



MARGARET RODERICK CENTRE
FOR MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH

MENTAL MOMENTS

Member Newsletter of the Margaret Roderick
Centre for Mental Health Research

MAY 2026



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From the Centre Head: Welcome to Our Latest Newsletter

PROFESSOR ZOLTAN SARNYAI

What an extraordinary year it has been! We are well into our first full year as the Margaret Roderick Centre for Mental Health Research, and the momentum we have built together is truly something to celebrate.

So much has already been achieved. Our Centre members have published outstanding research in some of the world's most prestigious scientific journals — including JAMA Pediatrics and Nature Mental Health — demonstrating the remarkable calibre of work happening right here within our Centre. A dedicated and enthusiastic team has come together to lead our community engagement efforts, bringing our research closer to the people it is designed to serve. We have established an exceptional Scientific Advisory Board, and we are deeply honoured that such an esteemed group of global leaders in mental health research has agreed to lend their expertise and time to guide our work. You will find their profiles featured in this newsletter — we encourage you to get to know them. A significant new partnership is also taking shape with the Queensland Brain Injury Centre at the Queensland Brain Institute, a world-leading hub of brain research, and we look forward to sharing more about this exciting collaboration in the months ahead.

But there is even more to come. We are thrilled to announce the opening of submissions for the first round of our major Competitive Research Grant scheme, alongside the second round of our Seed Grants. These are fantastic opportunities, and we warmly encourage all Centre members to consider applying. For the Competitive Research Grants in particular, we encourage you to think boldly — collaborations with leading Australian and international research groups are very welcome. We are also planning an exciting day-long research symposium to showcase the wonderful breadth and depth of mental health research happening across the Centre, and we can't wait to bring everyone together for that.

Altogether, 2026 is shaping up to be a landmark year for the Centre. It is a privilege to work alongside each of you as we build something truly world-leading — research that is rigorous, innovative, and deeply relevant to our community and to the global tropics. Here's to everything we will achieve together!



MRCMHR ANNOUNCEMENTS

Competitive Research Grants: Applications Now Open

Applications are now open for the Margaret Roderick Centre for Mental Health Research (MRCMHR) **Competitive Research Grants**, to support substantial research projects that address mental health challenges in regional, rural, and remote contexts. These grants are available to all eligible MRCMHR members and are designed to foster meaningful collaborations and partnerships between JCU researchers and investigators in leading academic and research institutes, industry and community partners; building local, national and international research collaborations while enhancing JCU's profile and capacity for mental health research.

Grant details:

Funding available: \$150,000 - 250,000 per project

Project duration: Up to 3 years

Applications open: Now

Applications close: 5pm Tue 30 June 2026 (AEST)

Please note that late applications cannot be accepted.

Applications should be submitted via email to
MRCMHR@jcu.edu.au

Essential criteria:

- Lead Investigator must be a MRCMHR member
- Lead Investigator must be a JCU-A researcher and have either a minimum appointment of 0.5 FTE, or proposal to commit 0.5 FTE to the project with salary funded by the grant
- Project must include at least one end user and/or industry partner, supported by letters of support
- Research team must include researchers from at least two different scientific disciplines and demonstrate multidisciplinary collaboration
- At least one Early or Mid-Career Researcher must be included in the research team
- Project must demonstrate relevance to regional, rural, and remote settings
- Project must align with one or more of the Centre's research themes:
 - Theme 1: Severe Mental Illness Support, Diagnosis and Treatment
 - Theme 2: Mental Health and Wellbeing for Enhanced Functioning
 - Theme 3: Emerging Issues and Novel Approaches to Innovating in Mental Health Practice

Access the Information Pack [here](#) for detailed information.

If you have any questions regarding the grant or the application process, please contact Professor Zoltan Sarnyai via MRCMHR@jcu.edu.au prior to the closing date.

MRCMHR ANNOUNCEMENTS

Seed Grants - Round 1, 2026: Applications Now Open

The MRCMHR is excited to announce **Seed Grants** to support the initiation of projects addressing mental health challenges in regional, rural, and remote settings, and may lead to future funding applications.

Grant details:

Funding Available: Up to \$12,000 per project

Project Duration: 18 months

Applications Open: Now

Applications Close: 5:00pm, 31 May 2026 (AEST).

