



# ANNUAL REPORT

20  
24

The  
**KIDS**  
RESEARCH INSTITUTE  
AUSTRALIA

DISCOVER • PREVENT • CURE



At The Kids Research Institute Australia, our vision is simple – **happy healthy kids.**

We bring together community, researchers, practitioners, policymakers and funders, who share our mission to improve the health, development and lives of children and young people through excellence in research.

Importantly, we want our research applied so it makes a difference.

Find out more at [thekids.org.au](https://thekids.org.au)

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The Kids Research Institute Australia acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Custodians of the land and waters of Australia. We also acknowledge the Nyoongar Wadjuk, Yawuru, Kariyarra and Kaurna Elders, their people and their land upon which the Institute is located and seek their wisdom in our work to improve the health and development of all children.

Cover image: Dr Sebastien Malinge and Chloe Buckingham from the WA Kids Cancer Centre.

This page: Charlotte Patterson and her mother Laura West. The Kids researchers have unlocked the genetic mystery of the rare disease Charlotte was born with.



# FOREWORD



Professor Jonathan Carapetis AM and Naomi Flutter

The past 12 months has been a period of extraordinary change for The Kids Research Institute Australia. We have a new name and brand, appointed a new Chair and launched our new Strategic Plan which we believe will deliver research outcomes with more impact, quicker, to kids and families. We are excited too, to have announced one of the most significant funding commitments for Australian medical research – with \$135 million committed to children’s cancer research in Australia.

At the same time, after reporting two consecutive deficits, we have worked hard to operate efficiently and manage costs, to enable us to post a modest profit in 2024. This helps set up the Institute for a financially sustainable future: a key pillar of our Strategic Plan.

**Research Reimagined**

In August, the Institute was proud to launch our blueprint for the next decade. Research Reimagined 2025–2035 is an unashamedly bold vision to do research differently, by finding solutions to the biggest problems facing kids and families to change young lives for the better.

Research Reimagined is a strategy that redefines the ‘who, what and how’ of a research institute. As an organisation, we have vowed to take responsibility for driving research outcomes to where they have impact, as well as establishing a pipeline of breakthroughs for tomorrow. We recognise the opportunity for research that comes from working with others to identify the major challenges facing children and to tackle them systematically, often starting with the endpoint in mind.

At its heart, the strategy is about collaboration and partnerships with those who share our vision including kids and young people, families, our local, national and global research partners, corporate sponsors, and our philanthropic and wider community.

**Think of the kids**

Coinciding with the launch of our Strategic Plan, the Institute unveiled our new name and brand – The Kids Research Institute Australia, or simply, The Kids. The name reflects the significance and breadth of the research we are undertaking to deliver even more impactful outcomes for children and young people.

Reflecting The Kids’ commitment addressing the inequity of the health and wellbeing experienced by Aboriginal kids and families, the new brand encompasses an Indigenous theme of family, country and culture.

Created in consultation with Aboriginal staff, the design elements portray a story of strength, where healthy kids are influenced by strong healthy families and communities, and by their Country. Patterns in the brand that reflect these themes include the desert, river, ocean and forest. Stars link Country to all parts of Australia.

While no longer using the word Telethon in our name, we’re delighted that The Kids remains a major beneficiary of the Channel 7 Telethon Trust. For more than 58 years, Telethon has generously supported The Kids – investing in our people, facilities and capabilities – and we know that its support has improved the health and happiness of kids throughout Western Australia.

**WA Comprehensive Kids Cancer Centre**

During the year, we were thrilled to announce one of WA’s biggest ever philanthropic gifts to transform children’s cancer research and treatment by improving outcomes for kids with cancer and discovering more effective and less toxic treatments.

The Stan Perron Charitable Foundation committed an incredible \$135.5 million over ten years to a multi-partner collaboration with The Kids and Perth Children’s Hospital (PCH). The Perth Children’s Hospital Foundation and the University of Western Australia will also contribute to the initiative.

This game-changing donation will turbocharge the research and work already being undertaken at PCH and the Institute, with sustainable long-term funding to allow staff to develop cutting edge laboratory and clinical research.

With its vision for all kids with cancer to survive and thrive, the WA Comprehensive Kids Cancer Centre will ensure WA children with cancer won’t have to leave the State to access the best treatment options.

**Research translation**

The Kids’ research continues to have a profound impact on children and families, in Western Australia and beyond.

In 2024 our scientists, together with the Undiagnosed Diseases Program at PCH led a

complex five-year experiment which cracked the code of a genetic mystery and paved the way for faster, more accurate diagnoses of the most rare and unknown diseases affecting children.

A large-scale Australian skin study led by The Kids and Aboriginal community-controlled health organisations halved the rate of skin infections experienced by Aboriginal children in remote communities, a crucial first step in reducing life-threatening illnesses caused by untreated skin sores.

We established a First Nations Childhood Cancer Research team, charged with understanding why Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children have worse outcomes and poorer tolerance to cancer treatments.

More than two decades of research, modelling and collaboration to develop safe and effective RSV immunisations led to the nationwide, Federal Government funded roll-out of an RSV immunisation program for pregnant women and newborns.

Our ORIGINS project, Australia’s biggest longitudinal study following the health and wellbeing of children from conception through to childhood, welcomed its 10,000th participant.

And we launched a new trial, aimed at boosting pre-school aged children’s activity levels across 700 Australian childcare centres. It is anticipated up to 80,000 children will benefit from the Play Active program.

**Animal openness agreement**

In 2023 the Institute became a signatory to the Openness Agreement on Animal Research and Teaching in Australia, reflecting our commitment to transparency and accountability in all parts of our research involving the use of animals.

Under the agreement, we report annually on our actions to uphold the commitments in this agreement. Between August 2023 and August 2024, The Kids developed a dedicated web page providing information about animals used in our research, our commitment to the Openness Agreement, and our ethics and quality standards relating to animal use.

We now ensure media and promotional material relating to research involving animals refers to the Openness Agreement and our website, which was updated to provide members of the public direct email access to ask questions of our animal ethics and communications teams.



The Kids is committed to ensuring all staff feel confident in talking about animals in research and we held collaboration workshops and staff forums to facilitate this goal.

Financially sustainable future

After two consecutive years posting a deficit, we are pleased to report the Institute has recorded a profit of \$10.8 million in 2024.

While this result is positive, we cannot be complacent about the long-term financial sustainability of the organisation as the sector continues to face significant economic, legislative and compliance challenges.

Operational spending constraints implemented across the Institute in 2023 contributed to the positive 2024 financial results, which were also supported by better investment returns and infrastructure support from the State Government’s Research Infrastructure Support program.

We will continue to exercise financial discipline, maintaining a financial performance what allows The Kids to realise the vision of our Strategic Plan and achieve far-reaching impact on the biggest problems facing kids and families.

Looking ahead, the focus for The Kids is to deliver our bold research agenda including a pipeline of breakthroughs that deliver impact for kids and communities, while operating within evolving compliance and regulatory settings, continuing to meet the goals of our funders and ensuring long-term financial security.

Our People

In 2024 we said farewell to our Deputy Executive Director and Director of Research, Professor Catherine Elliott, after nearly five years in the role. Professor Elliott made a significant contribution to the Institute including helping the Executive team navigate the impact of the pandemic on our organisation, playing a key role in our people review and Athena Swan gender equity journey, driving our partnership with the Child and Adolescent Health Service and leading our Science Leadership Committee.

We welcomed Donna O’Hara to the Executive team as Chief Operating Officer, who joined us from the Harry Perkins Institute, bringing a strong understanding of the research sector. Ms O’Hara replaced Colin Smith who left the Institute to take on the role of Chief Executive Officer at Lotterywest and Healthway in Western Australia.

Over the 12 months, many of our researchers were recognised for their outstanding contribution to

improving the lives of children and families. Notably, Dr Mary Brushe was honoured at South Australia’s Science Excellence and Innovation Awards for her work revealing the link between screen time exposure and toddlers’ language development, and Dr Pam Laird was named a joint winner of the Early Career Scientist of the Year at the WA Premier’s Science Awards.

Tuberculosis expert Dr Kefyalew Alene was named the Association of Australia Medical Research Institute’s 2024 Rising Star and Professors Chris Blyth and Asha Bowen were elected Fellows of the esteemed Australian Academy of Health and Medical Sciences.

Our Board

In 2024 we farewelled Julie Bishop and Fiona Drummond. Fiona retired from the Board after nearly seven years, including five years as Chair of our Finance Committee. Fiona was also a member of the Institute’s Remuneration and Nomination Committee. Her dedication to The Kids and this role, including her support for fellow Board Members and the Executive Leadership Team, is greatly appreciated.

Strong support

As we head into our 35th year, The Kids Research Institute Australia is proud of its extensive community of supporters, donors, research participants and corporate, government, Indigenous and local partners.

We are committed to partnership and collaboration and are honoured to walk alongside an extended community of allies, who value our research and help us to ensure it is translated into policy and practice for the benefit of all kids and families.

*Jonathan Carapetis*

Professor Jonathan Carapetis AM  
Executive Director

*Naomi Flutter*

Naomi Flutter  
Chair

THANK YOU JULIE BISHOP

In 2024 we farewelled the Hon. Julie Bishop who stepped down as Chair after five years, to allow her to focus on her critical role as the United Nations Secretary General’s Special Envoy to Myanmar.

Ms Bishop oversaw a period of significant growth at the Institute, helping to position The Kids as one of Australia’s most successful medical research organisations.

During her tenure Ms Bishop’s unwavering advocacy for child health research saw the establishment of the Julie Bishop Early to Mid-Career Female Researcher Award, which provided recipients with her financial and mentoring support.

This gift led to the creation of the Illuminate Awards, connecting our philanthropic community to our early to mid-career researchers to support their research ambitions. Since its launch we have had 29 awards and raised more than \$760,000 under Ms Bishop’s tenure. Of course, she also personally drove significant fundraising efforts, supporting many major and varied research initiatives.

Ms Bishop’s leadership and governance expertise helped to steer The Kids through many milestones during her tenure, including the transition to our home at Perth Children’s Hospital, our rebrand and the early development of our Research Reimagined strategic plan.

We note our sincere thanks for Ms Bishop in her time as Chair and for her unwavering and long-term commitment to The Kids.

In July, business leader Naomi Flutter replaced Ms Bishop in the role as Chair. Ms Flutter is the Executive General Manager, Corporate Affairs at Wesfarmers, with an existing strong connection to The Kids through our Wesfarmers Centre of Vaccines and Infectious Diseases.

With a business background, Ms Flutter brings a personal and professional interest in Indigenous health and education to the role.

