores the complex intersections between offending, mental health and service provision, and this acceptance marks an exciting milestone in advancing the work.



Next Generation of Researchers at MRCMHR: HDR & ECR Focus

At MRCMHR, Higher Degree by Research (HDR) candidates and Early Career Researchers (ECR) are a vital part of our research community, bringing fresh perspectives, energy, and a deep commitment to advancing mental health knowledge. In this section, we celebrate their achievements, share their journeys, and highlight the innovative work they're doing to shape the future of research.

Spotlight



Dr Natalie Conley

Lecturer – Nursing and Midwifery
College of Healthcare Sciences
James Cook University

Celebrating a PhD Milestone

Congratulations to **Dr Natalie Conley**, who has officially graduated with a PhD from the University of Otago, New Zealand.

Natalie's doctoral research, *Being There is Not Enough: Positioning Nursing within the Intellectual Disability (Compulsory Care and Rehabilitation) Act 2003*, explores the critical role of nursing in supporting people with intellectual

disability, particularly those who come into contact with the justice system.

Her research highlights how the lack of education around caring for people with intellectual disability contributes to inequitable health outcomes and breaches of human rights. Natalie is passionate about improving healthcare education and ensuring this often-overlooked population receives the support and care they deserve.

Reflecting on her work, Natalie said, *"I want to close those inequity gaps and bring teaching about care for people with intellectual disability back into healthcare education curriculums."*

She emphasises that care for people with intellectual disability must be both person-centred and trauma-informed, noting that *"without understanding this, preventable deaths and incarceration will continue."*

A key focus of her work is advocating for the inclusion of intellectual disability care in healthcare education and demonstrating the vital contribution nursing and allied health professionals make in improving outcomes. Natalie hopes her research will help close these gaps and inspire others to join the effort to create a more equitable and inclusive healthcare system. As she explains, *"Nursing is not just medical... nursing is social, dynamic and interpersonal and people with intellectual disability deserve access to this just as much as anyone else!"*

Congratulations, Dr Conley, on this significant achievement and your commitment to advancing equitable and inclusive healthcare. We look forward to seeing the impact of your research in the years ahead.



Next Generation of Researchers at MRCMHR: HDR & ECR Focus



Alyssia Merrick
PhD candidate
College of Healthcare Sciences
James Cook University

Congratulations to Alyssia Merrick on being selected as a **FameLab Australia 2026 National Finalist**.

FameLab is an international science communication competition that challenges early-career researchers to explain their research to a general

audience in just three minutes, without slides or technical jargon. Alyssia's research explores how tabletop role-playing games, such as *Dungeons & Dragons*, can support wellbeing, social connection, creativity and personal growth.

For the competition, Alyssia transformed their research into an engaging presentation that encourages audiences to reflect on an important question: *When was the last time you played?* By linking everyday experiences of play with psychological science, Alyssia highlights the value of play across the lifespan.

As a National Finalist, Alyssia travelled to Perth to participate in science communication training, networking opportunities and the FameLab Australia National Final.

We are proud to see Alyssia representing JCU and the MRCMHR on a national stage and sharing the science of play beyond academia.



Creative community connections

JCU PhD researcher, **Sarah Ayache** will be facilitating a community art workshop at the Tanks Art Centre, Cairns Botanic Gardens on 15th November 2026.

The workshop will explore the kinds of creative activities that appeal to parents and will inspire families to spend less time on their screens.

As an Art Psychotherapist with 20 years experience, Sarah is working to co-design with the community an intervention for screen overuse in children with creativity and attachment at its heart.

For more information email sarah.ayache@my.jcu.edu.au



INTRODUCTION OF OUR COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP

The Centre's Community Advisory Group brings together representatives from diverse communities, organisations, and sectors to provide community-informed advice and guidance on our research, translation, and engagement activities.

The Community Advisory Group helps ensure that the Centre's work remains relevant, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of the communities we serve, and is grounded in principles of inclusion, cultural safety, and meaningful engagement.

Lieutenant Colonel Kylie Hasse

A senior defence health leader with over 20 years' experience spanning clinical practice, organisational leadership, and strategic health capability development. She has held key appointments across Army, Special Operations Command and Joint Health Command, including command of 4th Health Battalion and management of Australia's largest garrison health facility during the COVID-19 response. Her operational service on OP SLIPPER and OP OKRA included strategic health planning within coalition environments, for which she was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal.

Kylie now serves as the Deputy Director ADF Health Strategy, shaping enterprise-level health policy and capability for the Australian Defence Force. She brings expertise in governance, risk, workforce management and health system integration.



Craig Stack

A long-time contributor to North Queensland's business and community sector. A Fellow of the Australian Property Institute and the Urban Development Institute of Australia, he is also a Past President and Life Member of the Townsville Chamber of Commerce, where he helped strengthen the region's business advocacy.