Late applications cannot be accepted.

Applications should be submitted via email to MRCMHR@jcu.edu.au

Essential criteria:

- Lead Investigator must be a MRCMHR Member, or a representative from a MRCMHR Partner organisation in collaboration with a Centre Member
- Research team must include at least one end-user
- Applications must clearly explain how project outcomes will support future funding applications and/or research publications.
- Project must be in line with the goal of the Centre
- Projects must align with one or more of the Centre's research themes:
 - Theme 1: Severe Mental Illness Support, Diagnosis and Treatment
 - Theme 2: Mental Health and Wellbeing for Enhanced Functioning
 - Theme 3: Emerging Issues and Novel Approaches to Innovating in Mental Health Practice

Access the Information Pack [here](#) for detailed information.

If you have any questions regarding the grant or the application process, please contact Professor Zoltan Sarnyai via MRCMHR@jcu.edu.au prior to the closing date.

MRCMHR is online

Follow the Margaret Roderick Centre for Mental Health Research on LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/company/mrcmhr](https://www.linkedin.com/company/mrcmhr)



We'll be sharing the Centre's research, activities and news, and celebrating Members' achievements. To have your work featured, send us a recent Centre-aligned publication with a short summary and link.



Consumer Working Group Launch

Members of the MRCMHR have come together to form the JCU Consumer Working Group, led by **Dr. Liza van Eijk** and **Dr. Klaire Somoray**. The group is tasked with developing JCU’s framework for consumer engagement in research, including grant development, research projects, and related activities. This initiative aims to ensure approaches to consumer involvement are consistent, meaningful, and aligned with best practice across the University, while strengthening the community impact of our research in line with the Centre’s vision.

The Working Group held its first meeting at the end of April, which focused on clarifying the purpose of the group, discussing why consumer engagement is critical to the Centre’s work, and beginning to identify shared priorities. A key outcome of this initial meeting was the commitment to developing clear guidelines or a framework for engaging with consumers.

Early discussion topics included the value of consumer-led research, practical approaches to involving consumers in grants and projects, building and sustaining community connections, and setting priorities for future work. Further meetings will build on this foundation.

Contact: Dr. Liza van Eijk - liza.vaneijk@jcu.edu.au

Member Highlights and Achievements



Dr. Tamra Jones
Senior Lecturer
College of Arts, Society and Education
James Cook University

Advancing Youth Mental Health Through Innovation and Collaboration

Dr Tamra Jones continues to contribute to MRCMHR through impactful research, funding success, and community engagement. She recently secured a \$22,500 Regional University Industry Collaboration Program (RUIC) grant, along with Dr. Leanne Cameron (CASE colleague and co-researcher) for a project exploring immersive VR to support student wellbeing in Queensland schools.

Dr Jones is also part of research teams on two MRFF grant applications focused on DeStress for Success in Adolescence, aiming to improve mental health outcomes through culturally and digitally adapted approaches.

Her work extends into the community through involvement in the North Queensland Community of Practice and support of regional partnerships, including the Queensland Kids Partnership and JCU collaboration.

Looking ahead, Dr Jones is helping deliver the Brain Health Schools Forum in Cairns on 2 June, bringing together leaders to advance student wellbeing and brain health initiatives.

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



Carolyn Heward

Senior Lecturer & PhD Candidate
College of Healthcare Sciences
James Cook University

Science Meets Parliament 2026

Earlier this year I had the privilege of attending Science Meets Parliament 2026 in Canberra as the recipient of a scholarship through Science and Technology Australia.

Science Meets Parliament brings researchers together with parliamentarians to strengthen the connection between evidence and policy. It was a valuable reminder that our elected representatives are genuinely open to hearing from researchers, but they are also extraordinarily busy. That means our ability to distil what we do, and why it matters, into a compelling elevator pitch is just as important as the research itself. Research translation is not just about publication, it's about having the right message in front of the right audience.

I had the opportunity to meet with the Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Defence Personnel, the Hon. Matt Keogh, who was receptive to hearing about my research on Soldier identity and its implications for veteran mental health and transition, particularly in the context of the Royal Commission.