One of her first roles was to launch the new brand with our key stakeholders.

Now steering The Kids as it embarks on its new strategic plan, Ms Flutter is focussed on relationships with partners, accelerating impact for kids, driving efficiency, ensuring corporate and research governance of the highest standard and transforming our operating model to help unlock capabilities and deliver stronger outcomes.





# BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**Hon. Julie Bishop, Chair (until June 2024)**  
**Chair of the Board, The Kids Research Institute Australia;** Chair, Remuneration and Nomination Committee, The Kids Research Institute Australia; Chancellor, Australian National University; Chair, King's Trust Australia; Trustee, The King's Trust Group Company; Global Board of Advisors of the Council on Foreign Affairs; Director, Julie Bishop and Partners; Patron, Shooting Stars; Special Envoy of the Secretary General of the United Nations on Myanmar.



**Naomi Flutter, Chair (from June 2024)**  
**Chair of the Board, The Kids Research Institute Australia;** Chair Remuneration and Nomination Committee, The Kids Research Institute Australia; Council member Scotch College Perth; Executive General Manager, Corporate Affairs, Wesfarmers Ltd.

**Professor Jonathan Carapetis AM**  
**Executive Director, The Kids Research Institute Australia;** Member, Finance Committee, The Kids Research Institute Australia; Member, Risk and Compliance Committee, The Kids Research Institute Australia; Member, Commercialisation Committee, The Kids Research Institute Australia; Chair, Association of Australian Medical Research Institutes (AAMRI) WA; Member, National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC); Member, Viertel Foundation Medical Advisory Board (MAB); Member, Sydney Institute for Women, Children and their Families, Advisory Board; Member, Kimberley Aboriginal Health Research Alliance (KAHRA) Board of Directors; Member, Executive Committee, SAVAC (Global GAS Vaccine Consortium).



**Fiona Drummond (until October 2024)**  
**Chair, Finance Committee, The Kids Research Institute Australia;** Member, Remuneration and Nomination Committee, The Kids Research Institute Australia; EY Managing Partner - Western Region and Assurance Partner; Fellow, Chartered Accountants in Australia and New Zealand; Fellow, Financial Services Institute of Australasia, Member Australian Institute of Company Directors; Fellow, Leadership WA program; Former Board Member, United Way WA.



**Jane Muirsmith**  
**Chair, Risk and Compliance Committee, The Kids Research Institute Australia;** Member Remuneration and Nomination Committee, The Kids Research Institute Australia; Non-Executive Director, Water Corporation; Chair, HealthDirect Australia; Non-Executive Director, Australian Finance Group; Non-Executive Director, Cedar Woods Properties Limited; Member, UWA Business School Ambassadorial Council Fellow, Executive Director, Lenox Hill; Graduate, Australian Institute of Company Directors; Former President, Women's Advisory Council to the WA Government.

**Ed Bostock**  
**Chair, Commercialisation Committee; The Kids Research Institute Australia;** Member Remuneration and Nomination Committee, The Kids Research Institute Australia; Former Chairman, Wespine Industries Pty Ltd; Managing Partner, Anchorage Capital Partners.



**Professor Jozef Gecz**  
**Member, Risk and Compliance Committee, The Kids Research Institute Australia;** Honorary Chair, Channel 7 Children's Research Foundation for the Prevention of Childhood Disability; Professor of Human Genetics, Adelaide Medical School, University of Adelaide; Fellow, Australian Academy of Health and Medical Sciences; Fellow, Australian Academy of Science; Founding Fellow, Faculty of Science of RCPA; Scientific Board Member of PCDH19 Alliance USA, PCDH19 ONLUS, Italy and FOXP1 Foundation.

**Nicole O'Connor**  
**Member, Commercialisation Committee, The Kids Research Institute Australia;** National Director for Mining, Utilities, Construction & Engineering, ServiceNow; Former Non-Executive Director, Remsense; Former Regional State Lead Public Sector, Amazon Web Services; Director of Research Services and Systems, Curtin University; Former General Manager Western Australia, SAP; Former Member, Advisory Board, Faculty of Business & Law, Curtin University; Former Member, Fremantle Primary School Board; Graduate, Australian Institute of Company Directors.



**Hon. Ben Wyatt**  
**Member Finance Committee, The Kids Research Institute Australia;** Non-executive Director, Woodside; Non-executive Director Rio Tinto; Non-executive Director, West Coast Eagles; Non-executive Director, Perth International Arts Festival; 'Member, Advisory Committee, Australian Capital Equity' Former WA State Treasurer.

**Professor Brendan Crabb AC**  
**Member Finance Committee, The Kids Research Institute Australia;** Chair, Australian Global Health Alliance; Chair Pacific Friends of Global Health; Member, Brain Cancer Research Advisory Committee; mRNA Victoria Scientific Advisory Board; Member, Advisory Board, Gene Technology Access Centre (GTAC), Victoria; Member, Scientific Advisory Board, Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute, UK; Adjunct Professor, The University of Melbourne; Adjunct Professor, Monash University; Former Member NHMRC Council (2015-22); Former President AAMRI (2012-14); Fellow of Australian Academy of Science (and Chair of SC9 Fellowship Committee), Fellow of the Australian Academy of Health and Medical Sciences, Director and CEO, Burnet Institute.



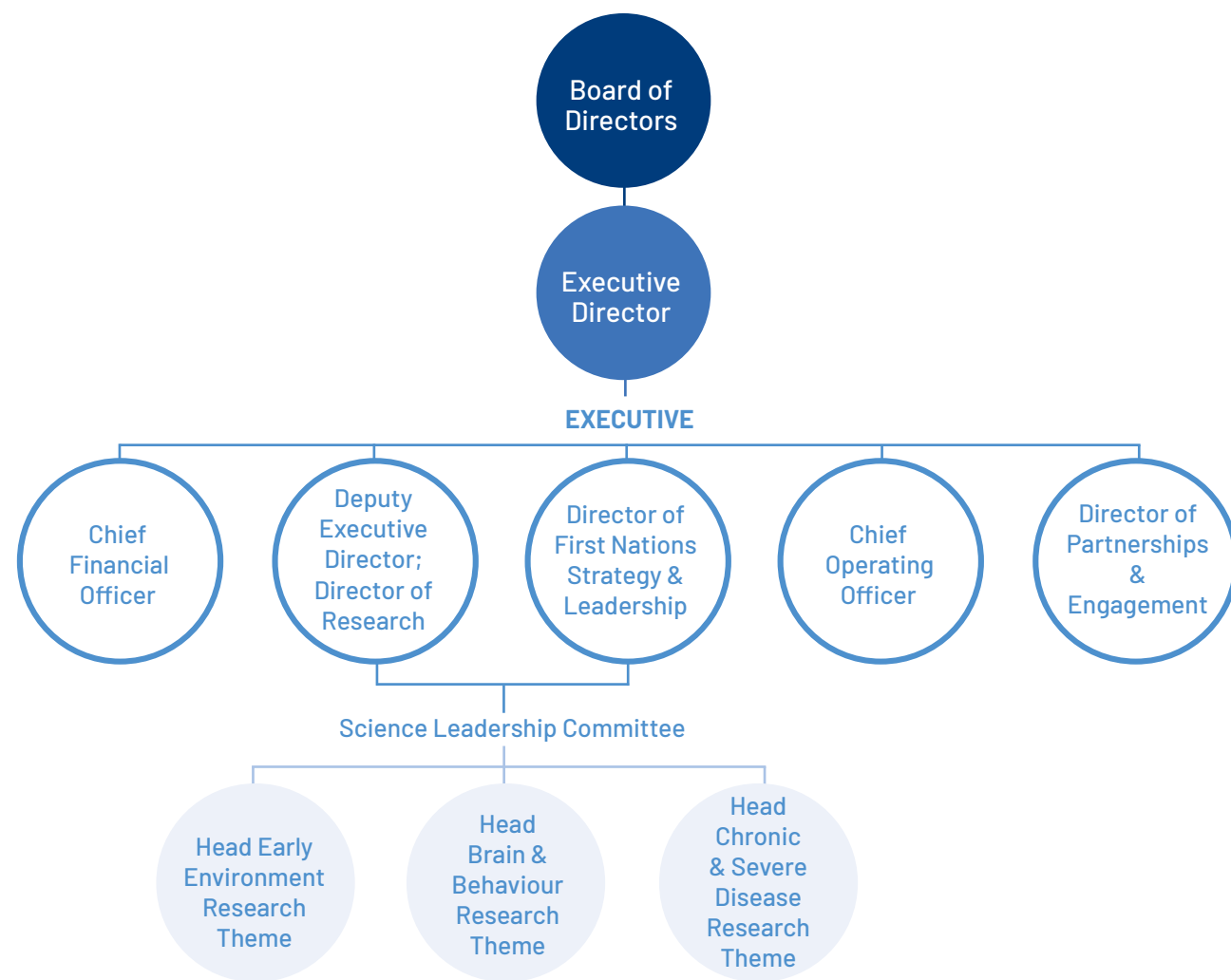
**Adam Maxwell**  
**Company Secretary, The Kids Research Institute Australia;** Chief Financial Officer, The Kids Research Institute. Australia.



**Helen McLean**  
**Company Secretary, The Kids Research Institute Australia;** Senior Lawyer, The Kids Research Institute Australia.



# ORGANISATIONAL CHART



# SCIENCE LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE

The Science Leadership Committee oversees the strategic direction of the science and research undertaken at The Kids InstituteThe Kids Research Institute Australia. It is the primary decision-making body for the organisation's science and research.

Pictured (L-R): A/Prof Glenn Pearson, Prof Liz Davis, Prof Catherine Elliott, Prof Jane Pillow, Prof Ben Jackson.



# EXECUTIVE



**Professor Catherine Elliott**  
**Deputy Director; Director of Research (until December 2024)**  
 Professor Elliott commenced as the Director of Research at the The Kids Research Institute Australia in 2020. Her leadership role brings people together to work collaboratively to elevate our research excellence to improve the health and development of children. Prior to starting at the Institute she was the Professorial Chair of Allied Health and Kids Rehab at Curtin University and the Child and Adolescent Health Service.

**Professor Jonathan Carapetis**  
**Executive Director**

Professor Carapetis is the Executive Director of the The Kids Research Institute Australia. He is also an infectious diseases consultant physician at Perth Children's Hospital and a Professor at The University of Western Australia. He holds qualifications as a medical practitioner (MBBS), specialist paediatrician (FRACP Paediatrics), specialist infectious diseases physician (FRACP Infect Dis), and specialist public health physician (FAFPHM).



