

# ANNUAL REPORT



2022

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**KIDS** are at the ♥  
of everything we do



At the Telethon Kids Institute, 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 knowledge applied so it makes a difference.

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

Telethon Kids Institute 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 Kurna 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.

# CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOREWORD



PROFESSOR JONATHAN CARAPETIS (EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR) & HON JULIE BISHOP (CHAIR)

Challenging the status quo is what we do at Telethon Kids. We need to think outside the box, ask the hard questions, and consciously do things in a different way if we are to truly realise the potential in our research, our people, and our organisation.

It is with this mindset that we have navigated many of the challenges of the past twelve months, and elevated opportunities to take our work to the next level.

When the COVID-19 virus finally made its way to Western Australia at the beginning of 2022, we were well-placed to respond.

Thanks largely to the processes we had continually reviewed and refined throughout the first two years of the pandemic, we were able to continue much of our non-clinical research with limited disruption, but for some work the restrictions caused significant interruption. Our staff rose to the challenge,

and adapted where and how they worked to make the most of the situation.

In difficult times, we looked to what we do best. We used our research skills to inform understanding of the virus and made sure our research was making a difference. Among a number of COVID-19 research projects, Associate Professor Ewan Cameron led a team of researchers from Telethon Kids and Curtin University to develop a new software tool that built a "virtual WA" to create some of the most detailed COVID-19 modelling ever applied to an Australian COVID-19 outbreak.

Our COVID-19 modelling and information resources provided reassurance and expertise to the community in a time of great uncertainty. We doubled our normal Twitter engagements and saw a staggering increase in our posts being shared on Facebook and LinkedIn – up 342% and 560% respectively.

## Our research



For the second year in a row, Telethon Kids' researchers were awarded more than \$60 million in research funding through competitive grants. This represents a success rate of around 35 per cent, with 120 grants funded from 335 applications. We are grateful for the ongoing support of the Federal and State Governments which provide much of this funding.

The Institute performed exceptionally well in the WA Child Health Research Fund, with our researchers receiving 74 per cent of the funding pool, at a success rate of 24 per cent compared to a scheme success rate of 18 per cent.

Aboriginal health research continued to be a key focus.

Associate Professor Francis Mitrou and his team received the only NHMRC Synergy grant awarded in WA, with \$5 million to improve Aboriginal health by understanding the generational impact of early life experiences with the health and social service systems. This project will revisit data collected as part of the seminal Western Australian Aboriginal Child Health Survey that began in 1998 and produced four volumes of findings that continue to inform policy and practice today.

In NAIDOC Week 2022, we proudly launched our Guidelines for the Standards for the Conduct of Aboriginal Health Research, recognising the importance of genuine partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in co-designing and conducting all research that is done with Aboriginal communities.

Professor of Indigenous Genomics Alex Brown will lead a national collaboration which will seek to ensure that Indigenous Australians benefit from advances in genomic medicine. We opened the new Djaalinj Waakinj Centre for Ear and Hearing Health in Cockburn – a collaboration that under the cultural guidance of Val Swift has community firmly at its centre.

Drawing on our seminal research at Banksia Hill Detention Centre, the Institute has been among a growing number of voices advocating for an overhaul of the way young people in detention are managed in

Western Australia. These conversations have been challenging at times, but we remain focussed on using our evidence to educate and inform and advocate for change.

Our Impact Report provides more research highlights from throughout the year.

## Our People



Creating a culture for our organisation to thrive continued to be a focus for the Board, which considered and accepted the recommendations from our People Review, undertaken in 2021.

By the end of 2022, all the recommendations had been implemented or were well underway. This significant piece of work has provided a clear direction on what we need to be a great place to work, which underpins our ambitions to achieve our challenging research agenda and continuous improvement of our culture will remain a priority into the future.

As part of our response to the findings of the Review, we implemented a new leadership structure that brings together the right people, at the right level, for the right conversations, to encourage more agile and informed decision-making across the Institute.

The Executive is the highest management decision-making authority, with responsibility to deliver on the Board's strategic vision. It focuses on decisions that transcend one portfolio requiring significant collaboration and those that affect the long-term direction of the Institute. Recruitment for three new Director positions was finalised in early 2023.

The Science Leadership Committee oversees the strategic direction of the science and research undertaken at Telethon Kids and is the primary decision-making body for science and research, and the allocation of resources to support those initiatives.

This new structure is designed to enhance transparency and accountability and will be embedded over the next year.

The People Review reaffirmed our commitment to supporting a strong and inclusive culture where people are

supported to be the best they can be. More than 50 workshops were conducted with teams at all sites, providing an opportunity for staff and students to shape the articulation of the ideal culture for Telethon Kids and the behaviours that we all expect in order to achieve it. Of course, culture is never “done” – we will always focus on encouraging and enabling a mindset of “the Institute Way” so that we can be the very best research organisation to work in.

While our staff and student numbers remained steady, we expanded our footprint with new facilities at Adelaide and Joondalup. Teams from CliniKids and the Origins Project are based at the new Joondalup location and are expected to have more than 4,000 appointments with families in the first twelve months. In Adelaide two teams operate from our city location; the Indigenous Genomics and the Early Years System Evidence teams.

## Financial sustainability



2022 was a financially challenging year for the Institute.

The Institute posted a \$10.4m loss for the year to 31 December 2022 – a common theme among medical research institutes around Australia.

The most significant factor to affect our bottom line was global volatility in equity markets, which dramatically reduced the valuation of our investments.

Net income in 2022, including the revaluation of investments, represented a \$17.1m reduction compared to the prior year. Whilst operating income in 2022 increased by 7.4 per cent (\$6.8 million) over the prior year, operating expenses increased by 10.2 per cent mainly due to employee expenses reflecting the tough workforce conditions facing the entire not for profit sector.

A \$9.8 million reduction in net assets was caused mainly by a \$9 million reduction in the value of investments, however other assets, including cash, increased by 1.7 per cent over the year.

We would like to thank Deloitte, our auditors, for their continued support and advice in what was a tough year.