This kind of direct engagement with policymakers is exactly what translational research looks like in practice. We live in an era of significant misinformation, and that makes



the role of evidence-based research in policy conversations more important than ever.

If you are affiliated with an STA member organisation (for me it was being an NTEU member) I'd strongly encourage you to consider applying for a scholarship to attend SMP next year. Scholarships are available across a range of categories including regional and remote, early career researcher, and others. If you are interested in seeing your research influence policy, it is well worth your time.

- Carolyn Heward



Member Highlights and Achievements



Christopher Lo

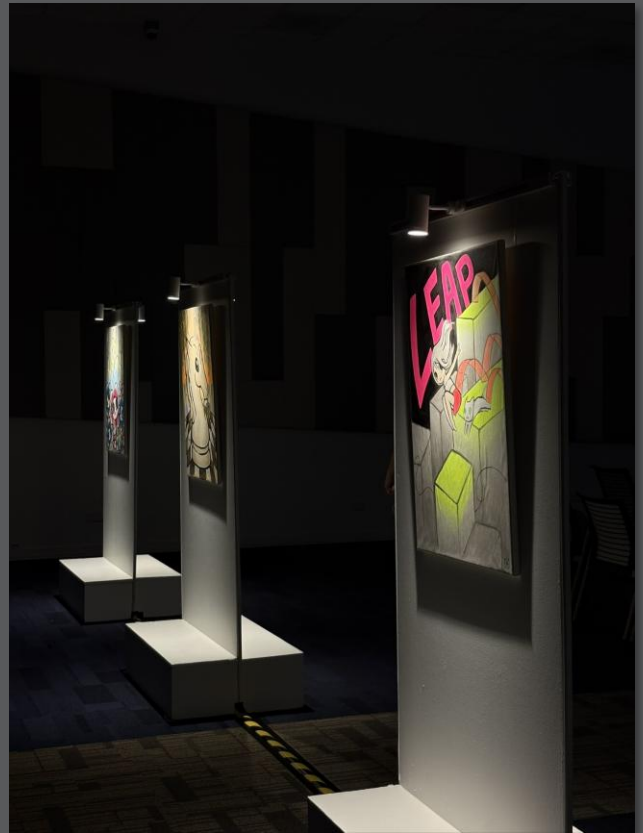
Associate Professor
College of Healthcare Sciences
James Cook University

Research in Action: Christopher Lo's Work Across Health, Systems and Society

Since December 2025, Christopher Lo's work has spanned both peer-reviewed research and public-facing journalism, focusing on how systems shape behaviour and health.

Recent articles include *The retail afterlife: How surplus goods find new value at "binz" stores* (The Conversation, March 2026), which was among the top five most-read JCU articles in April and featured on the Shaye Ganam Show (Edmonton radio), and *The welcome mat isn't always out for international students* (News Decoder, April 2026), examining how market dynamics and geopolitics influence higher education and global mobility.

In academic work, Lo is co-author on a forthcoming paper in the *Journal of Pain* (accepted April 2026) on disease explanations of chronic pain and stigma. His recent publications span psychosocial and health systems research, including work on biopsychosocial profiles in head and neck cancer (Head & Neck, 2026), romantic relationships during COVID-19 (Geopsychiatry, 2026), policy and access issues in psychedelic interventions (Politics & Policy, 2026; Social Science & Medicine, 2026), positive aging experiences (The Gerontologist, 2025), existential distress in advanced cancer (General Hospital



Psychiatry, 2025), and approaches to recognising student voice in AI-assisted work (College Teaching, 2025). This builds on a broader portfolio of peer-reviewed publications spanning psycho-oncology, end-of-life care, and digital interventions.

Lo also curated *Mindscapes*, a psychology × art pop-up exhibition at JCU Singapore Open House (March 2026), translating psychological research into interactive visual installations engaging prospective students and the public. (See attached, photo credit Chris Lo, *Mindscapes* exhibit.)

Together, this work reflects an ongoing focus on translating research into accessible insights on complex social systems.

Member Highlights and Achievements



Dr. Margaret Jordan
Senior Research Fellow
College of Medicine and
Dentistry
James Cook University

Recognition for Top-Cited Research in Immunology

Congratulations to Dr. Margaret Jordan, who has been recognised by Wiley for her outstanding research impact with a **Top Cited Article** award in the *Journal of Immunology Research*.