**Associate Professor Glenn Pearson**  
**Director of First Nations Strategy & Leadership**  
 Associate Professor Glenn Pearson is a Nyoongar man and the Director of First Nations Strategy and Leadership at the The Kids Research Institute Australia, which is located on Nyoongar Whadjuk boodjar. A member of the Executive Team, his position leads the implementation of the Institute's Commitment to Aboriginal Children and Families (2020-2023) Statement. A trained primary school teacher, he has 15 years of experience in senior positions within the Australian and State Governments.



**Adam Maxwell**  
**Chief Financial Officer**  
 Adam Maxwell was appointed as Chief Financial Officer of The Kids Research Institute Australia in early 2023 following a seven-year tenure in the same role at Rocky Bay Limited, one of Western Australia's leading disability service providers. His ability to assist organisations through change is extensive and he was instrumental in helping relevant stakeholders to navigate through the once-in-a-lifetime revolutionary change that the National Disability Insurance Scheme has brought about.

**Donna O'Hara**  
**Chief Operating Officer**

Donna O'Hara brings a wealth of experience and expertise in healthcare operations and strategic leadership to The Kids. Her previous role was Chief Operating Officer at the Harry Perkins Institute of Medical Research, where she made significant contributions over three years. With more than 15 years of executive experience spanning healthcare, education, and community sectors, Donna has a proven track record in directing corporate services, community engagement, and employee services.



**Elizabeth Chester**  
**Director of Partnerships & Engagement**

Developing and deepening relationships with community, donors and funders, policy makers and practitioners is core to increasing the impact and sustainability of our research at The Kids Research Institute Australia. Elizabeth has responsibility for the fundraising and philanthropy, communications, marketing, government and community engagement functions at the Institute, as well as the support functions for Indigenous research. A journalist by profession, she has worked with the Institute for more than 20 years using her extensive experience in media, advocacy and stakeholder relations.



At The Kids, Donna leads a dynamic team responsible for managing our state-of-the-art research facilities based at Perth Children's Hospital, as well as overseeing critical functions like human resources, ICT/ security, and the Bioresources Facility. She plays a pivotal role in managing contractual arrangements, enhancing risk management practices, and spearheading strategic initiatives to advance our mission in paediatric health research.



# 35 YEARS OF THINKING OF THE KIDS

In its simplest form, science is about asking questions and finding answers. But it's what we do with those answers that really make a difference. For 35 years, The Kids Research Institute Australia has been changing the lives of children and young people for the better.

## SARCOMA



World-first immunotherapy gel applied inside wound after removal of solid tumours showing promising results in reducing recurrences

## HEALTHY SKIN



Developed national healthy skin guidelines to guide diagnosis and treatment of skin sores, scabies and fungal infections

## DEVELOPMENTAL DELAYS



Game-changing early intervention program for children showing neuro-development delays

## INFANT LEUKAEMIA



Survival improvements of 50-80% using new immunotherapy in combination with standard-of-care chemotherapies

## EAR INFECTIONS



Nasal therapy to prevent childhood ear infections – which are the major cause of childhood hearing loss

## CYSTIC FIBROSIS



Led paradigm-changing discoveries that lung changes can be detected early in CF, changing life trajectories with early interventions

## RHEUMATIC FEVER



Developing a diagnostic test for RF instead of current diagnosis based on clinical features

## RSV



Took part in two game-changing trials investigating a world-first RSV immunisation for babies.

Our epidemiological research helped identify best immunisation targets for Australian-first immunisation program for babies

## VACCINES



Conducted pivotal trials that contributed to the licencing of more than 10 childhood vaccines

## STREP A VACCINE



Leading the world in developing a platform to accelerate vaccines for Strep A

## PLAY ACTIVE



Evidence-based program of physical activity for childcare centres launched nationally

## EARLY YEARS CENSUS



Led the development and adoption of first national census of early childhood development

## RHEUMATIC HEART DISEASE



Developed a blueprint for eliminating RHD in Australia

## CEREBRAL PALSY



Developed the first cerebral palsy register in Australia

## CHILDHOOD BRAIN CANCER



Led trans-Tasman clinical study to validate a new diagnostic test for kids with brain cancer to better understand genomic characteristics of tumours

## SUICIDE CLUSTERS



Spatial epidemiology used to identify suicide clusters

## CYBERBULLYING



Developed Beacon – a cyber safety app for parents

## AUTISM



Key role in the development of national guidelines to assess and diagnose Autism Spectrum Disorder in Australia

## CHILD DISABILITY



Broke the mould for how quality of life is measured in intellectual disability

## RARE AND UNDIAGNOSED DISEASES



Pioneering genomic interrogation tool integrated into a national initiative, aiming to elevate diagnostic rates for rare diseases to over 70%

## TYPE 1 DIABETES



First in Australia to introduce insulin pump therapy to children with diabetes. Now at the international forefront of trials of an artificial pancreas

## PERIOPERATIVE CARE



Developed chewable tablets giving children sensation of a full stomach to reduce stress of fasting before surgery

## MALARIA



Using cutting-edge geospatial modelling to track and monitor malaria to inform control interventions, policies and programs

## FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER



Developed and implemented a diagnostic tool for fetal alcohol spectrum disorder in Australia

## FOLATE



Helped discover that folic acid in a mother's diet before and during pregnancy helps prevent neural tube defects

## RESPIRATORY DISEASE



Demonstrated the important role of safe sun exposure and Vitamin D during pregnancy for the development of a baby's lungs, brain and bones

## VAPES



Found the majority of e-cigarettes contained known lung toxins and potential carcinogens

## SUPERBUGS



Opened WA's first phage manufacturing facility which could see patients battling antibiotic-resistant superbugs have access to life-changing therapies

## SCREENTIME



World-leading study found toddlers exposed to screentime at home are hearing fewer words and making fewer vocalisations

## VIRTUAL WA




Developed a digital replica of the State to inform public health policy on matters including asthma, obesity and suicide



# OUR IMPACT


 **27**  
Clinical trials  
logged in 2024

 **75**  
Non-clinical trials  
logged in 2024

 We submitted  
**317**  
grant applications


 Awarded  
**\$50.2 million**  
in research funding

 Researchers received  
**83%** of the funding pool from the  
WA Child Health Research Fund

 Our work was cited in  
**272**  
policy documents from  
**24**  
countries

 This includes  
**58** policy documents published  
by Intergovernmental  
Organisations,  
such as the World Health  
Organization, United Nations  
and World Bank

 Our research  
contributed to  
**648**  
publications

 Our total body of  
**7,266**  
publications gained more than  
**45,000**  
new citations

 **146**  
of our articles had a  
CNCI greater than two


 **46**  
researchers had a  
Scopus H-index  
greater than 40





## GLOBAL IMPACT - OUR POLICY DOCUMENTS AROUND THE WORLD

INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS .....	56
AUSTRALIA .....	44
CANADA .....	40
USA .....	32
UK .....	21
EU .....	11
SWITZERLAND .....	11
FRANCE .....	8
GERMANY .....	8
SWEDEN .....	6
DENMARK .....	5
NETHERLAND .....	5
IRELAND .....	4
NEW ZEALAND .....	4
FINLAND .....	3
SPAIN .....	3
BELGIUM .....	2
KENYA .....	2
SOUTH KOREA .....	2
AUSTRIA .....	1
ICELAND .....	1
INDIA .....	1
JAPAN .....	1
NORWAY .....	1

## OUR REACH

 We were mentioned  
**2,988** times in  
the media

 Reached  
**2.83 million**  
people through our social  
media channels

 We visited  
**68** schools

 **5,469**  
students attended our  
workshops and festivals

 We travelled  
**10,707km**  
delivering programs to  
schools and communities

## OUR PEOPLE

 **831**  
Employees

 **168**  
Students

 **53**  
Volunteers

 **334**  
Honoraries



## RESEARCH THEMES



We are searching for answers to some of the most debilitating and chronic conditions that affect children. Our four research themes are Indigenous Health, Brain and Behaviour, Chronic and Severe Diseases and Early Environment.

### Indigenous Health

Indigenous Health is an overarching research theme at The Kids Research Institute Australia in recognition of the priority we place in addressing the ongoing disparity in outcomes for Aboriginal children compared with other Australian kids. It is embedded across every research theme with all research expected to be inclusive in considering the specific cultural, social and economic contexts of Aboriginal families and children. We set high standards for the conduct of Aboriginal research and are committed to working in genuine partnership with community, responding to their priorities.

#### Indigenous kids cancer

A first of its kind research program at The Kids aims to develop new strategies to better treat First Nations children with cancer. Aboriginal children with cancer have much worse outcomes and poorer tolerance to current therapies, with very little understanding why. The new program, led by Kamilaroi woman, Dr Jess Buck from the WA Kids Cancer Centre, will aid in the development of life-saving and life-altering treatments for First Nations kids with cancer.

#### Gong for Dr Justine Clark

Dr Justine Clark was one of two scientists nationally to receive the Australian Academy of Science's 2024 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Science Award. Dr Clark is an Adnyamathanha woman and post-doctoral researcher in Indigenous genomics. Her focus on precision cancer research will contribute to international efforts to improve Indigenous cancer health equity.



Dr Justine Clark

#### Infection rates halved

A large-scale Australian skin study has halved the rate of skin infections experienced by Aboriginal children living in remote communities, with regular skin checks key to the stunning result. Led by The Kids and Aboriginal health organisations in close partnership with nine Aboriginal communities in WA's Kimberley, the five year SToP Trial set out to identify the best methods to See Treat and Prevent painful skin sores and scabies.



#### Professor Alex Brown made Academy Fellow

Trailblazing Aboriginal doctor and health researcher Professor Alex Brown was made a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering in recognition of his leadership in ensuring Indigenous peoples are at the forefront of genomics efforts nationally and internationally.

#### Childrens' book tackles eczema

A children's book written by community, for community, has been launched in WA's south-west to help children and families understand more about one of the common inflammatory skin conditions in children. Kaal Tackles Eczema was developed by the Koolungar Moorditj Healthy Skin Project at The Kids after research identified nearly 20 per cent of Aboriginal children living in urban areas had eczema.



Brain and Behaviour

Brain and Behaviour focuses on the core of many issues impacting the ongoing health and wellbeing of children and young people. Our research investigates the developmental, genetic, family and environmental determinants of child wellbeing and how clinical, educational and community practices can provide every child with the best opportunity for optimal health and development.

Keeping kids active



More than 80,000 Australian children are expected to benefit as 700 childcare centres across the country trial a new program aimed at boosting declining physical activity levels. Australia is currently sitting on a D- for children's physical activity – a statistic that hasn't changed since 2015. The Australian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for the Early Years state children aged 3–5 years should be getting three or more hours of physical activity per day, including 60 minutes of energetic play, but only one in ten young children are achieving this. The Kids Research Institute Australia-developed Play Active program – backed by 10 years of research and co-created with the early childhood education and care (ECEC) sector – aims to reverse the trend by helping early childhood educators to support children to be more active while in childcare.