To broaden our income base, the Institute has continued to explore options beyond the traditional grants funding model. Our Innovation and Commercialisation office is identifying opportunities to achieve greater impact from our research while at the same time extending our revenue opportunities.

We've also established a dedicated unit to help support research teams take on Government and non-government tenders and research contracts. This not only provides additional income, but also helps to build awareness of the research and researchers amongst policy makers, supporting our aim for our research to be useful and used.

## Our Thanks



Our work would not be possible without the support of others.

We are especially grateful for the ongoing funding and support of our Principal Partner, Telethon, and immensely proud to be one of more than 100 beneficiaries involved in Australia's longest standing community fundraising event.

We are indebted to the many individuals, families, community members, and corporate partners who provide us with the funding, support and advocacy needed to extend the remit and reach of our research, and the development of our researchers. A wonderful example is our new Illuminate Awards that provide funding and development opportunities for our emerging and mid-career researchers. This philanthropic support is outlined on page 25.

Our community is at the heart of all that we do. We thank the hundreds of volunteers who share their lived experiences to better inform our research, and the thousands of study participants who generously give of their time to improve treatments and therapies for others. We were grateful to receive more than 800 survey responses our 'Think Big' initiative, enabling people to have a say on the big picture research priorities at Telethon Kids. This feedback will inform the development of the Research Strategy that will be integral to our next Strategic Plan.

Our Board of Directors provide their skills and experience to guide the strategy and governance of the Institute. Their time

and expertise have been particularly appreciated over the past year as we've reimaged and reframed our priorities in order to respond to challenges in the external environment.

We were delighted to formally welcome Professor Brendan Crabb to the Board. With a long and accomplished scientific career, including as Director and CEO of the Burnet Institute, Brendan's expertise and leadership are already proving to be a great asset. At the same time we farewelled Rohan Williams after nine years' service as a Director. Rohan saw us through many transitions, including to our new building, and we thank him for his enormous contribution over that time.

Supporting the Board are a number of Committees whose members, including external volunteers, bring their expertise and experience in specific areas. Our thanks to all Committee members and the Telethon Kids Board of Directors for their substantial and ongoing contributions, which are all provided on a voluntary basis.

Thank you to our staff, students and volunteers who have worked so tirelessly to make a difference. Your resilience, and capacity and willingness to take on new challenges inspires us, and undoubtedly contributes so much to our success.

Finally, to every one of you who supports the Institute in whatever way –without you, we wouldn't be able to do the research that is changing the lives of children around the world, and for that, we give our heartfelt thanks and gratitude.

## Julie and Jonathan

Handwritten signature of Julie Bishop in blue ink.

Hon Julie Bishop  
Chair

Handwritten signature of Jonathan Carapetis in blue ink.

Professor Jonathan Carapetis AM  
Executive Director



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS



## Hon Julie Bishop, Chair

Julie joined the Board as Chair in August 2019 and also Chairs the Institute's Remuneration and Nomination Committee and the Development Committee. She is the Chancellor of the Australian National University, Chair of the Princes' Trust Australia, Trustee of the Princes' Trust Group Company and a Member of the International Advisory Board Afiniti. Julie is a Member of the Human Immunome Project and is a Member of the Global Board of Advisors of the Council on Foreign Relations. She is also the Director of Julie Bishop and Partners, Patron of Shooting Starts and is a Member of the Trilateral Commission Capitalism Taskforce.



## Jonathan Carapetis AM

Jonathan became the Executive Director and Board Member of the Telethon Kids Institute in July 2012. He is the Chair of the Association of Australian Medical Research Institutes (AAMRI) WA and Past President of AAAMRI nationally. Jonathan is also a Member of the Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association, the University of Western Australia's Forrest Foundation Selection Committee and the Executive Committee of the Strep A Vaccine Consortium (SAVAC). He Chairs the Methodist Ladies' College Foundation.



## Fiona Drummond

Fiona became a Board Member of Telethon Kids' Institute in November 2017 and also chairs the Institute's Finance Committee and is a Member of the Remuneration and Nomination Committee. Fiona is EY Managing Partner – Western Regional and Assurance Partner, a Fellow, Chartered Accountants in Australia and New Zealand, a Fellow of the Financial Services Institute of Australasia and a Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. She is also a Fellow of the Leadership WA program and a Board Member of United Way WA.



## Jane Muirsmith

Jane is the Executive Director of Lenox Hill and joined the Telethon Kids Institute Board in February 2018. She is Chair of HealthDirect Australia and Non-Executive Director of the Australian Finance Group and Cedar Woods Properties. Jane is also a Member of the UWA Business School Ambassadorial Council, a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and a former President of the Women's Advisory Council to the WA Government. At Telethon Kids, Jane is also a member of the Risk and Compliance Committee.



## Professor Jozef Gezc

Jozef joined the Telethon Kids Board in 2016 and is a Member of the Institute's Risk and Compliance Committee. He is Senior Principal Research Fellow at the National Health Medical Research Council (NHMRC), Honorary Chair at Channel 7 Children's Research Foundation for the Prevention of Childhood Disability, Professor of Human Genetics at Adelaide Medical School at the University of Adelaide and a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Health and Medical Sciences. Jozef is also a Fellow of Australian Academy of Science, and a Founding Fellow at Faculty of Science of RCPA.



## Nicole O'Connor

Since joining the Telethon Kids Board in November 2016, Nicole has also become Chair of the Institute's Risk and Compliance Committee and a Member of the Remuneration and Nomination Committee. Nicole is the WA State Manager Public Sector for Amazon Web Services and is a former Non-Executive Director at Remsense. She is a former Director of Research Services and Systems at Curtin University a former General Manager Western Australia, SAP and a Former Member of the Advisory Board at the School of Information Systems at Curtin University. Nicole is also a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



## Hon Ben Wyatt

Ben joined the Telethon Kids Board in April 2021 and is also a Member of the Institute's Finance Committee. Ben is a Non-executive Director of Woodside, a Non-executive Director of Rio Tinto, Non-executive Director of the West Coast Eagles and a Non-executive Director of the Perth International Arts Festival. He is also a Non-executive Director at APM and a Member of the Advisory Committee for Australian Capital Equity. Ben is a Former Treasurer of the State of Western Australia.