As co-founder and Managing Director of Knight Frank's Townsville and Mackay offices, Craig brings more than 30 years of regional experience to numerous advisory and industry groups. He began his career as a valuer before settling in Townsville in 1987 and has remained deeply involved in local economic and community development ever since.

Craig now contributes his regional insight as a member of the Community Advisory Group for the Margaret Roderick Centre for Mental Health Research, supporting initiatives that benefit North Queensland communities



INTRODUCTION OF OUR COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP

Dr Marianna Masiorski

First generation Australian – born of Polish parents who migrated to Australia a few years before she was born. English is actually her second language, speaking Polish at home until she started attending pre-school.

Marianna graduated from James Cook University of North Queensland in 1997 with an Honours degree in Psychology and become a fully registered Psychologist with the Psychology Board of Australia in 1999.

Marianna has held positions ranging from supporting women through a domestic violence, private practice, working closely with GP's, providing supports to Queensland emergency services including the Firecare program and the SES for which she received an Australia Day commendation in 2004. Marianna has also been the Chair of the Mackay and Sunshine Coast Branches of the Australian Psychological Society, representing those regions at state and national levels.

In addition to working directly with clients, Marianna has also engaged in managerial positions such as with NWRH, where she has worked for 8 years. In this role, Marianna has operationalised many early intervention and prevention, drug and alcohol support, disability support and mental health services ranging from supporting people experiencing mild to moderate mental health disorders through to severe and complex conditions.



Cathy O'Toole

Cathy has over four decades of experience leading people, managing organisations and projects, many as a Chief Executive Officer. She has worked in the Mental Health and Wellbeing Sector at both CEO and State and National Peak levels since 2002. She has worked as the lead consultant with the Tropical Brain and Mind Foundation's Mentally Healthy City Townsville developing the 7 Ways to wellbeing for Townsville sectors and community organisations.

She has a Masters in Metaphysical Science, a Bachelor of Education, and a Diploma of Teaching TAFE, as well as Diplomas in Community Welfare, Frontline Management, Training and Assessment, and Business Management.

She is currently the President/Chair of Community Mental Health Australia (CMHA), Immediate Past President/Chair Qld Alliance for Mental Health (QAMH) and Carers Australia (CA).

As the former Federal Member for Herbert, Cathy's work involved navigating social and economic policy, driving strategic direction, and serving on various committees.

Cathy has extensive experience relating to the challenges that face people living with mental ill health both in her private life and professional work as a leader, she also has a living experience in the role of an unpaid carer.



INTRODUCTION OF OUR COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP



Uncle Randal Ross

Randal Banbari Ross of the Jangaru (Sunset) coolengi (Eagle) is of Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and South Sea Islander descent from Townsville and surrounding districts. He is a Senior Law Man Yuru/Bindal and Umpila Aboriginal tribes and a descendant of Erub (Darnley Island) and his Australian South Sea Islander (Kanaka) connection hails from Tanna, Santo and Ambrym Island.

Randal currently works with North and West Remote Health as the Manager for Cultural and Community Relations covering more than 50 communities through Townsville, Gulf and Central Queensland as far as Longreach and Birdsville and east coast areas of Mackay, Sarina and Whitsundays through to Ingham.

Randal is currently present on numerous boards:

- Townsville Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Corporation for Health (TAIHS)
- Garbutt Magpies Sporting and Cultural Association
- THHS – Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Community Advisory Council
- THHS – Secure Mental Health First Nation Elders Council
- Ronald MacDonald Charity House Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group
- Central Queensland University – First Nations Elders & Leaders Council

Randal is also the Co-founder of a national recognized family therapeutic healing program Red Dust Healing which has been operating for over seventeen years nationally and internationally. He currently works and represents several Reconciliation Action Plans (RAP) for several organisations including the NWRH Innovate RAP, Ronald Macdonald House Charity Innovate RAP and Ausco Modular Homes Innovate RAP, Central Queensland University.

Randal is committed to ensure many of our Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Australian South Sea Islanders peoples have services available to access in this continual evolving society.

Lee Kynaston

Deputy Principal at Pimlico State High School, where she provides strategic leadership with a strong focus on inclusion and evidence-informed practice. Lee has maintained a strong interest in, and commitment to, mental health and wellbeing in education for over 25 years. She previously served as an executive member of the Tropical Brain and Mind Foundation Board. Lee brings an education-sector perspective to support research that meaningfully connects evidence with schools and community settings.



Member Publications

- Aga, F. (2026). Artificial intelligence in Australian prison psychiatry: Promise, pitfalls, and ethical imperatives. *Australasian Psychiatry*. [Article](#)
- Aga, F. (2026). Sustainable use of AI in psychiatry. *Australasian Psychiatry*, 34(4), 399. [Article](#)
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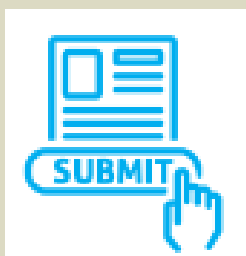
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