Big data, big results

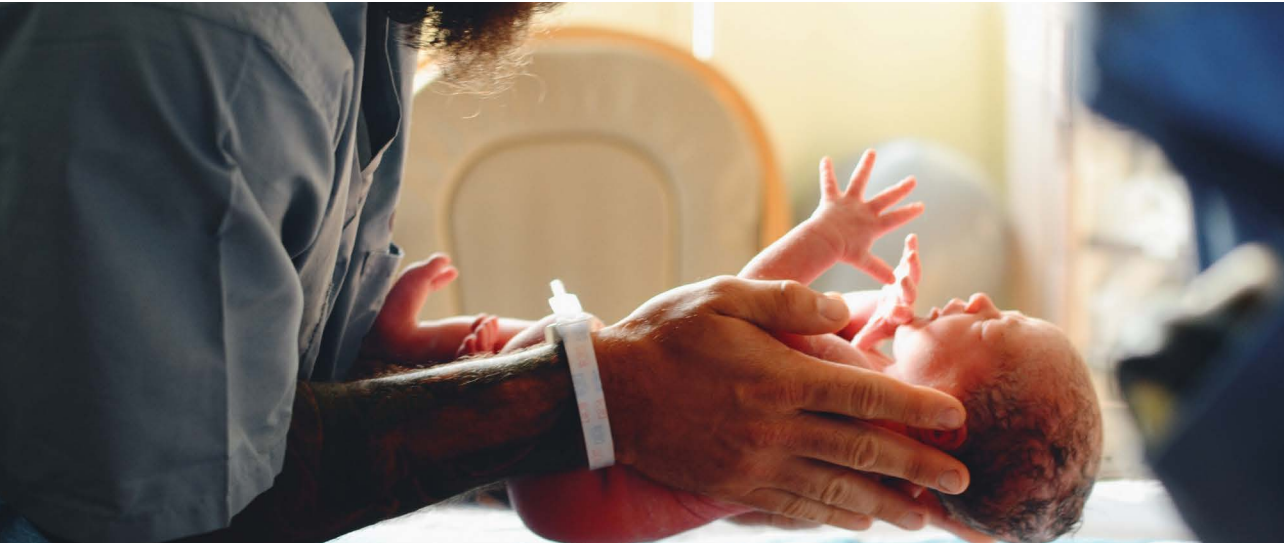
Researchers will use cutting edge big data and geospatial modelling techniques to tackle the dramatic decline in the number of West Australian children walking or riding to school, thanks to a Healthway grant of almost \$200,000 awarded to a team from The Kids Research Institute Australia and Curtin University. Forty years ago 75 per cent of children walked or rode to school, but this has now dropped to just one in five, meaning children are missing valuable opportunities to incorporate physical activity into their daily routines. To try to understand what's stopping children from 'actively travelling' to school, and what might encourage more to do so, the research team will create an innovative simulator that models different factors specific to different school zones.

Asthma mapping

Children who live in the outer suburbs of Australia's four biggest cities are twice as likely to have asthma as those living in inner city areas, according to a new study based on health data captured in the last Australian Census. The data was gathered after Australians completing the 2021 Census were asked for the first time to share information about long-term health conditions, to help researchers map patterns of chronic disease across the country. A team led by geospatial modelling expert Associate Professor Ewan Cameron – from The Kids and Curtin University – combined the data with cutting-edge statistical modelling and satellite imagery to intricately map the distribution of childhood asthma and look for environmental or other risk factors.

Dads' mental health matters

The mental health and wellbeing of new fathers whose children end up in neonatal intensive care is the focus of a new project to be led by The Kids researchers, thanks to a \$388,000 grant from Healthway. The research project will identify ways to help Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) practitioners better support fathers as part of routine preterm care, ultimately delivering better outcomes for children and families. The research will involve 200 fathers of babies admitted to the NICUs at King Edward Memorial and Perth Children's Hospitals, with the results to be incorporated into a program of materials that can be accessed both in-person and online.





# Chronic and Severe Diseases

Childhood cancers, diabetes, respiratory conditions and rare diseases can be debilitating and life threatening. Our Chronic and Severe Diseases research theme interrogates effective intervention and prevention to understand the complex interactions between genetic and environmental factors, as well as better ways of diagnosing, treating and controlling disease.

## Immunotherapy sarcoma treatment

2024-2025 Cure Cancer grant recipient and The Kids cancer researcher Dr Ben Wylie and his team have developed a biodegradable gel that surgeons can apply locally during cancer removal surgery on children with sarcoma. The gel will release mRNA-based immunotherapy drugs in the surgical area, which act as messengers to activate the immune system to seek out and destroy cancer cells. As the gel is naturally broken down by the body, the drugs are slowly released over time, reducing the need for children to stay in hospital for gruelling follow-up treatments and allowing them to return home to their families sooner.

## Down syndrome leukaemia study

A team of world-leading scientists secured \$5 million in funding from the Leukaemia and Lymphoma Society to advance the fight against leukaemia in children with Down syndrome. The funding will support four innovative projects that aim to develop better, less harmful treatments for these vulnerable kids.



Associate Professor Alexander Larcombe

## Informing policy on vaping

The Kids formative research has helped inform world-leading vaping reforms, aiming to protect young Australians and the broader community from the harm caused by vapes. Associate Professor Alexander Larcombe, Head of Respiratory Environmental Health at the Wal-yan Respiratory Research Centre – a powerhouse partnership between The Kids Research Institute Australia, Perth Children’s Hospital and Perth Children’s Hospital Foundation – spearheaded a research program on e-cigarette contents and health impacts. His dedicated research and advocacy efforts have significantly shaped public perception of e-cigarettes and generated evidence-informed policy that delivers tangible benefits in our community.

## Cancer researcher of the year



Associate Professor Rishi Kotecha

Associate Professor Rishi Kotecha, Co-Head of Leukaemia Translational Research at The Kids Research Institute Australia Cancer Centre and Consultant Paediatric Oncologist at Perth Children’s Hospital, was named Cancer Council WA’s 2024 Cancer Researcher of the Year. The prestigious award recognises Associate Professor Kotecha’s contributions to advancing leukaemia research and improving access to clinical trials and cutting-edge therapies for infants and children in Western Australia.

## Fighting antimicrobial resistance

One out of every 10 children with a bloodstream infection are infected with a multi-drug resistant organism in the nation’s first-ever surveillance study investigating the prevalence of paediatric antimicrobial resistance (AMR). The Australian Group on Antimicrobial Resistance (AGAR) Kids Report, prepared by the Wesfarmers Centre of Vaccines and Infectious Diseases, based at The Kids Research Institute Australia, used data collected from 38 laboratories throughout the country to identify the strains of bacteria responsible for sending kids to hospital.



Early Environment

Early Environment is our research theme which examines the ways that environments early in life can affect a child's lifelong health and development. Factors ranging from infection and climatic conditions to pollutants, housing and our complex microbiome all have an impact. Understanding these exposures and their impact on early growth and development is key to preventing and treating a number of common childhood conditions.

ORIGINS milestone



Professor Desiree Silva

Australia's biggest longitudinal study of its kind, following the health and wellbeing of children from their conception through to childhood, welcomed its 10,000th and final participant. ORIGINS Co-Director and Professor of Paediatrics Desiree Silva said it was exciting to have reached the major milestone.

IRON Child study

A third of Western Australian one-year-olds and up to two thirds of three-year-olds have low iron, a study by The Kids Research Institute Australia found. IRON Child, a sub-project of longitudinal birth study ORIGINS, was undertaken with project partner, Joondalup Health Campus (JHC). ORIGINS Co-Director and Joondalup Health Campus Professor of Paediatrics Desiree Silva said the findings were concerning because low iron was potentially detrimental at such a critical stage of life and development.

Breakfast helps school results

A study by The Kids researchers revealed the clear link between eating breakfast and academic success, with students who skip breakfast some or all of the time achieving poorer NAPLAN results than children who always eat breakfast. In research published in the journal Public Health Nutrition, a team from The Kids studied the student-reported breakfast habits of 28,651 South Australian school children aged 8-16. They then examined how the same students performed in that year's NAPLAN tests – standardised national literacy and numeracy tests undertaken by students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 – to see if there was any link between the two. Led by Senior Research Officer Dr Alanna Sincovich from The Kids' Adelaide office, the study found students who never ate breakfast were almost twice as likely to perform poorly in NAPLAN numeracy tests and 1.6 times as likely to do poorly in reading tests.

Peanut allergy trial

Mothers eating a diet rich in peanuts while breastfeeding might be helping to reduce their baby's risk of developing a peanut allergy – that's the hypothesis of a new clinical trial that has been granted \$2.29 million in funding by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC). Led by The Kids Head of the Early Life & Life-Course Health Program, Associate Professor Debbie Palmer, 4,000 pregnant women across Perth and Melbourne will be recruited over the course of the five-year trial.

Breast milk liquid gold



A new international study, published in Microbiome, has revealed that the first drops of breast milk are crucial for healthy growth at birth and can help combat chronic undernutrition, which affects 200 million children and causes more than three million deaths annually worldwide. Led by Professor Valerie Verhasselt, Director of the Larsson-Rosenquist Foundation Centre for Immunology and Breastfeeding (CIBF) at The University of Western Australia's Medical School and The Kids Research Institute Australia, the research highlights the crucial impact of diet at birth on healthy growth, independent of the gut microbiota.



# OUR PEOPLE

Five outstanding members of The Kids Research Institute Australia family were named in the 2024 Australia Day Honours List. Their research has been supported over many years by significant partners including the Channel 7 Telethon Trust and by competitive grants.



**Associate Professor Hayley Christian**

Associate Professor Hayley Christian was made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in recognition of her internationally respected research on the importance of physical activity in the early years. This honour is awarded for service in a particular locality or field of activity or to a particular group. Associate Professor Christian is Head of the Child Physical Activity, Health and Development research team and Program Head of Health Behaviours and Environments at The Kids and The University of Western Australia, Co-Director of the WA Node of the ARC Centre for Excellence for Children and Families over the Life Course, and a National Heart Foundation Future Leader Fellow.



**Professor Fiona Wood AO**

Burns specialist Professor Fiona Wood was made an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) in recognition of her distinguished service to plastic and reconstructive surgery and medical research, and as a clinician scientist and mentor.