## Ed Bostock

Ed was appointed to the Telethon Kids Board in August 2021 and is also a Member of the Institute's Development Committee and Remuneration and Nomination Committee. Ed is the Chairman of Wespine Industries Pty Ltd and is the Chief Financial Officer Health Wesfarmers Ltd. He is the Former Managing Director of Business Development at Wesfarmers Ltd.

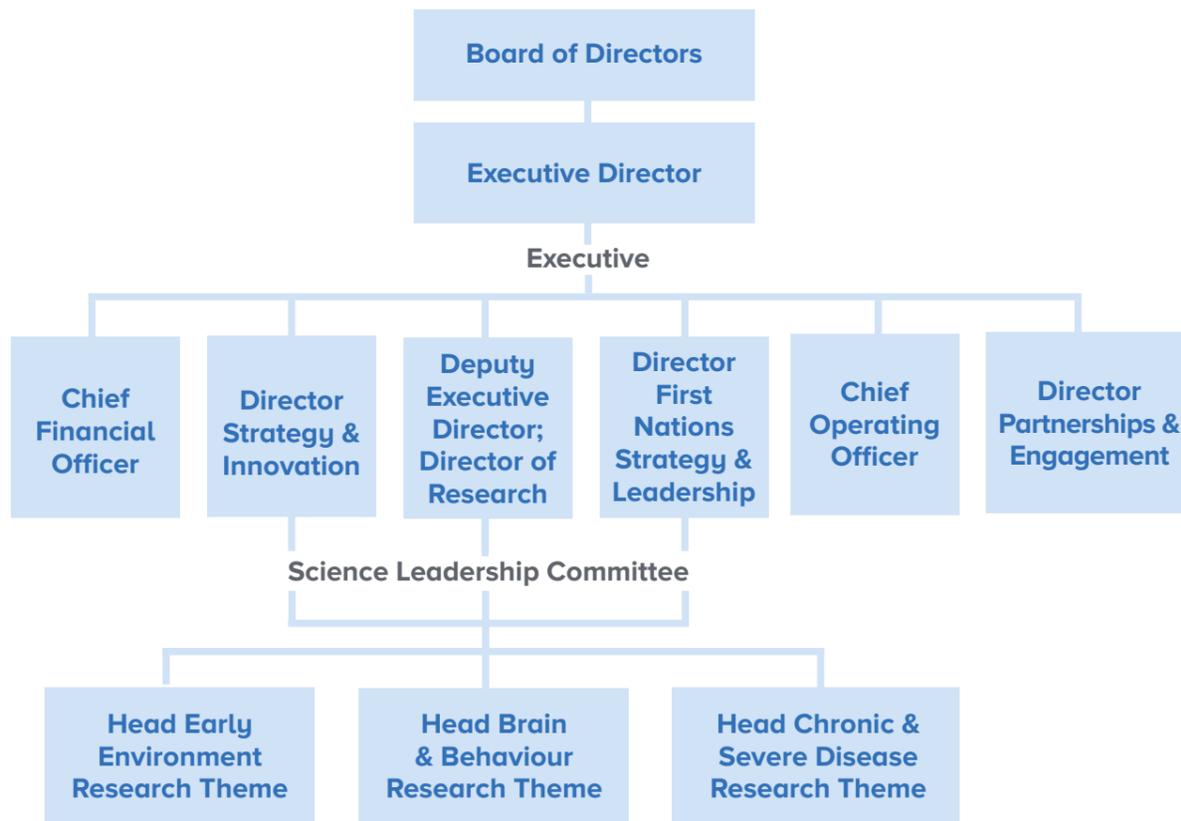


## Professor Brendan Crabb AC

Brendan joined the Telethon Kids Board in June 2022 and he also sits on the Institute's Finance Committee. Brendan is Chair of the Australian Global Health Alliance, Chair of Pacific Friends of Global Health, a Member of the Brain Cancer Research Advisory Committee, a Member of the Victorian Chapter of the Association of Australian Medical Research Institutes (AAMRI) Pty Ltd and a Member of the Board for the Institute for Health Transformation. He is also a Member of the Alfred Research Alliance, a Member of the Victorian Government Medical Research Strategic Advisory Committee, a Member of the mRNA Victoria Advisory Board, and a Member of the WHO Malaria Vaccine Advisory Committee (MALVAC).

**Rohan Williams** retired from the Board in June 2022.

# ORGANISATIONAL CHART



# SCIENCE LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE

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



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

# EXECUTIVE



## Professor Jonathan Carapetis – Executive Director

Professor Carapetis is the Executive Director of the Telethon Kids Institute. 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).



## Professor Catherine Elliott – Deputy Director; Director of Research

Professor Elliott commenced as the Director of Research at the Telethon Kids Institute in 2020. Her leadership role brings people together to work collaboratively to elevate the 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.



## Adam Maxwell – Chief Financial Officer

Adam Maxwell was appointed as Chief Financial Officer of Telethon Kids Institute 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.



## Colin Smith – Chief Operating Officer

Colin Smith is the Chief Operating Officer at Telethon Kids Institute, having joined the team in 2023 from State energy body, Synergy. During his twelve-year tenure at Synergy, Colin maintained several roles including General Manager Customer Experience and Manager Corporate Strategy Implementation. He led the rollout of several community programs specifically focusing on supporting vulnerable customers, including Synergy's Family Violence program.



## 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 the research at Telethon Kids. 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.



## Associate Professor Glenn Pearson – Director of First Nations Strategy & Leadership

Associate Professor Glenn Pearson is a Nyoongar man and the Director First Nations Strategy and Leadership at the Telethon Kids Institute 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.



## Sharon Dignard – Director of Strategy & Innovation

Sharon is a highly experienced strategist and leader with over 20 years' experience cultivating high-performing teams and driving evidence-based thought-leadership, translating strategy into actionable plans and tangible outcomes. She joined Telethon Kids Institute as the Director of Strategy and Innovation in 2023 after 12 years at the Water Corporation, where she held multiple positions including Head of Strategy and Performance.