The award acknowledges her paper, "The Plasticity of Immune Cell Response Complicates Dissecting the Underlying Pathology of Multiple Sclerosis" as one of the most frequently cited articles published in 2024.

Congratulations on this well-deserved recognition and contribution to the field of immunology.

Sarkar, S. K., Willson, A. M. L., & Jordan, M. A. (2024). The Plasticity of Immune Cell Response Complicates Dissecting the Underlying Pathology of Multiple Sclerosis. *Journal of Immunology Research*, 2024. [Article](#)

Celebrating a National Milestone for Bamboo

Congratulations to MRCMHR Members **Prof. James Dimmock, Ms. Kaila Putter, Dr. Amanda Krause and Dr. Brian Law**, on the national launch of the Bamboo Parenting Program.

The program is an evidence-informed initiative designed to support first-time mothers during the perinatal period by connecting them with trained community mentors. The program reflects ongoing research showing that around half of new parents experience adjustment difficulties, with approximately 20 per cent affected by perinatal depression and anxiety.

Drawing on psychological and public health research, the Bamboo program addresses social isolation and the pressures many new mothers face to appear as though they are coping. The program uses a research-led matching approach that pairs mothers with supporters based on shared characteristics and experiences, while allowing participants autonomy in choosing the supporter who best fits their needs.

Following a successful trial in Northern Queensland, the program has now expanded nationally, with first-time mothers across Australia able to participate. The expansion has been accompanied by positive [media coverage](#) highlighting the program's relevance, research foundation, and real-world impact.

The Bamboo Parenting Program is supported by JCU, the Queensland Mental Health Commission, Act Belong Commit, and the North Queensland Primary Health Network, and represents an excellent example of research translation into community-focused mental health support. More information and registration details are available [here](#).

We congratulate the team on this significant milestone and the recognition of their work.



Next Generation of Researchers at MRCMHR: HDR & ECR Focus

Spotlight – Celebrating Academic Excellence

Congratulations to **Dr. Rachel Quigley**, recipient of the **2026 Medal for Excellence for a Higher Degree by Research**, awarded to theses passed *cum laude* in recognition of outstanding quality.

Rachel's PhD, *Developing a framework for supporting communities to age well in the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area*, was funded by a \$1.1 million NHMRC Targeted Research Grant. Grounded in strong community partnerships, her research used participatory approaches, including yarning circles, to understand what ageing well means locally.

The resulting Ageing Well Framework provides culturally responsive, evidence-based strategies to support older adults to remain connected, independent, and living meaningful lives in their communities.



We also congratulate **Dr. Dominic Orih**, recipient of a **Dean's Award for Excellence**, which recognises excellence in Higher Degree by Research. Recipients of this award have been commended by independent expert examiners as having made substantial contributions to their field of research.

Dominic's research, *Promoting university student wellbeing: Exploring the feasibility of soft skills and the First Nations-developed Family Wellbeing Empowerment Program*, examines innovative, strengths-based approaches to supporting student wellbeing in higher education.

His work investigates the challenges and opportunities of integrating the First Nations Family Wellbeing empowerment program into university curricula, highlighting how holistic educational approaches can improve not only student wellbeing, but also soft skills, academic engagement and life readiness—challenging traditional skill-focused education paradigms.



From Local Practice to Global Impact

Perinatal psychologist, PhD candidate and MRCMHR member **Melissa Freestun** has recently been featured in the [Townsville Bulletin](#), highlighting both clinical work in private practice and ongoing research into maternal mental health.

Melissa's work is gaining national and international recognition. Two abstracts have been accepted for presentation at the **World Association of Infant Mental Health (WAIMH) Congress** in Canada this October:

- *Conceptualising Psychological Birth Trauma as an Early Prevention Target for Infant Mental Health*
- *Psychological Birth Trauma and Adult Attachment Styles: A Scoping Review of Emerging Evidence*

Earlier this year, Melissa also presented at the **Australian College of Midwives (ACM) National Professoriate Forum**, sharing findings from research titled *Normal on Paper: Adult Attachment, Birth Trauma, and Satisfaction in Australian Postpartum Women*. This work explores how attachment styles relate to experiences of birth trauma and postpartum satisfaction, with important clinical implications for improving care.