**Professor Asha Bowen OAM**

Infectious diseases clinician-researcher Professor Asha Bowen was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the King's Birthday Honours List for her service to medicine in the field of clinical diseases.

**Associate Professor Hannah Moore**

**Associate Professor Hannah Moore**

Associate Professor Hannah Moore was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for services to epidemiology – particularly her efforts to understand and address the burden of respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and influenza. Associate Professor Moore is Program Head of Infections and Vaccines within the Wesfarmers Centre of Vaccines and Infectious Diseases at The Kids, Co-lead of the Infectious Diseases Epidemiology Team, and an Associate Professor within the Curtin School of Population Health at Curtin University. Her primary focus is using the power of population-based data to answer critical questions around the burden, risk factors and seasonal patterns of infectious diseases in specific populations, including children and vulnerable communities.



**Aunty Millie Penny AM**

Longstanding Elder cultural advisor Aunty Millie Penny was made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in recognition of her invaluable contributions to the Aboriginal community through a variety of roles. Aunty Millie, a Noongar Yorga woman from the Pinjarra area south of Perth, is an Elder Co-Researcher at The Kids and a Founding Member and former Senior Counsellor with the Yorgum Aboriginal Corporation. She has been an Elder cultural advisor to a range of Aboriginal research projects at The Kids since 2016, and in 2019 became an Honorary Research Associate with the Institute. Aunty Millie is pictured with Western Australian Governor and The Kids Patron, His Excellency the Hon Chris Dawson AC APM.



# OUR PEOPLE

## Dr Pam Laird

Respiratory health researcher and clinician Dr Pam Laird was named joint winner of the Early Career Scientist of Year at the 2024 WA Premier's Science Awards. Dr Laird was recognised for her significant contribution towards reducing the chronic respiratory disease burden in Aboriginal children.



## Dr Mary Brushe

Dr Mary Brushe won the PhD Research Excellence at South Australia's Science Excellence and Innovation Awards for her work revealing the link between screentime exposure and toddlers' language development.



## Dr Kefyalew Alene

Dr Kefyalew Alene was named the Association of Australian Medical Research Institutes 2024 Rising Star in recognition of his groundbreaking work into tuberculosis and strategies needed to control the disease.



## Professor Britta Regli-von Ungern-Sternberg

Professor Britta Regli-von Ungern-Sternberg received the Frank Fenner Prize for Life Sciences at the 2024 Prime Minister's Prizes for Science in recognition of her achievements in reducing the risks associated with paediatric anaesthesia.



## Mitch Messer

Health consumer champion and The Kids community engagement team member Mitch Messer won the Community category at the 2024 West Australian of Year Awards. He was recognised for committing 40 years to bridging the gap between health consumers, the health system and policy makers.

Miitch Messer



2024 IMPACT

Research breakthrough gives hope to children with rare and undiagnosed diseases



Charlotte Patterson with her brother Josh and mother Laura West

Scientists at The Kids Research Institute Australia, together with the Undiagnosed Diseases Program and Perth Children's Hospital (PCH), combined medical expertise with laboratory investigations and cutting-edge computational biology to uncover a unique combination of cellular characteristics which pinpointed the cause of an undiagnosed disease that has puzzled doctors since 10-year-old Northam girl Charlotte Patterson was born.

The researchers then scoured literature and data from around the world to find other patients with similar traits to match the findings to the condition,

which they now believe affects less than 10 people globally.

The findings were delivered to Charlotte's family by doctors from the Undiagnosed Disease Program (UDP) at PCH.

The quest to find the cause of Charlotte's condition started in 2019 and was boosted in 2020 by a donation of more than \$1.1 million raised at that year's Channel Seven Telethon Ball.

The Kids' Precision Health Program Head and computational biologist, Dr Timo Lassmann, said discovering the characteristics of the variant gene

which caused Charlotte's disease was like finding a needle in a haystack.

"Charlotte's case was extremely complicated and challenging because of the unique characteristics of the variant," Dr Lassmann said. "Now, as a result of this work, we will be able to apply the process we used to other cases to diagnose unknown diseases more quickly."

In her short life Charlotte has been diagnosed with cerebral palsy, seizure disorder, a heart defect, intellectual disability and many physical abnormalities that until now, have been unexplained. She has had 64 surgeries, takes 16 different medications daily and requires a feeding tube.

Her mother, Laura West, said it had been extremely difficult for the family to not know what caused Charlotte's condition.

"We had no roadmap, no idea what the future might look like or what her lifespan might be," Mrs West said. "We have just had this endless and ever-growing list of things that are wrong with Charlotte and no idea what caused any of them."

The Kids' Translational Genetics Team Head, Dr Vanessa Fear, said the discovery of what caused Charlotte's condition was astounding. After a complicated process of assessing the genetic variant in the laboratory, The Kids' researchers discovered the variant was actually changing the basic machinery in cells responsible for the gene and protein expression, and altering the way the neural cells were developing.

Dr Fear said researchers had created a model of Charlotte's disease in the laboratory so they could not only determine what was causing her symptoms, but also investigate how they could modify cell pathways to improve outcomes for Charlotte.

"I am just really proud to have been a part of this process where so many people have worked every little step of the way, from collecting blood samples to analysing the cells, to finally providing this extremely valuable data we could feed back to

Charlotte's clinician and her family," Dr Fear said.

UDP lead Dr Gareth Baynam said families with a child with an undiagnosed disease were forced to live in 'limbo land' where their world was filled with uncertainty.

"You don't know what the right treatment is, and you don't know if you're receiving the wrong treatment," Dr Baynam said.

"What I hope is that through getting this diagnosis it really does help Charlotte have better health and to have more certainty about what the future brings.

"We can now unequivocally say that Charlotte is going to have a long life. She is not going to go backwards, there is a path forward."

Mrs West said receiving a diagnosis for Charlotte was life-changing for her family. "It gives us hope for the future," she said. "I think the best bit was learning that this specific gene variant has just occurred out of the blue. It was something that happened and it not hereditary and can't be passed on." This was particularly important for Charlotte's three siblings.

Dr Lassmann said the case underscored the vital role of collaboration between clinical and research teams and highlighted the value of translational genetics teams taking on the most difficult cases.

The Kids Executive Director, Professor Jonathan Carapetis, said the discovery was groundbreaking and set up a pipeline for similar breakthroughs in rare and undiagnosed diseases.

"The work The Kids' computational biology team is undertaking is world-leading," Professor Carapetis said. "They are using cutting-edge technologies and computational science to unlock some of the biggest medical mysteries and help other children with undiagnosed diseases."



## Nation-leading RSV immunisation program cuts babies' hospital admissions by almost 90 per cent

**An Australian-first study demonstrating the effectiveness of a new immunisation against respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) for babies found it to be 88.2 per cent effective in reducing hospitalisation rates and helped more than 500 WA families avoid a hospital stay.**

Led by researchers at the Wesfarmers Centre of Vaccine and Infectious Diseases, based at The Kids Research Institute Australia, and funded by Perth Children's Hospital Foundation, the REVIVE Study investigated RSV-related hospital admissions following the introduction of WA's immunisation program providing babies with a long-acting monoclonal antibody called nirsevimab.

Affecting the airways and lungs, RSV is a life-threatening virus responsible for sending 3.6 million children to hospitals worldwide each year. It is especially dangerous for vulnerable young babies at high risk of potentially deadly complications such as severe bronchiolitis and pneumonia.

"Western Australian researchers have had a long-term commitment to providing protection against RSV and this resulted in WA leading the way as the first Australian state to announce a government-funded nirsevimab program for all babies born throughout winter in 2024," Dr Ushma Wadia said.

"More than 24,000 doses of nirsevimab were distributed throughout April - September last year, providing coverage to 85 per cent of newborns and 66 per cent of a 'catch-up' cohort of babies in the lead-up to their first winter season.

"With the support of Perth Children's Hospital Foundation, as well as the Stan Perron Charitable Foundation for our on-going RSV research program, our team worked alongside WA Health to evaluate hospitalisation rates at Perth Children's Hospital, Fiona Stanley Hospital and Joondalup Health Campus, and allowed us to become the first place in the southern hemisphere to successfully demonstrate the major impact of RSV immunisation in young babies," Dr Ushma Wadia said.

Published in The Journal of Infection, the study also investigated the effect immunisation had on the severity of RSV cases, with nirsevimab recipients 60 per cent less likely to require oxygen or assistance with their breathing if admitted with RSV.

Carrick Robinson, CEO of Perth Children's Hospital Foundation, said the results of this groundbreaking study are extremely promising. With a dramatic reduction in hospital admissions for RSV, WA is setting the standard in protecting our youngest and most vulnerable. Not only does this ease the pressure on our hospitals and emergency departments, but it also ensures families are spared the stress and strain of hospital stays.

"Through funding innovative initiatives like this, which have the potential to make a real difference in the lives of children and their families, as well as reducing the burden on the healthcare system, not only in WA but across Australia for years to come," Mr Robinson said.

For Professor Chris Blyth, Head of the Wesfarmers Centre of Vaccines and Infectious Diseases, it is the global significance of this work that is hugely significant.

"The data gained from the REVIVE Study aligns with outcomes from research conducted in the northern hemisphere and can now be used as evidence to inform vaccine policy throughout the world, including in lower-income countries where morbidity rates for RSV are at their highest," Professor Blyth said.

The success of WA's nirsevimab program also contributed to the rollout of a national, \$174.5 million RSV immunisation program now underway for all pregnant women and newborn babies which hopes to keep 10,000 Australian babies out of hospital each year.

"Researchers from the Wesfarmers Centre have spent the last two decades participating in global vaccine studies to develop safe and effective world-first RSV immunisations, so being able to see the outcomes of this work first-hand is certainly very rewarding for all involved," Professor Blyth said.

Riley Kent with her mum Alexandra Cogan





## World-first Inklings program launches in South Australia

The Kids Deputy Director Professor Andrew Whitehouse, Inklings South Australia Program Manager Samantha Welke, Inklings SA Operations Coordinator Rachel Buckingham, Inklings General Manager Gemma Upson, Inklings Senior Manager Rebecca Langford, Office for Autism Acting Director Sarah Kemp and The Kids Chief of Staff Dr Mitch Hartman at the Adelaide launch



**South Australian families with babies showing early social and communication differences will be among the first to benefit from a nation-leading early support program, as The Kids Research Institute Australia's Inklings Program officially launches in South Australia.**

Thanks to a joint investment by the Albanese and Malinauskas Governments, the program will help caregivers understand the needs of babies between the ages of six to 18 months who are showing early developmental differences and build the capacity of families to better support their child.