# 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** is an overarching theme which is embedded across all of our research. Improving the health and wellbeing of Indigenous children and families is a priority of the Institute.

**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.

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

**Early Environment** is our research theme which focuses on the ways that environments early in life can affect a child's life-long 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.



## INDIGENOUS HEALTH

**Head: Glenn Pearson**

Indigenous Health is an overarching research theme at Telethon Kids 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 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 health research and are committed working in genuine partnership with community, and respond to their priorities.

## BRAIN AND BEHAVIOUR

**Head: Ben Jackson**  
**Deputy Head: Tolu Okitika**

### CHILD HEALTH ANALYTICS PROGRAM HEAD: Peter Gething

GEOSPATIAL AND TUBERCULOSIS  
Kefyalew Alene  
GEOSPATIAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT  
Peter Gething  
INFECTIOUS DISEASE ECOLOGY AND MODELLING  
Nicholas Golding

### DEVELOPMENT AND DISABILITY PROGRAM HEAD: Jenny Downs

AUTISM RESEARCH  
Andrew Whitehouse  
CHILD DISABILITY  
Jenny Downs  
EARLY NEURODEVELOPMENT AND MENTAL HEALTH  
Amy Finlay-Jones

### HEALTHY BEHAVIOURS AND ENVIRONMENTS PROGRAM HEAD: Hayley Christian

CHILD PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT  
Hayley Christian  
FOOD AND NUTRITION  
Gina Trapp  
PSYCHOLOGY OF ACTIVE, HEALTHY LIVING  
Ben Jackson

### MENTAL HEALTH AND YOUTH PROGRAM HEAD: Ashleigh Lin

ABORIGINAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING  
Brad Farrant, Carol Michie  
YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH  
Ashleigh Lin, Yael Perry

### POPULATION HEALTH PROGRAM HEAD: Francis Mitrou

ADOLESCENT HEALTH AND WELLBEING  
Peter Azzopardi  
EARLY YEARS SYSTEMS EVIDENCE  
Yasmin Harman-Smith  
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITY WELLBEING  
Francis Mitrou

## CHRONIC AND SEVERE DISEASES

**Head: Elizabeth Davis**  
**Deputy Head: Vacant**

### CANCER PROGRAM HEAD: **Joost Lesterhuis**

BRAIN TUMOUR RESEARCH  
 Raelene Endersby, Nick Gottardo  
 LEUKAEMIA TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH  
 Rishi Kotecha, Laurence Cheung  
 SARCOMA TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH  
 Joost Lesterhuis  
 TRANSLATIONAL GENOMICS IN LEUKAEMIA  
 Sébastien Malinge

### DIABETES, METABOLISM AND CLINICAL SCIENCES PROGRAM HEAD: **Jane Valentine**

DIABETES AND OBESITY RESEARCH  
 Tim Jones, Elizabeth Davis  
 KIDS REHAB RESEARCH WA  
 Jane Valentine, Ashleigh Thornton

### PERIOPERATIVE CARE PROGRAM HEADS: **Britta Regli-von Ungern-Sternberg & Fiona Wood**

PAEDIATRIC BURN CARE  
 Fiona Wood  
 PERIOPERATIVE MEDICINE  
 Britta Regli-von Ungern-Sternberg

### PRECISION HEALTH PROGRAM HEAD: **Timo Lassmann**

COMPUTATIONAL BIOLOGY  
 Timo Lassmann  
 INDIGENOUS GENOMICS  
 Alex Brown  
 MITOCHONDRIAL TEAM  
 Aleksandra Filipovska, Oliver Rackham  
 SYSTEMS VACCINOLOGY  
 Tobias Kollmann  
 TRANSLATIONAL GENETICS  
 Vanessa Fear

### RESPIRATORY HEALTH PROGRAM HEAD: **Andre Schultz**

AIRWAY EPITHELIAL RESEARCH  
 Anthony Kicic  
 BREATH TEAM (BUILDING RESPIRATORY EQUITY FOR  
 ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HEALTH)  
 Andre Schultz  
 CHILDREN'S LUNG HEALTH  
 Shannon Simpson, Kathryn Ramsey  
 CHILDREN'S RESPIRATORY SCIENCE  
 Ingrid Laing  
 P4 RESPIRATORY HEALTH FOR KIDS  
 Stephen Stick  
 RESPIRATORY ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH  
 Alexander Larcombe

## EARLY ENVIRONMENT

**Head: Jane Pillow**  
**Deputy Head: Asha Bowen**

### EARLY LIFE & LIFE-COURSE HEALTH PROGRAM HEAD: **Debbie Palmer**

CLINICAL EPIGENETICS  
 David Martino  
 CHRONOBIOLOGY  
 Jane Pillow  
 NEONATAL HEALTH  
 Tobias Strunk  
 NUTRITION IN EARLY LIFE  
 Debbie Palmer  
 ORIGINS PROJECT  
 Susan Prescott

### END RHD PROGRAM HEAD: **Asha Bowen**

HEALTHY SKIN AND ARF PREVENTION  
 Asha Bowen  
 STREP A TRANSLATION  
 Jonathan Carapetis  
 STREP A & ARF THERAPEUTICS  
 Laurens Manning  
 STREP A PATHOGENESIS & DIAGNOSTICS  
 Timothy Barnett  
 STREP A VACCINES  
 Alma Fulurija

### IMMUNOBIOLOGY AND IMMUNOTHERAPEUTIC PROGRAM HEAD: **Deborah Strickland**

EARLY LIFE MICROBIAL IMMUNOLOGY  
 Archita Mishra  
 IMMUNOLOGY AND BREAST FEEDING  
 Valerie Verhasselt  
 INFLAMMATION  
 Prue Hart  
 PREGNANCY AND EARLY LIFE IMMUNOLOGY  
 Deborah Strickland

### INFECTION AND VACCINES PROGRAM HEAD: **Hannah Moore**

BACTERIAL RESPIRATORY INFECTIOUS DISEASE GROUP  
 Lea-Ann Kirkham, Ruth Thornton  
 EAR HEALTH & HEARING  
 Chris Brennan-Jones  
 INFECTIOUS DISEASES EPIDEMIOLOGY  
 Hannah Moore, Chris Blyth  
 INFECTIOUS DISEASE IMPLEMENTATION RESEARCH  
 Tom Snelling  
 VACCINE TRIALS GROUP  
 Peter Richmond