Congratulations on these contributions of local research to global conversations on perinatal and infant mental health.





Member Publications

- Cher, J. E., Barlas, J., Hennessy, M., Ramsay, J. E., & Aw, S. (2025). Staying motivated by anchoring on values: a mixed methods study on the workplace well-being and addiction beliefs of substance use professionals in Singapore. *Substance Abuse Treatment, Prevention, and Policy*, 20(1), 54. [Article](#)
- Finlay, S., Suvarna, B., Adegboye, O., Rudd, D., McDermott, B., van Eijk, L., & Sarnyai, Z. (2026). Hair cortisol concentration and adolescent mental health: Insight from the Queensland Twin Adolescent Brain Project. *Psychoneuroendocrinology*, 185, 107730. [Article](#)
- Flavell, C. A., Crowe, M., Kenchington, P., Jones, A., Barker, R., & O'Brien, K. K. (2026). Disability and frailty in people living with Human Immunodeficiency Virus in regional Australia: A cross-sectional study with a measurement property assessment of the HIV Disability Questionnaire. *HIV Medicine*. [Article](#)
- Garde, V., Churchill, M., Greenslade, J., Watt, K., & Mallett, A. J. (2026). Overview of somatization through three historical lenses and future directions. *Discov Ment Health*, 6(1). [Article](#)
- Garde, V., Greenslade, J., Lane, P., Duffy, C., Pardon, M., Mallett, A., & Watt, K. (2026). Psychological interventions for reducing non-cardiac Emergency Department Re-presentations ? A study protocol for Randomized Controlled Trial. [version 1; peer review: awaiting peer review]. *F1000Research*, 15(565). [Article](#)
- Kraeuter, A.-K., & Sarnyai, Z. (2026). Ketogenic diet-derived faecal microbiota transplantation improved sensorimotor gating deficits in an acute NMDA-receptor antagonist model of schizophrenia in mice. *Food & Function*. [Article](#)
- Kresic, K., & Oliva, J. L. (2026). Hot off the press: Media primes successfully influence attitudes towards Chinese people during COVID-19. *Communication and Race*, 3(1), 1-18. [Article](#)
- Kristoper, H. P. S., Suarez, L., & Marsh, N. V. (2026). Psychometric Properties of the Attitudes to Ageing Questionnaire-Short Form (AAQ-SF) in Sri Lanka. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*, 23(3). [Article](#)
- Munro, N. R., Teague, S., Somoray, K., Simpson, A., Budden, T., Jackson, B., Rebar, A., & Dimmock, J. (2026). Effect of exercise on depression and anxiety symptoms: systematic umbrella review with meta-meta-analysis. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*. [Article](#)
- Nguyen, H. X. T., Hyde, Z., Watson, R., Smith, K., Malay, R., Flicker, L., Radford, K., Russell, S., Quigley, R., Sagigi, B., Strivens, E., Withall, A., Timbery, A., Donovan, T., Draper, B., Delbaere, K., Lavrencic, L., Cumming, R., Hughson, J. A.,...LoGiudice, D. (2026). Strength together: Risk and protective factors for dementia and cognitive impairment in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. *Int Psychogeriatr*, 100206. [Article](#)
- Prentice, C. L. S., Flavell, C. A., Massy-Westropp, N., & Milanese, S. (2025). Individualised exercise for patients with persistent low back pain and lateral abdominal muscle impairments: a randomised feasibility study. *Pilot and Feasibility Studies*, 11(1), 144. [Article](#)
- Sheel, H., Suárez, L., & Marsh, N. V. (2025). Assessing social and emotional learning of children in India: Perspectives from parents and teachers. *Acta Psychologica*, 262, 106052. [Article](#)



Member Publications

Sethi, S., Berk, M., Andreatza, A. C., Mujica-Parodi, L. R., Campbell, I., Campbell, H., Longhitano, C., Rasgon, N., Volek, J., Calkin, C. V., Ford, J., McCullumsmith, R., Cunnane, S., Liwinski, T., D'Agostino, D., Frye, M., & Sarnyai, Z. (2026). Metabolic psychiatry targeting metabolic dysregulation in mental health. *Nature Mental Health*, 4(4), 508-520. [Article](#)