Inklings uses short videos of the caregiver with their baby to help parents better understand their

baby's thoughts and feelings, the different ways that babies communicate, the importance of interaction, and of following their baby's focus of interest.

The \$14.8 million program is funded by the Department of Social Services and the South Australian Government, in partnership with The Kids Research Institute Australia across the state, including Northern Adelaide, Adelaide metro, regional areas, Lower Eyre, and Far North (regional and remote).

The pilot program has already seen success in Western Australia, providing families with valuable support and resources.

Professor Andrew Whitehouse, Deputy Director at The Kids, welcomed the expansion of Inklings to South Australia.

**"The Inklings Program launching in South Australia means that more families will have early support at their fingertips," Professor Whitehouse said.**

**"Early support, when it is needed most, will help families at a crucial time in their child's development, providing long-term benefits for the child's future."**

"It's a great feeling to see the translation of this life-changing research making a difference to families

who need support. This is a truly exciting moment for South Australia."

Delivery of the program was a key recommendation of South Australia's Royal Commission into Early Childhood Education and Care.

It will focus on breaking down barriers for families from First Nations, culturally and linguistically diverse, and low-socioeconomic backgrounds to access the program.

This marks the second stage of an early care initiative, building on previous efforts to support families at the earliest stages of their child's development.



## Philanthropic legacy for kids cancer research

**One of WA's biggest ever philanthropic gifts will transform childhood cancer research and treatment by improving outcomes for children with cancer and discovering more effective and less toxic treatments.**

The Stan Perron Charitable Foundation will contribute \$135.5 million over the next decade to the multi-partner collaboration, which will build on the significant work already being undertaken by Perth Children's Hospital and The Kids Research Institute Australia.

Perth Children's Hospital Foundation (PCHF) will also make a multi-million dollar contribution over the next five years with an option to extend and The University of Western Australia will add up to \$9 million to help improve the lives of kids impacted by cancer in WA and across the globe.

The financial commitment from the Stan Perron Charitable Foundation, one of WA's oldest charities, is an incredible contribution to the State and a fitting legacy to its founder, businessman Stan Perron, who died in 2018.

Child and Adolescent Health Service Chief Executive, Valerie Jovanovic said investing in childhood cancer research and care was important with 1240 Australian children diagnosed with cancer each year.

"Childhood cancer is the leading cause of death by disease for Australian children," Ms Jovanovic said.

"We have a great opportunity to do more in this space and give our children and young people access to world-leading care and research.

"This field is moving extremely rapidly with precision medicine, genomics and other science advances. The donation will not only benefit Western Australian children – it will allow our Perth Children's Hospital clinicians and The Kids researchers to contribute to these advances and lead the field in their areas of expertise."

Chair of the Stan Perron Charitable Foundation, Elizabeth Perron said the intent and objectives of the Comprehensive Kids Cancer Centre aligned

perfectly with the intent of the Foundation established by her father.

"The Foundation's guiding principles for giving expressly target any activity that improves the health and wellbeing of children in Western Australia," Ms Perron said.

"While the funding is significant, like all projects funded by the Foundation, we are concerned less by the amount of money donated but primarily by the impact of the activity on the lives of children."

Cutting-edge laboratory and clinical research have been shown to improve short, medium and long-term patient outcomes through seamless operational and cultural integration between researchers and clinicians.

Importantly, it can immediately translate into improved treatment, survival and whole-of-life outcomes for patients.

While this is already happening at Perth Children's Hospital (PCH) and The Kids, the initiative will give the work a longer-term future, underpinned by sustained funding instead of short-term, project-based grants. It will also mean no Western Australian child will miss out on the best treatment available.

Professor Nick Gottardo, head of the Oncology and Haematology Department at PCH, said in the past 70 years only 50 new drugs had been approved to treat paediatric cancers, whereas for adults 60 cancer drugs were approved every year.

"Current treatments for kids cancer cause severe and often life-long side effects including problems with emotions, reproduction, growth, development, hormones, learning, memory problems, heart, lung, digestive system, hearing, vision and most strikingly, can cause secondary cancers," Professor Gottardo said.

"This amazing donation will give us the chance to build on the world-leading research we are already undertaking and ensure kids in WA can be treated right here in WA.



Announcing the game-changing donation (left to right): UWA's Professor Anna Nowak, Child and Adolescent Health Service Chief Executive Valerie Jovanovic, Health Minister Amber-Jade Sanderson, Tracey Hollington, Angus Hollington, Professor Nick Gottardo, Medical Research Minister Stephen Dawson, Elizabeth Perron, Associate Professor Joost Lesterhuis, The Kids Executive Director Professor Jonathan Carapetis, Perth Children's Hospital Foundation CEO Carrick Robinson

**"It will mean that kids with cancer will have access to the best treatment options without needing to leave the State and kids diagnosed with cancer in the future will benefit from transformative discovery research.**

**"It will advance our pre-clinical discovery pipeline to significantly improve outcomes for kids yet to be diagnosed with cancer, to discover more effective and less toxic treatments that will be adopted worldwide and to improve the lives of kids impacted by cancer globally.**

**"Our vision is for all kids with cancer to survive and thrive."**

The Kids Executive Director Professor Jonathan Carapetis said the initiative was a research model exemplar where researchers, clinicians and families

with lived experience had charted a course for what would be needed in kids' cancer research and treatment in the next decade.

**"This is research reimaged. Nothing about this work is business as usual. It has been borne out of genuine partnerships with kids and families at the heart of the plan.**

"This funding is a game-changer for childhood cancer research and treatment in WA.

"It will bring together 'Team WA' – an interdisciplinary team of clinicians and researchers; it will also attract and retain the brightest minds in this field from around the world and facilitate the purchase of the most advanced equipment needed to ensure game-changing research breakthroughs," Professor Carapetis said.

Key local partners also include the Harry Perkins Institute of Medical Research, Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital, Linear Clinical Research and the Cancer Council of Western Australia.



# THANK YOU

## PHILANTHROPIC SPECTRUM

What powers the work of our talented researchers every day is the community's support in helping us to achieve our mission. Our incredibly generous and passionate donors have been critically important in our success as one of Australia's leading child health research institutes. That success sees us deliver real-world impact to kids and families who need it most.

Each supporter's story is unique. Some people choose to support us through fundraising efforts coordinated by local schools or clubs. Some families choose to make a gift at the end of the tax year. A group of visionary supporters have joined our Fiona Stanley Circle by leaving a gift to the Institute in their Will to sustain our work for generations to come. We have partnered with Trusts, Foundations and corporations who support our research with multi-year commitments to fund transformational and world-leading work. Our staff are also a special part of fundraising and generously give through workplace giving, raising tens of thousands of dollars a year to champion the work of their colleagues, including grants to help early career researchers get vital funding at the beginning of their research career.





# PITCHFEST

## Philanthropy kickstarts science careers through innovative awards

Philanthropy is empowering early to mid-career researchers to kickstart their innovative projects thanks to a unique initiative introduced at The Kids Research Institute Australia.

Now in its third year, Illuminate Pitchfest challenges emerging scientists to pitch their research to a room of donors and inspire them to fund their projects. Launched in 2021 by The Kids former Chair, the Hon Julie Bishop, the awards have supported 29 early to mid-career researchers and raised more than \$760,000.

For Dr Jane Choi the award gave her the opportunity to start her research into the role body clocks have in improving the lung health of premature babies and to find simple, safe and affordable therapies to avoid adverse health consequences.

“The Illuminate Awards have helped me to connect with the community, my donors and to kickstart my project with confidence,” Dr Choi said.

Dr Vincent Mancini, senior research fellow in the Human Development and Community Wellbeing Team, said his award provided him with the seed funding he needed to start a project making a difference to the lives of Australian babies and their families.

Thanks to the funding, Dr Mancini has been able to continue his work focussed on empowering fathers and father figures to improve the health and wellbeing of children, particularly babies admitted to the neonatal intensive care unit.

Fathers are a critical source of support for mothers and babies during this period, but they don't have access to suitable services to help them navigate



Dr Sonia McAlister and Naomi Flutter

such a difficult time. Dr Mancini’s research is seeking to improve the health and wellbeing of NICU babies by helping fathers in their role as a primary source of support for mothers and babies.

The Awards provides participating researchers with three minutes to literally sell their research project to prospective donors.

Acting Director, Partnerships and Engagement Alecia Benzie, said the concept had proven extremely successful not just for the researchers but also for donors.

“It is actually an extremely personal way of connecting researchers with the donor community,” Ms Benzie said. “Often their research stories have personal significance, for example, from an illness that impacted them as a child or may have impacted a close family member or friend, and that had influenced their career path.

“The process also means that the researchers learn how to clearly articulate what can be quite complicated projects, in a way that is easy to understand to members of the public.

“At the same time, donors get to know the researchers whose work they are contributing to, and it really personalises their generous gift and perhaps gives them a greater sense of purpose.

“Donors are kept informed about the projects’ progress and we have ongoing thank you events throughout the event to keep the donors and researchers connected. The awards really are very special.”

Other projects supported by Pitchfest have included research into the toxicity of the aerosol inhaled by vape users, initial work on a clinical trial to provide timely and effective management of early lung disease in Indigenous children, new therapies to improve the recovery and survival for children with high-risk leukaemia and developing phage therapy to combat antimicrobial resistance in children.