# 2022 AT A GLANCE

## OUR WORK



Submitted  
**335**  
grant  
applications



Awarded  
more than  
**\$60 million**  
in research  
funding



Researchers  
received  
**74%**  
of the  
**WA Child Health  
Research Fund**



**800**  
research  
projects  
under way



**39**  
clinical trials



**12**  
Invention  
Disclosures lodged



**85**  
non-clinical trials



**3**  
Provisional  
Patents filed



Our researchers  
contributed to  
**645**  
publications

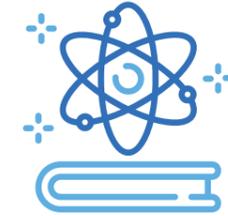


We partnered with  
**289**  
national and  
international  
organisations



Our researchers  
were in  
**442**  
external decision  
making groups  
to improve the  
lives of children

## OUR REACH



Travelled more than  
**6,000 kms**  
taking science to WA schools



Inspired more than  
**2,100**  
students  
at our workshops



Mentioned  
more than  
**8,300**  
times  
on TV, radio,  
online and print



Reached more  
than **2 million**  
people  
through social  
media channels



People spent  
**716**  
hours  
reading about  
our research  
on our website

## OUR PEOPLE



**232**  
Students



**797**  
Staff

# REWARDING RESEARCH EXCELLENCE

The excellence of Telethon Kids Institute researchers has been recognised in multiple ways across Western Australia and nationally over the past year, including at the Premier's Science Awards, WA Australian of the Year Awards, Eureka Prizes and Tall Poppy Awards.



**Australian Academy of Science**  
Executive Director **Professor Jonathan Carapetis** – inducted as a new Fellow in recognition of his pioneering expertise in infectious diseases



**Australia Day Honours List**  
Mental health champion and Co-Director of Embrace **Professor Helen Milroy** – named a Member of the Order of Australia (General Division)



James Hill



Associate Professor Hayley Christian



Dr Nicole Hill



Dr Rachael Zemek

## Premier's Science Awards

Youth mental health researcher and Ngarrindjeri man **James Hill** – joint winner, Shell Aboriginal STEM Student of the Year

Telethon Kids Institute also had several finalists: physical activity researcher **Associate Professor Hayley Christian** (HBF Mid-Career Scientist of the Year), youth mental health researcher **Dr Nicole Hill**, and cancer researcher **Dr Rachael Zemek** (both for Woodside Early Career Scientist of the Year)



Professor Regli-von Ungern-Sternberg



## Tall Poppy Awards

**Professor Britta Regli-von Ungern-Sternberg**, Head of the Perioperative Medicine Team, and vaccine hesitancy researcher **Associate Professor Katie Attwell**, an Honorary Research Fellow at Telethon Kids – named 2022 Western Australian Young Tall Poppies



Associate Professor Katie Attwell

## Byron Kakulas Medal

**Professor Regli-von Ungern-Sternberg** and fellow members of the Perioperative Medicine Team, **Associate Professor David Sommerfield** and **Professor Lee Yong Lim** – winners of the inaugural Byron Kakulas Medal, awarded by the Perron Institute

Left: Professor Regli-von Ungern-Sternberg, Professor Lee Yong Lim and Associate Professor David Sommerfield



**Cancer Council WA Research Excellence Awards**  
Clinical Associate **Professor Nick Gottardo** – Cancer Researcher of the Year 2022



**ABC TOP 5 Science**  
Youth mental health researcher **Dr Alix Woolard** – secured an intensive two-week media residency after being named one of the ABC's 2022 TOP 5 Science early career researchers



**Australian Museum Eureka Prizes**  
Ear health researcher **Associate Professor Chris Brennan-Jones** – finalist, Macquarie University Eureka Prize for Outstanding Early Career Researcher



**2023 Australian of the Year Awards**  
Autism researcher **Professor Andrew Whitehouse** – finalist, Western Australian of the Year



**Institute of Public Administration Australia WA inaugural Achievement Awards**  
Cardiometabolic Sunhealth team, led by **Dr Shelley Gorman** – joint winners, Best Practice in Children's Consultation

# 2022 HIGHLIGHTS

## Researchers discover new form of antimicrobial resistance



Telethon Kids Institute researchers uncovered a new form of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) which was previously undetectable using traditional laboratory testing.

This world-first breakthrough could have a significant impact on one of the world's greatest health threats.

AMR is expected to claim 10 million lives a year by 2050.

Dr Tim Barnett from the Wesfarmers Centre of Vaccines and Infectious Diseases and his colleague Kalindu Rodrigo discovered a new mechanism that allows bacteria to dodge antibiotic treatment by getting nutrients from the human host.



The discovery was made during investigations into Streptococcus A but the researchers are already finding evidence of different mechanisms across other types of bacteria. The team is now focused on developing new tools to detect more mechanisms and to diagnose AMR faster and enable more effective treatment.

## 'Man's best friend' could unlock treatments for kids with cancer



An immunotherapy gel to fight sarcoma tumours after surgery is being trialled on pet dogs in Perth.

Sarcoma is the third most common type of cancer in children, and current treatments involve surgery to remove the tumour followed by chemotherapy or radiotherapy,

but cancer cells often remain behind, and the cancer can return.

Director of the Telethon Kids Cancer Centre, Associate Professor Joost Leisterhuis, led the development of a new gel designed to be applied inside the wound during surgery.

The gel is loaded with immunotherapy drugs and draws the patient's own immune cells to the site where the tumour was removed to "mop up" any remaining cancer cells.

Sarcoma is a common cancer in dogs and surprisingly it presents similarly to in humans, so the Telethon Kids Institute team has joined forces with Perth Vet Specialists to carry out the clinical trial on eligible pet dogs.

The Perth dog trial has shown very promising results, with hopes the new immunotherapy gel will be ready for clinical trial in humans within the next five years.