Vos, G., Ebrahimpour, M., van Eijk, L., Sarnyai, Z., & Azghadi, M. R. (2026). The effect of acute stress on the interpretability and generalization of schizophrenia predictive machine learning models. *Biomedical Signal Processing and Control*, 118, 109708. [Article](#)

Wang, N. Z. M., & Teoh, A. N. (2026). Do the Traits of Fictional Crushes and Real-Life Ideals Align? An Investigation Into Ideal Standards Based on Fictional Fandoms. *Psychology of Popular Media*. [Article](#)

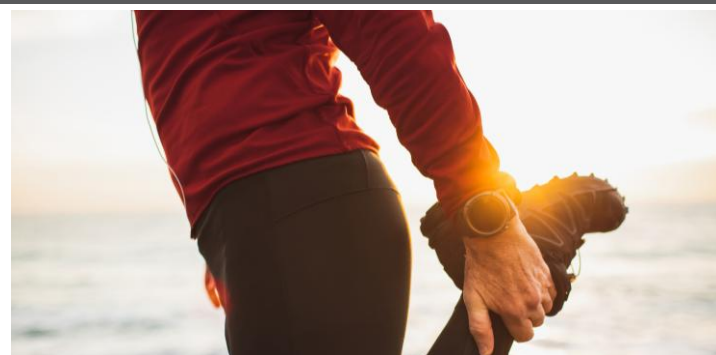
Digital Media Use and Child Health & Development: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis

This meta-analysis, led by Senior Research Fellow **Dr Sam Teague**, examined more than 150 international studies and found that higher levels of digital media use during childhood and adolescence were associated with a range of later difficulties, including depressive symptoms, behavioural problems, increased risk of substance use and self-harm, and poorer academic performance. Social media particularly stood out in the breadth and consistency of its links with later developmental outcomes.

These findings highlight the importance of supporting healthy media habits and improving the quality and safety of young people's digital environments.

Read the [full article here](#) (via ResearchOnline). For practical guidance on supporting adolescents' media use, please see the [Raising Children Network](#).

Teague, S., Somoray, K., Shatte, A., Miller, D., Moss, K., Crawford, A., Wildman, H., Kayal, D., & Hutchinson, D. (2026). Digital Media Use and Child Health and Development: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *JAMA Pediatr*.



Finding Your Stride: Navigating Running With Multiple Sclerosis. A Qualitative Study

MRCMHR researchers (Moira Smith, Teneale McGuckin, Carol Flavell and Liza van Eijk) from the College of Healthcare Sciences, have recently published their work on navigating running with multiple sclerosis, in the *International Journal of MS Care* ([article available here](#)).

This qualitative study explores the perspectives of individuals with MS who were actively participating in regular running and highlights the benefits and challenges of doing this activity. Participants highlighted the importance of running for their mental health, physical health and identified how running provided them with a sense of control over their condition.

Dr. Moira Smith was interviewed by the journal to provide additional perspectives on this study. The full interview is [available here](#)

Smith, M., McGuckin, T., Flavell, C & van Eijk, L. (2026) Finding Your Stride: Navigating Running With Multiple Sclerosis. A Qualitative Study. *International Journal of MS Care*, 28(2), 75-82.



INTRODUCTION OF OUR SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY BOARD

The Centre's Scientific Advisory Board brings together leaders with exceptional expertise in mental health research to help steer our mission toward improving mental health outcomes across our region, and globally. The Board provides strategic guidance on our research priorities, ensuring that our work remains both scientifically rigorous and deeply impactful.

By drawing on their multidisciplinary expertise and insight, our Scientific Advisory Board helps ensure that the Centre's research efforts translate into meaningful, measurable improvements in mental health outcomes for individuals and communities worldwide.



Doctor Harris Eyre

Harris is a physician, neuroscientist, entrepreneur, and strategist. Harris is credited for pioneering the brain economy transition across sectors and industries. He is dedicated to fostering awareness, data, tools, investment, and leadership to drive the transition.