The 2025 Pitchfest finalists from left to right - Dr Laurence Cheung, Dr Jack Brett, Dr Thomas Nevill, Dr Sonia McAlister, Dr Laura Coleman, Board Chair Naomi Flutter, Pitchfest mentor Professor Jane Pillow, Dr Brittany Dewdney, Dr Renee Ng, Dr Zahra Abbas, Dr Jua Iwasaki, Dr Sharon Clark



Dr Jua Iwasaki pitching her research to donors



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Packer Family Foundation

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Sandy Booth  
Hannah Boseley  
Davide Bosio  
Jenny Bourke  
Andrew Bowler  
Gary Brabham  
Kyden Bradley  
Kay Brennan  
Cheryl Bridge  
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Elissa Brown & Brett Cornelius  
Geoffrey Brown  
Darryl Bruce & Nicole Ashby  
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Steven & Julianne Burgess  
Maicey Burkett  
Katie Burrage  
Matthew Burvill  
Jeremy Butler  
Clint & Laura Butler  
Angela Cacciola  
Richie Cahill  
Maddison Calvert  
Josephine Cammilleri  
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Fiona Campbell  
Robert Campbell  
Shane Campbell  
Vivian Campbell  
Lauren Canceri  
Joy Cao  
Jonathan Carapetis  
Travis Carraro  
Sarah Cattermole  
Maria Cavallo & Victoria Bridger  
Julian Cavenoni  
Young Chae

Aaron Chapman  
Linda Chappell  
Trent Cheetham  
Paul Cheever  
Edward Chembeya  
Jack Cheong  
Liz Chester & Ashley Paterson  
Colin Chiang  
Kim Chidgzey  
Don & Helen Chipper  
Tony Chong & Li-Lin Ang  
Ira Christodoulakis  
Tracey Cinavas-Prosser  
Charlotte Clark  
Donald Clark  
Izzy Clark  
Maxime Clark  
Michael Claydon  
Marie Clifton  
Rachael Clifton  
Harvey & Lyn Coates  
Philippa Codd  
Vicki Collis  
Julie Colton  
Mark Connell  
Shannon Connor & Andrew Laws  
Melinda Conti  
Mitchel Cooper  
Akemi Corbett  
Ian & Kerry Cordingley  
Karen Corica  
Felicity & Pete Cowan  
Judy Crooke  
Jason Culverwell  
Janet Cunningham  
Kathleen A Curtis  
Daniel Dahdal  
Lesley & Peter Davies  
Lisa Davies  
Nathan Davies  
Shannon & Christie-Lee Davies  
Bodie Davis  
Dylan & Ellen Davis  
Michael & Wendy Davis  
Vanessa De Abreu  
Leon Degreeef

Jeanette & Trevor De Landgraftt  
Jenny Della-Vedova  
Jackie DeLuis  
Karrina DeMasi  
Fulya Deniz  
Maggie Dent  
Josh de Rooy  
Michelle de Rooy  
Anique De Vries-Turner  
Rachel Dews  
Joel Dimasi  
Sharon DiMauro  
Hadeel Doehler  
Jeff Douglas  
Kate Downie  
Tim Downing  
Ben Drabik  
Lisa & Pierre Dreyer  
Sabine Driesser  
Lara Ducie  
J & D Ducrow  
David Duncan  
Nick Dyer  
Francesca Earley  
Jackson Eaton  
Kelly Eckel  
Megan Edwards  
Pamela Eldred  
Carol & Mick Elias  
Cath & Craig Elliott  
John Elliott  
Kerrie Elliott  
Danielle Ellis  
Kristine & Alan Ellis  
Amanda Ellison  
Brooke Elphick  
Kellie Elphick

Jess Emery  
Max Emmerton & Hannah Lowther  
Stephanie Enkel  
Kristy Evans  
Ying Fan  
Greg Farrell  
Ashleigh Feleppa  
Debbie Felgate  
Thea & Ron Ferguson  
Luisa Fernanda  
Ella Fieldhouse  
Denise Fisher  
Kirsty Fishlock  
Elle & Dom Fitzsimons  
Grace Fleay  
Dani Fleiser  
Kobi Fleming  
Sue Fletcher AO  
Yvonne Fletcher  
Marshall & Sue Flower  
Margaret Flynn  
Alan Foley  
Erin Fong  
Nicole Foot  
Alex Forbes  
Karen Forde  
Debbie & Maurice Ford  
Shaun & Kristin Ford  
Katya Forster  
Judith Foster  
Darlene Fox  
Lisa & James Frankis  
Brett & Kerry Franklin  
Carmen Frendo  
Carol Frieling  
Kate Frusher  
Harlie-Rose & Tatum Garcia  
Lorraine Gauci  
Theo Gaunt  
Rommel Geronimo  
Karen Getchell  
Amelia G  
Tammy Gibbs  
Emma & Scott Gillespie  
Marie Ginbey  
Diarmuid Gleeson  
Barbara Gniewek

Thomas Godsall  
Girard Good  
Richard Gordon  
Michael Gore  
Bradley Gosling  
Chiquita Goss  
Alan & Gillian Grace  
Mary & Hugh Grace  
Jenni Grace  
Nikki Graham  
Ben Gray  
Nicole Gray  
Stacey Gray  
Ralph Green  
Benjamin Greenhow  
Amy Greenly  
Jen Grove  
Karl & Paula Gruber  
Jamelia Gubgub & David Wallace  
Samara Gumina  
Mark Gummer  
Daphne Hahn  
Marlene Hall  
Rhys Hall  
Sarah Hall  
Diandra M Harapan  
Paul Hardy  
Glenda Harnett  
Trish Harris  
Amy Harrison  
John Hawke  
Ruth Hayter  
Emma Hayward  
Mark & Jemma Hector  
Beth Hender  
Adam Henry  
Elise Henry  
Flick Henry  
Linda Henry  
Nathan Henry  
Rachel Henry  
Shauna Henry  
Vanessa Hernandez  
Mary Hickey  
Colin Hill  
David Hillier  
Sandy Hinchcliff

Fletcher Hinton  
Jack Hipwood  
Luke Hipwood  
Michael Hipwood  
Anh & Dan Hoang  
Mike Hobley  
Tracy & Justin Hollington  
Devon Hollywood  
Karen Holmes  
Samantha Holmes  
Joel Horgan  
David Horne  
Meegan Howlett  
Michael Hudson  
Catherine & Greg Hughes  
Rachel Hu  
Jed Hunter  
Shane Hutchinson  
Dan Hutt  
Rachel Hutt  
Laurence & Nicola Iffla  
Reinaldo Jaimes Quintero  
Millie James  
Pat & Nick Jameson  
Gemma Jameson  
Marco Jansen  
Anita Jaswal  
Stuart Jeffery  
Martin Jermy  
Jai Jeyaraman  
Georgina Johanson  
Rachel Johns  
Aaron Johnson  
I & K Johnson  
Mia John Toru  
Amanda Jones  
Irene Jones  
Peta Jones  
Sonia Jones  
Carla Jose  
Rhys Katich  
Andrea Kavanagh  
Georgia Kelly  
Jackie Kelly  
Steve Kelly  
Damian Kenny  
Sylvia Kershaw





Taya Kesby  
Mark Kester  
Eva Khung  
Frith Klug  
Heddy & Alfred King  
Michael & Katherine King  
Shane King  
Simone Knox & Samuel Zaknich  
Alexa Ko  
Ed Kopsen  
Kyle Kriskovich  
Megan Kriskovich  
Joanne & Ignatius Kwee  
Michael Lai  
Sue & Nigel Laing  
Kylie Lambert  
Alexander Larcombe  
Juna Latheef  
Calum Lawson  
Tony Leca  
Courtney Leeder  
Jordan Leedham  
Fanny Lefert  
Deborah Lehmann AO & Michael Alpers AO  
Tam Le  
Tung Minh Le  
Tamlyn Lennox  
Ellie Lenny  
Mat Lenz  
Abby Lethlean  
Amanda Lewis  
Simon Lim  
Callum Lincoln  
Ryan Lincoln  
James Little  
Shannen Lloyd  
Nelson Loh & Tee Ching Hun  
Francis J Longhurst  
Jan & David Lord  
Tania Lourensz  
Karen Lown  
Ian & Joanne Ludlow  
Samuel Luke  
Jodie Lundy  
Kyle Lyons  
Horst Maberly  
Andrew Macgregor

Jonah Macliver  
Wendy Macliver  
Leonardo Macri  
Jaleesa Maher  
Patrice Maher  
Vincent Mancini  
Jaime Mangano  
Astral Mansfield  
Francisco Manuels  
Sherianne Marbus  
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Moya Martin  
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Julie Martino  
Adam & Holly Mason  
Rebecca Matsen  
Ashley Matthewman  
Toni Matthews  
Adam Maxwell  
Brooke Mayger  
Lianne May  
Baz & Kate McConkey  
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Michael McCormick  
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Sam McDonald  
Alison McDonnell  
Jacqui McGovern  
Jayden McKenna  
Scott & Gillian McKinlay  
Helen McLean  
Jaime McMullan  
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Sue & Lindsay Medalia  
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Emily Merilion  
Tina Merry  
Marcia Messer  
Kelly Mezger  
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Linda Millar  
Ryan Miller  
Shaun Millett  
Brad Milner  
Graham Minchin

Adrian Miola  
Maxine Miolini  
Mitchell Miolini  
India Miolini  
Elena Monaco  
Ingrid Moolman  
Greg & Dixie Moore  
Liz Mortimer  
Paul Morton  
Mitchell Mott  
Trish & Sandy Moyle  
Paul Mulder  
Gracen Murphy  
Karla Murphy  
Kate Murphy  
Sandra Murphy  
Ken & Rosslyn Myers  
Ahmi Narkle  
Robyn Nastas  
Vaishnavi Nathan  
Steve Naylor  
Helena Nel  
Cally Nelson  
Violet Newcombe  
Christina Newman  
Juliana Newman  
Estelle & Roy Newport  
Shaun Ngere  
Anthony Nguyen  
Lauren Nicholson  
Zac Niedrich  
Kendall Nikoleaff  
Sofia Nobensi  
Sonia Nolan  
Margaret Nowak  
Jacqueline Nunnerely  
Kate O'Brien  
Nicole O'Connor & Ped Ristic  
Jason O'Donnell  
Katie O'Donnell  
Shani O'Donnell  
Steve O'Neill  
Jane O'Reilly  
Michael Oakland  
Connor Ockwell  
Ylva Olsen  
Lizbeth Ong  
Alkim Ozaygen

Belinda Page  
Lorraine Palmer  
Jayshraj Paneer Selvam  
Louella Paramor  
Sudip Pariyar  
Anne Park  
Andy Parr  
Leeanne Parsons  
Linda Parsons  
Brooke Paterson  
Emma Paterson  
Natalie Paton  
Paula Patorniti  
T Paul  
Geoffrey Paull  
James Payne  
Peter & Suzanna Payze  
Glenn Pearson  
Steven Pearson  
Milka Pearson  
Ben & Tyler Pearson  
Jehan Peddar  
Frank Pellizzari  
Melissa Penny  
Jack Pepper  
Heather Percy  
Hana & Richard Peres  
John Perrella  
Claire Perrozzi  
Linda Perry  
Sharon Pestana  
Stuart Pestana

Sheedy Pete  
Shelley Petruzio  
John Dewar Phillips  
Matthew Phillips  
Rob Phillips  
Janessa Pickering  
Don Pinto  
Peter & Nathalie Pires  
Vladimir Piscetek  
Daniel Porritt  
Alison Potter  
Julian Poulton-King  
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Leif Powis  
Euan Pretl  
Rachelle Pretorius  
Alison Price  
Luke Primmer  
Norma Prosser  
Jamieson Quin  
Bob Quinn  
Maryam Qureshi  
Krithika Ramnarayan  
Jennifer Rankin  
Wayne Ratajczak  
Jonathan Razmovski  
Jo Redden  
Paul Reeve  
Josh Reid  
Bert & Andrea Reuter  
Maureen & Mel Rhoden  
Joseph Richardson  
Brenda Roberts