Read more about the impact our research is making in our 2023 Impact Report [telethonkids.org.au](https://telethonkids.org.au)

## National network to significantly improve health outcomes for indigenous Australians



A national collaboration will seek to improve understanding of genomic medicine for Indigenous Australians.

The project, led by Telethon Kids Institute and the Australian National University's Professor of Indigenous Genomics Alex Brown, will bring together researchers, genetic health services, Indigenous community-controlled organisations and industry partners to fast-track the development of genomic advances to benefit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Genomics can unlock the information in our DNA to enable personalised, more targeted approaches to the prevention and treatment of a range of health conditions including cancer, diabetes and heart disease, as well as rare diseases among Indigenous children.

This national network will advance the benefits of Genomic Medicine for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, who have to date been excluded from national genomics efforts.

It will ensure that there is Indigenous governance for the gathering of genomic data, built around a culturally safe framework that respects the traditions and beliefs of Indigenous people who engage with genomic research.

It is hoped the national network will contribute to improving health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



## Landmark research investigating benefits of COVID-19 vaccination for kids



Telethon Kids Institute launched a national study, examining the COVID-19 vaccine for children to inform the national policy on vaccination.

Stage two of the PICOBOO trial will investigate which initial and booster vaccination strategies provide the best protection against COVID-19 in kids.

Led by Dr Charlie McLeod from the Wesfarmers Centre of Vaccines and Infectious Diseases at



Telethon Kids, and Infectious Diseases Paediatrician at Perth Children's Hospital, the study has the potential to guide global COVID-19 vaccination policy now and into the future.

Children aged six to 17 years old are taking part in the study.

It is also hoped the study will reveal what impact a previous COVID-19 infection has on a child's level of immunity.

## RSV prevention finally in reach after 20 years of research



Telethon Kids researchers were part of a ground-breaking global study that has paved the way for a world-first immunisation for respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) within 12 months.

The long-lasting monoclonal antibody given to newborns was found to give significant protection from RSV in their first weeks and months of life when babies are the most vulnerable.

Professor Peter Richmond, head of the Vaccine Trials Group at the Wesfarmers Centre of Vaccines and Infectious Diseases at Telethon Kids Institute, Head of Paediatrics at The University of Western Australia and Perth Children's Hospital Paediatrician led the Perth arm of the global study.



RSV kills more than 100,000 babies globally each year and has been linked to life-long health problems like asthma and recurring lung infections.

It is hoped the monoclonal antibody Nirsevimab will be available for use in Australia in 2024, closely followed by a vaccine given to pregnant women that would provide protection for their newborn.

## On the spot Strep A tests



Instant diagnosis and treatment of potentially life-threatening Strep A infections are now close to reality across Australia's remote and regional areas thanks to molecular point-of-care testing (POCT) that slashes result times from five days to just minutes.



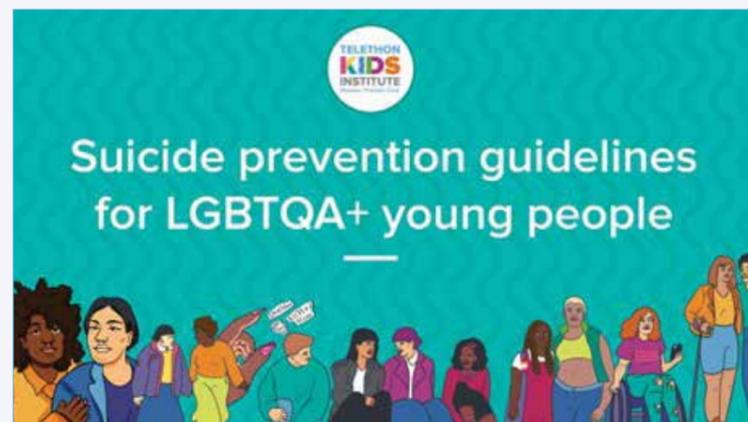
In a study published in the *Medical Journal of Australia*, researchers from Telethon Kids Institute and their collaborators have shown that utilising POCT machines to fast-track diagnosis of group A streptococcal (Strep A) pharyngitis in kids has the potential to revolutionise prevention strategies for acute rheumatic fever (ARF) and rheumatic heart disease (RHD).

Strep A infections are often responsible for sore throats and painful skin infections, which can lead to irreversible and potentially deadly heart and kidney damage if left untreated.

Affecting remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians at some of the highest rates in the world, the key challenge in the prevention of ARF and RHD has been timely diagnosis and treatment of Strep A to minimise the risk of serious complications and stop the spread of infection throughout communities.

Dr Dylan Barth, Honorary Research Associate and Epidemiologist for the END RHD Program at the Wesfarmers Centre of Vaccines and Infectious Diseases, based at Telethon Kids Institute, and Adjunct Research Fellow at The University of Western Australia, said using POCT brought the diagnostic lab directly to the patient and would play a crucial role in elimination of ARF and RHD in Australia.

## Suicide prevention guidelines to drive better services for LGBTQA+ young people



improve mental health interventions for young LGBTQA+ people at risk of suicide.

Aimed at health professionals, community service providers and other organisations in regular contact with young people,

the guidelines are made up of 290 simple recommendations aimed at making services more inclusive to better equip professionals to support young LGBTQA+ people.

The clear recommendations cover areas including general principles for inclusive practice, assessing and supporting young people who are experiencing suicidal thoughts, and advocacy.

Researchers from Telethon Kids Institute's Youth Mental Health team have developed Australia's first guidelines for clinicians and service providers to

Around 10 per cent of young people identify as LGBTQA+, making the guidelines vital information.



## Study shows mask mandate could prevent 147,000 COVID-19 cases



Telethon Kids Institute researchers produced Australia's most detailed modelling for the Omicron outbreak in WA.

Telethon Kids Institute and Curtin University's Geospatial Mapping team

created a new software tool to build a "virtual WA" using big data to map out the state's physical and social geography.

The advanced model was able to accurately predict the peak of WA's Omicron wave in 2022 by creating a simulation of the state's 2.7 million residents and how they move in the community.

It was also able to model the impact of different scenarios on case numbers, including the removal of mask mandates and the easing of other restrictions.