Harris was the senior author of the first technical paper on the brain economy published in 2021, he co-led the OECD Neuroscience-Inspired Policy Initiative, and supported the development of the Global Brain Capital Dashboard, published via The Brookings Institution. The work continues to proliferate and mature, and Eyre works across the spectrum of research, strategy, movement building, and execution. In 2025, the President of Cameroon endorsed The Yaoundé Declaration on the Brain

Economy, the Center for Houston's Future launched the first city-level brain economy initiative, and brain-lens investing was articulated, and brain economy science strategy frameworks were pioneered. In 2026, the World Economic Forum (WEF) and McKinsey Health Institute launched a Brain Economy Insights Report. Multi-national corporations and politicians across the globe are collaborating actively.

He is Co-Lead of the Brain & Society Initiative of the Rice Brain Institute, a Faculty Scholar with the Baker Institute for Public Policy, and adjunct with the schools of Engineering and Social Sciences.

Eyre is an alumnus of the Forbes 30 Under 30 and the Fulbright Scholar program. He has garnered recognition with the EB1A Green Card, an honor typically reserved for Nobel and Pulitzer prize winners. He has authored over 200 papers and chapters in outlets such as Nature Medicine, Neuron, The Brookings Institution, WEF, and was the lead editor of the book 'Convergence Brain Health' (Oxford Press).

Beyond his professional achievements, Harris has authored a reflective short story titled "My Migraines are a Superpower." In his free time, he enjoys family time and activities such as mountain biking, meditation, and podcasts. He is originally from the Great Barrier Reef region of Australia.

INTRODUCTION OF OUR SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY BOARD

Professor Rhonda Wilson



Professor Rhonda Wilson is an Australian mental health nursing researcher, educator, and policy leader. She is Professor of Mental Health Nursing at RMIT University, where she leads the Digital Mental Health Nursing Laboratory. Her research focuses on digital mental health innovation, sensory environments for wellbeing, workforce development, and strengthening the role of mental health nurses in contemporary care systems.

Rhonda currently serves as President of the Australian College of Mental Health Nurses (ACMHN) and has been instrumental in establishing the International Council of Mental Health Nursing. Through her research, leadership, and advocacy, she advances culturally responsive, trauma-informed mental health care and supports the development of a strong global mental health nursing workforce.

Professor Simon Rosenbaum

Simon Rosenbaum is a Professor in the Discipline of Psychiatry and Mental Health at UNSW Sydney and Co-Lead of the NExuS Research Group (Nutrition, Exercise and Social Equity). His work sits at the intersection of physical activity, mental health, trauma and social equity, with a particular focus on people affected by displacement and social disadvantage. Across his research, practice and partnerships, he works to strengthen the role of physical activity and lifestyle-based approaches within mental health care, community services and humanitarian response.



Simon is the founder of Addi Moves, a free, trauma-informed movement facility based at the Addison Road Community Organisation in Marrickville, Sydney. He has worked in complex humanitarian settings, including as a Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Officer with the International Organization for Migration in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, and has collaborated with partners across more than 25 countries. He has held visiting Professorial appointments in Bangladesh, Colombia and Mexico, and has published more than 330 peer-reviewed papers. He is a Clarivate Highly Cited Researcher (2019–2024) and is currently supported by an NHMRC Emerging Leadership 2 Fellowship. He is a past President of the Australasian Society for Traumatic Stress Studies and was named a 2024 NSW Young Tall Poppy. He previously served as inaugural Co-Chair of the Olympic Refugee Foundation Think Tank on Sport and Humanitarian Settings (2021–2023) and returned to the role in 2026.

INTRODUCTION OF OUR SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY BOARD



Professor Ernest Hunter

Ernest Hunter is an Australian medical graduate (UWA), trained in adult, child and cross-cultural psychiatry, and public health in the United States (Washington University, University of Hawaii and University of Michigan) before returning to Australia in the mid-1980s. His doctoral work (University of New South Wales) in the Kimberley was published as ***Aboriginal Health and History: Power and Prejudice in Remote Australia*** (Cambridge University Press).