Andrew Robins  
Anna Rodger  
Chandra Roebuck  
Sam Rolfe  
Budhwani & Ranya Roofi  
Tony Rosillo  
Ash Rosindale  
Juls Rowan  
Gerry Ryan  
Atef Saba  
Jonathan Saddik  
Mirella & Krys Sadkowsky  
Kaina Salivaji  
Ian Salt  
Ganesh Saminathan  
Andrea Sampson  
Brooke Sanderson  
Ashley Schoof  
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Stephanie Schumer  
Natalie Scibilia  
Paula Scott  
Steve Scudamore AM & Anne Last  
Amanda Scully  
Jackie Scurlock  
Paul Serukai  
Tarni Shalders  
Disa Shallue  
Simmone & Michael Sharp  
Bill Shaw  
Graeme & Lillian Sheard  
Angela Sheedy  
Vicki Sheedy  
Ben Siford  
Michelle Silver  
Michael Simojoki  
Jodie Sims  
Kanwarbir Singj  
Kyle Slack  
Marjorie Sloan  
Danial & Emma Smart  
N Smith-Birch  
Anette & John Smith  
Brad Smith  
Cassidy Smith  
Cathal Smith  
Dan Smith





Diane Smith	Kat Stillitano	Ruth Thomas	Josh Tweddle	Thomas Warden	Lisa Wolfe
Grant Smith	Jennifer Stokes & Robert Wales	Sam Thomas	Dan Tyrrell	Craig Wasley	Margaret Wood
Nathan & Kim Smith		Georgie Thomas	Adelina Uniewicz	Sandra Waters	Margaret & Brendan Wood
Sharon Smith	Frances Strahan	Cameron Thompson	Jonathon Vagg	Rachael & Pete Watson	Clare Wood
Adam Sofoulis	Terri Strong	Jacqui Thomson	Matthew Valsecchi	Leon & Kay Watt	Noel Wood
Kevin Sok	Lavanya Subramaniam	Lyn Thomson	Anthony Vanderwiel	Ian Weber	Samantha Wood
Janine Spaeni	Claudia Sullivan	Graham & Dianne Thorne	Diann Van De Weyer	Lucy Weber	Gillian Woods
Justina Sparks	Daniel Sultana	Jo Toberts	Maeve van Drunick	Kay Webse	Joanne & Anthony Woods
Karen Sparling	Natalie Sumich	Jo Todd	Emma Varis	Michael Webster	Alison Woodward
Rachel Speirs	Joann Swailes	Rebecca & David Tomkinson	Jessica Vassallo	William Webster	Alix Woolard
Stephen Spiteri	Caitlin Sweeney	Kylie & Isabelle Tomlinson	Kieran Veale	Tala Weiss	Adrian & Riana Workman
Antony & Emma Spradbery	Karen Swift	Catherine Toner	Dannii Veldsman	Bonnie Wells	Phil Worrall
Sue & Ross Stanfield	Andrew Symons	Jillian Tonkin	Tim Veletta	Alwyn William Werrell	Max Wung
Fiona Stanley AC	Joseph Takacs	Jason Toogood	Caleb Verbruggen	Karen Whitely	Korin Wyatt
Tanya Staude	Robyn Tamke	Louise Topini	Vincenzo & Jenny Vesnaver	Nicole Wickens	Shane Wylie
Ashton Steele	Jan & Dave Tarplett	Silvana Torrissi	Hannah Vitangcol	Bonnieville Williams	Zvi Yom-Tov
Shayla Stefanetti	Lorraine Telfer	Jodie Trezise	Dianna Vitasovic	Luke Williams	Shaun Young
Marika Stefaniw	Mary Tennant	Victor Trifon	Rena Vithiatharan	Jo Willox	Steve Zera
Ciara Stephenson	Barbara Terrell	Jenny Truong	Brandi Wahl	Geordie Wilson	Linda Zhang
Stephen Stick & Deborah Andrews	Carly Terzanidis	Sandra Turgay	Aaron Walkom	Sarah Wilson	Dennis & Emily Zuvela
Margy Still	Angela Testa	Teresa Turton	Doug & Margaret Walsh	Decima Wilson	Anonymous (241)
	Peter Thackray	Angela Tuttavilla			



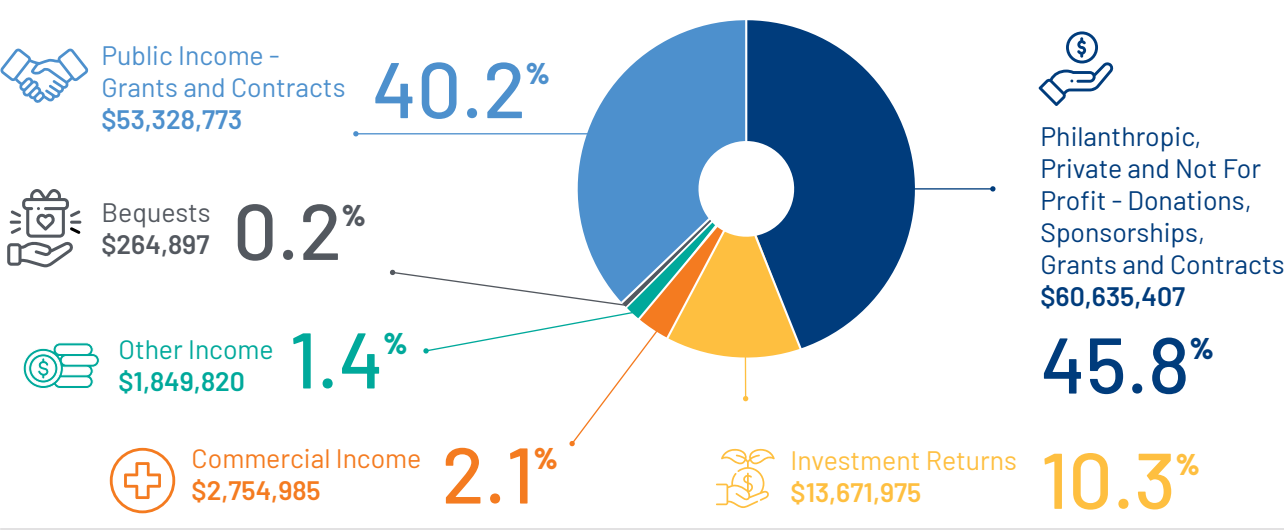
Identical twins Henry and Archie Cooper were hospitalised early in their lives with respiratory syncytial virus (RSV)





# OUR FINANCES

TOTAL INCOME \$132,505,857



TOTAL EXPENSES \$121,642,698

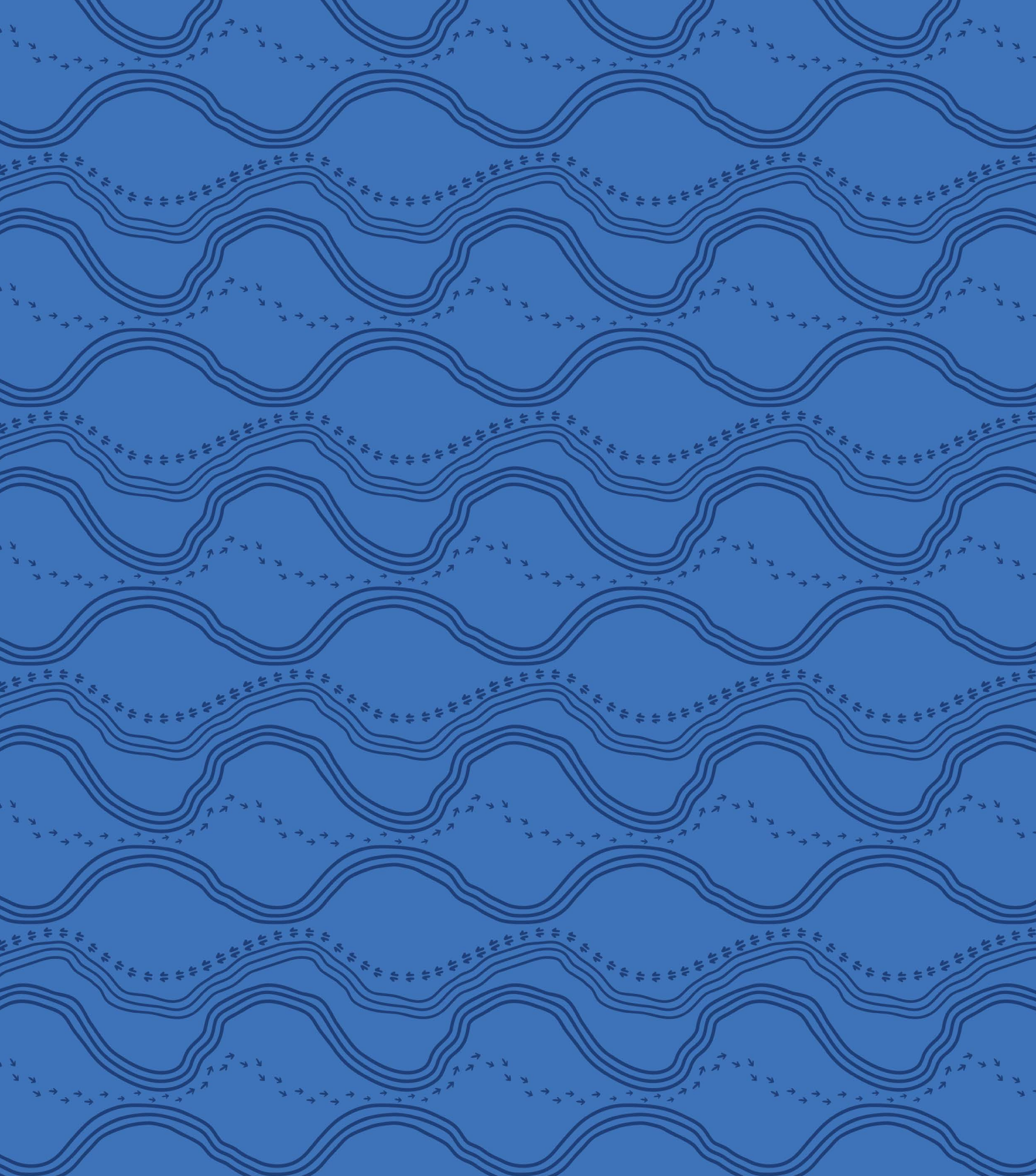






Pre-term baby Finn Ross is part of a study led by The Kids investigating whether an inexpensive set of eye masks and ear plugs could hold the key to better outcomes for babies born too soon.





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