This modelling helped to inform Government decision making and gave the public a detailed insight into how the Omicron outbreak would play out.



Read more about the impact our research is making in our 2023 Impact Report [telethonkids.org.au](https://telethonkids.org.au)



## PHILANTHROPIC SPECTRUM

Overwhelmingly, when we ask our community why they give to Telethon Kids Institute the sentiment is that children are our future, and each child deserves a happy, healthy start to life. Research provides the hope for discoveries, preventions and cures that will change the course of a child and family's life. Children are our tomorrow.

We are humbled by the support of our partners, who inspire us every day with their stories and strength, and absolute commitment to be a part of making a positive change in our world. Some, simply because they intrinsically believe in the significant benefits of child health medical research in a community whilst others have experience firsthand of a child with a disability or illness and the positive and powerful role research played in their journey.

# THANK YOU

For more than 30 years, Telethon Kids Institute has been making breakthroughs that help kids in Western Australia and beyond. We've done this hand in hand with our community of supporters – they have grown with us and, in many ways, have defined what we have become today – WA's largest medical health research institute and one that is solely focused on kids. Happy, healthy kids.

Our community of supporters come in all shapes and sizes. Every gift counts and includes generous individuals who fundraise, become donors or leave a bequest in their will, Trusts & Foundations, including Telethon, which provide valuable ongoing support for research programs and platforms and Corporates whose multi-year support enable game-changing research to happen, here in Western Australia.

We are also incredibly proud of the fact that 18 per cent of our own Telethon Kids staff and researchers give back, through our workplace giving program.

### A special nod to our legacy leaders

An increasing number of our donors choose to leave a gift in their will and in doing so become part of our Fiona Stanley Circle, named in honour of one of Telethon Kids' most treasured benefactors: Founding Director and now Patron Fiona Stanley AC.

Professor Harvey Coates AO has a passion for helping children. As a leading paediatric Ear Nose and Throat (ENT) surgeon, Harvey spent decades performing life-changing procedures like tonsillectomies and grommets for kids at Princess Margaret Hospital and throughout remote areas in Western Australia. Like many of our Fiona Stanley Circle members, he wants to continue helping kids as part of his legacy and sees research as the key.

"The research being conducted at Telethon Kids improves the lives of all children, and that's why I'm very happy to give to Telethon Kids Institute in my Will. I can easily see where the value is – children are our future. It can sound glib, but it's true."

We give deep thanks and gratitude to all of you and acknowledge your support on the following pages.

### Thank you to our support teams

A thriving, growing philanthropic community relies on dedicated and passionate volunteers who are tirelessly committed to introducing new supporters to the Institute and supporting the Development team in creating ways to engage with our community. We thank the following for their ongoing service to philanthropy at Telethon Kids.

### Our Board Development Committee

Chaired by the hon Julie Bishop, members are Ed Bostock (TKI Board), Rebecca Tomkinson, Steve Scudamore, Di Bain and Sarah D'Onofrio. This Committee support introductions to our corporates and broader national community.

### Our Development Advisory Network

Chaired by Sarah D'Onofrio, members include Emilio Pagano, Avinash Subhas, Sharon Giorgetta and Shaun Hardcastle who help introduce the next generation of donors to Telethon Kids, focussing particularly on connecting donors to our researchers, deepening their knowledge of child health research and making some great friends along the way.

All our donors share a commitment to helping the Telethon Kids Institute to improve the health and development of our children. And they do this in many different ways. An act of philanthropy can change the course of research – seed funding for research ideas, an investment in an early career researcher providing critical support to build their research programs, travel scholarships, funding equipment, providing multi-year support for established research centres and projects.

*Thank you to all our volunteers and donors who support our research and our researchers.*

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 Breanna Redhead  
 Amy Relo-Fisher  
 Bert and Andrea Reuter  
 Paul Rezon  
 Nate Riegert  
 Chris Rinaldi  
 Kate Roberts  
 Brenda Roberts  
 Sasha Roberts-Smith  
 Monique Robinson  
 Stuart and Christine Robinson  
 Deanne and Family  
 Skaj Rofe  
 Michaela Rogers  
 Sandra Rosandich  
 Ryan Ross  
 Donna Rothwell  
 Michael Rowlands

Belinda Roychowdhury  
 Susan Rumisha  
 Jennifer Russell  
 Gerard Ryan  
 Laura Ryan  
 Tony Ryan  
 Wendy Ryan  
 Jonathan Saddik  
 Mirella and Krys Sadkowsky  
 Olena Sagaydak  
 Kaina Salivaji  
 Ganesh Saminathan  
 Norma Samuel  
 Brooke Sanderson  
 John and Debbie Schaffer  
 Ebony Schell  
 Brenda Schmidt  
 Ashley Schoof  
 Nikki Schultz  
 Natalie Scibilia  
 Julia Scolari  
 Jenny Scott  
 Steve Scudamore and Anne Last  
 Jackie Scurlock  
 Diana Sedgwick  
 Julia Sells  
 Saroja Selvanathan  
 Leslie Seow  
 Terri Seward  
 Sourabh Shakti  
 Roger and Sue Shales  
 Simone Sharp  
 Jessica Sheppard  
 Lindsay Sheppard  
 Natasha Shuker  
 Brett Silver



Kirsten Silvey  
 Laura Simatovic  
 Lauren Simcock  
 Stephen Simmons  
 Kellie Simmul  
 Wendy Simpson  
 Glen Slaymaker  
 Dale Slisar  
 Danial and Emma Smart  
 Dan Smith  
 Grant Smith  
 Cassey Smith  
 Sharon Smith  
 Mark Smith  
 Anette Smith  
 Alison Smith  
 Peter and Eleanor Smith  
 Nicky Smith  
 Tom Snelling and Nada Andric  
 Keith Solly  
 Margery and Ivan Solomon  
 Wei Soo  
 Sahira Spaeni  
 Sean Spalding  
 Steve and Jo Sparkes  
 Justina Sparks  
 Grace Spencer  
 Stephen Spiteri  
 Antony Spradbery  
 Julie-Anne Sprague  
 Aimee Squibb  
 Sharne Stacey and Gordon Burgess  
 Fiona Stanley AC  
 Bayley Starr  
 Annette Steele  
 Sam Stephenson  
 Rebecca Stevanoski  
 Travis Steventon  
 Adam Stewart  
 Lee Stewart  
 Stephen Stick  
 Brian and Jill Stinson  
 Sara Stockdale  
 Emma Stockwell  
 Jennifer Stokes  
 Denise and Peter Stransky  
 Lucy Strates  
 Sharon Streets