He has worked for over three decades in Cape York and the Torres Strait as a clinician and as Foundation Chair in Mental Health (Public Health) with University of Queensland based in Cairns. For the last decade since clinical retirement from Queensland Health he has been an Adjunct Professor with the Cairns Institute of James Cook University in Cairns. He continues to work in the mental health/public health space in remote Indigenous communities through the Schools Up North project auspiced by Youth Empowered Toward Independence (YETI).

He is author of several hundred publications in the academic and popular press.

Professor Dost Ongur

A native of Istanbul, Turkey, Dr. Öngür obtained his M.D./Ph.D. degree from Washington University in St. Louis and psychiatric residency training at the MGH/McLean Adult Psychiatry program. He is currently the William P. and Henry B. Test Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and Chief of the Psychotic Disorders Division at McLean Hospital.

Dr. Öngür is the author of more than 300 articles on research into neurobiology, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia. His research uses brain imaging approaches to probe brain abnormalities in psychotic disorders as well as clinical studies to understand the trajectories of illness in early phases of these disorders. He is currently the principal investigator of a P50 Center grant from the NIMH focused on early psychosis research. He is also an active clinician and an administrator responsible for all clinical services serving patients with psychotic disorders at McLean.

For his teaching and mentoring, Dr. Öngür has won awards from McLean Hospital, Harvard Medical School, and the Kempf Award from the APA. He has served on Council for ACNP, SOBP and SIRS, on the Scientific Council for NARSAD/BBRF, and he is currently President-Elect for the Society of Biological Psychiatry, slated to serve as President for the 2027 SOBP Annual Meeting. He serves on the Future DSM Steering Committee for the American Psychiatry Association. Finally, he is the Editor in Chief of JAMA Psychiatry, a premier journal in the field.



INTRODUCTION OF OUR SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY BOARD

Emeritus Professor Bruce J. Tonge AO

An academic specialist Child Psychiatrist, Monash medical graduate, and trained in Psychiatry at Oxford and Cambridge, UK. He has a distinguished record of clinical work, teaching, funded research and publication and was the Foundation Head, Monash University School of Psychology and Psychiatry. He established the internationally recognised Monash University Centre for Developmental Psychiatry and Psychology.

His clinical, research and teaching interests are in the areas of: developmental psychiatry with a particular focus on neurodevelopmental disorders including Autism and Intellectual Disability; childhood anxiety and depressive disorders; and treatment outcome studies, parent education and skills training and public mental health interventions.

He has international standing in mental health research over 30 years with:

- (1) Largest 30year longitudinal study (with S. Einfeld) of mental health in children with intellectual disability including development of population screening tools which has influenced policy and service delivery in many countries including the UK, USA, Vietnam and NZ and a NHMRC Program grant providing a public mental health evidence-based parenting skills program throughout Qld. Vic and NSW.
- (2) Development of a range of evidence based psychological treatments for anxiety, school refusal, PTSD, and depression in young people delivered in Australia and internationally.
- (3) Building resilience support programs sponsored by the Mental Health Foundation Australia (MHFA) in at risk populations such as families impacted by bushfires or domestic violence or refugee experiences. (4) Co-Director, Autism Consultation and Training Now program 2014-18, trained 16,000 early childhood professionals on ASD early intervention in the “*My Health, Learning and Development*” DHHS Victoria.

A CI on 133 Competitive grants of \$47.5M including 37 NHMRC/ARC grants, 345 articles, 69 chapters, 22 books/manuals. Editor of the *Handbook of Studies on Child Psychiatry* (Elsevier) and co-author of a number of assessment tools including the Developmental Behaviour Checklist, which assesses psychopathology in children and adults with intellectual disability, in wide use in Australia and internationally.

He has served on a number of Boards including, Neuroscience Victoria & Australia, *beyondblue* (Scientific Review Board), AMAZE (Chair), International Association for the Scientific Study of Developmental Disability and Mental Health Foundation Australia (Chair and Patron).

Awards include: the Victorian Public Healthcare Meritorious Service Award for “Outstanding Individual Achievement in Mental Healthcare” 2009; Australasian Society for Psychiatric Research Founders' Medal 2010; RANZCP Citation 2019.

He was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia in 2023 for “services to psychiatric medicine, to tertiary education, to youth, and to the community”.



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