Chaojiao Sun  
 Bruce and Jenny Sutherland  
 Natalie Sutton  
 Norihito Suzuki  
 Joann Swailes  
 Laura Swanton  
 Andrew Symons  
 Justin Tabrizi  
 David Talalla  
 Robyn Tamke  
 Suzanne and Bryan Taylor  
 Rebecca Taylor  
 Kylie Taylor  
 Heather Tebbs  
 Ian Teede  
 Meng Tee Teng  
 Mary Tennant  
 Barbara Terrell  
 Angela Testa  
 Peter Thackray  
 Jenni Thomas  
 Jacqui Thomson  
 Graham and Dianne Thorne  
 Peter Thorp  
 Jillian Tonkin  
 Madison Toovey  
 Anthony Torresan  
 Silvana Torrisi  
 Mary Townsend  
 Jenny Truong  
 Sarantos Tsalavoutas  
 Ella Tudor-Roberts  
 Grace Turner  
 Annabel Unger  
 Jane Unkovich  
 Sandra Vagg  
 Jonathon Vagg  
 Maurice Valenzuela  
 Claire Van Mansum  
 Chris Vanderwoude  
 Sudheer Vasist  
 Francis Vaz  
 Kieran Veale  
 Libby and Hill Venn  
 Lee Vermeersch  
 Rochelle Villemin  
 Kerwin Vincent  
 Rena Vithiatharan  
 Isabella Voss

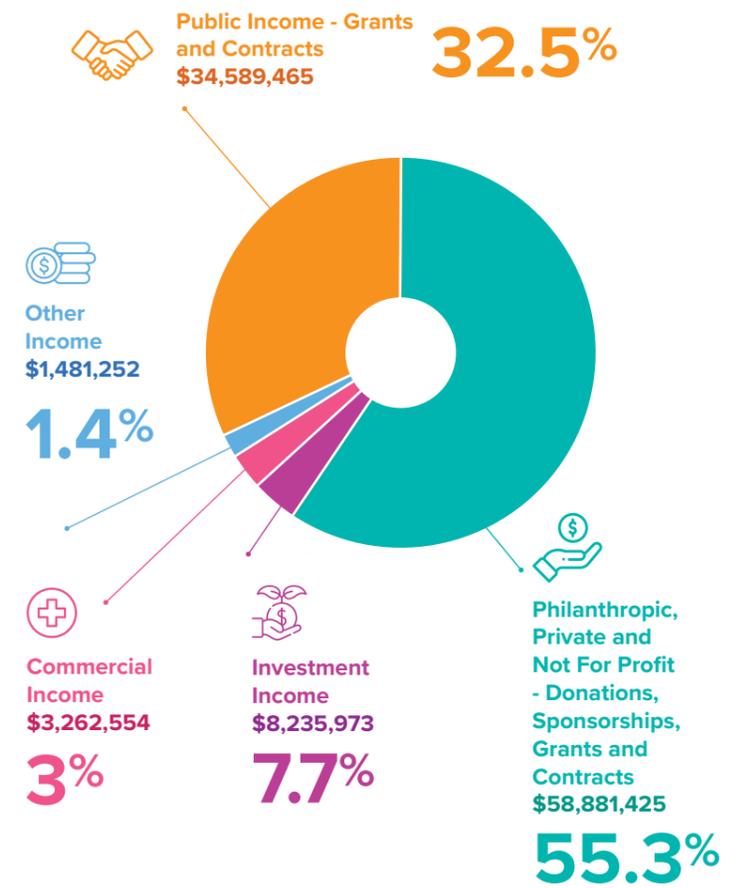
Rupa and Hari Vuthaluru  
 Jakeb Waddell  
 Tom Walker  
 Ashley Walker  
 Aaron Walkom  
 Ian and Margie Wallace  
 Will Wallefeld  
 Olivia Walter  
 Mi Wang and Zekun Yang  
 Bianca Ward  
 Clare Ward  
 Thomas Warden  
 Jill Warn  
 Anita Warner  
 John Warren AC  
 Emily Waru  
 Megan Waru  
 Karen Warwick  
 Mary Watson  
 Corinne Watt  
 Sanchia Watts  
 Melanie Watts  
 Imogen Webb  
 Jo Webb  
 Mary Webberley  
 Matt Weber  
 Ian Weber



Maureen Webster  
 Kim Wedge  
 Nicole Wee  
 Lakmi Weerasinghe  
 Joanna Welburn  
 Hannah Went and Family  
 Alwyn William Werrell Estate  
 Katrina West  
 Suzie White  
 Craig White  
 Sharon Whiting  
 Nicole Wickens  
 Kristy and Chris Wiegele  
 Linda Wijaya  
 Penny Wilding  
 Scott and Jodie Williams  
 Teneille Williams  
 Jennie Willis  
 Ron and Liz Windeyer  
 Simon Winter  
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 Margaret and Brendan Wood  
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 Madi Woodward  
 Alix Woolard  
 Carmen Woolhouse  
 Breeanne Wright  
 Cathy Wright  
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 Vickie Xu and Lewis Pan  
 Jola Yas  
 Richard and Pia Young  
 Renee Young  
 Billie Zadow  
 Michelle ZaDow  
 Jack Zahra  
 Eva Zellman  
 Rachael Zemek  
 Yuan Zhang  
 Linda Zhang  
 Tina Zhang  
 Dianna Zimmermann  
 Margherita Zocco  
 Dennis Zuvela

# OUR FINANCES

## TOTAL INCOME \$106,450,669



## TOTAL EXPENSES \$107,883,119





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PRINCIPAL PARTNER

