




# Healthy Development Adelaide (HDA)

*A Research & Innovation Cluster in South Australia*



Advancing an understanding of healthy development to ensure the physical, psychological and social health of infants, children and adolescents

Promoting & facilitating  
multidisciplinary research

## *The Foundation of a Healthy Society*

Winner in Excellence in Research Collaboration  
*SA Sciences Excellence Awards 2009*

[www.adelaide.edu.au/hda](http://www.adelaide.edu.au/hda)

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## Introduction

Australia is justifiably proud of its excellent record in research, clinical practice and the development of social justice policies that support access of all Australians to world-class health services. However, there are a range of problems that currently challenge the physical, psychological and social health of Australian children and adolescents. Such challenges require a multidisciplinary and focussed research effort to ensure the healthy development of next generation of Australians and the 'Foundation of a Healthy Society'.

HDA was established in 2004 as an initiative of the University of Adelaide and is led by Professor Robert Norman (University of Adelaide) and Professor Michael Sawyer (Children Youth and Women's Health Service / University of Adelaide). *Professor Caroline McMillen (University of South Australia) left her role as Co-Convenor in October 2011 taking up a new position as Vice-Chancellor at the University of Newcastle.*

HDA fosters research across 24 disciplines that include demography, epidemiology, education, genetics, indigenous health, nutrition, obstetrics & gynaecology, paediatrics, pharmacology, psychology, public health and sociology. Over 160 members are involved that include government, health service personnel, and researchers from the University of Adelaide, University of South Australia, Flinders University and relevant organisations.

As of 2008, HDA has become *A Research and Innovation Cluster in South Australia* with funding partners including the University of South Australia, Women's & Children's Health Research Institute (WCHRI), Channel 7 Children's Research Foundation, Department of Education & Children's Services. As of 2010, additional partners include Fertility SA, Children Youth & Women's Health Service, Flinders University, and Flinders Reproductive Medicine.

## The Research Context and Target Areas

HDA was formed around three main pillars created to highlight specific research interactions and major research questions, each covering a specific time period and spanning from preconception to adolescence. Within each pillar are three themes. Each theme traverses basic science, clinical science, health service delivery, social, cultural, economic and environmental determinants of health. The intent of this structure is to ensure that research groups with thematic interests will align with researchers from other research areas to advance our understanding of overall impact of research relating to infants, children and adolescence.

### A Good Start to Life: Preconception to Birth

- Healthy Reproduction : Early Growth and Birth : Pregnancy and Families

### The First Steps: Birth to 5 years

- Healthy Babies : Growth and Child Health : Healthy Parenting

### Learning to Climb: Childhood to Adolescence

- Adolescent Development : Health Risk Behaviours : Gender and Sexuality

## Excellence in Research Collaboration

HDA's role, profile and reputation within the state has been well established and our contribution was acknowledged by winning the *Excellence in Research Collaboration* category at the 2009 South Australian Science Excellence Awards.

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## WHO WE ARE

HDA was established to foster research relevant to the healthy development of children and adolescents. HDA has been developing relationships with cross-disciplinary teams with expertise to tackle the bigger research questions and to enable researchers to work more effectively across universities, government, research organisations and the community.

HDA has been building the blocks that can enable researchers to exchange ideas, build collaborative relationships and work together for the benefit of Australian society. HDA continues to advance as the prominent *Health Research & Innovation Cluster* in South Australia.

### *HDA Convenors*



**Professor Robert Norman**  
**Director: The Robinson Institute, University of Adelaide**  
**Professor of Reproductive and Periconceptual Medicine**  
**Subspecialist in Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility:**  
**FertilitySA; Flinders Reproductive Medicine; Royal Adelaide Hospital**

Rob Norman is an active clinician and subspecialist in reproductive medicine and infertility and one of the world's most respected authorities on reproductive health. He was awarded the South Australian Scientist of the Year in 2009.



**Professor Michael Sawyer OAM**  
**Head: Research & Evaluation Unit, Women's & Children's Hospital, Women's & Children's Health Network**  
**Professor of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry:**  
**Discipline of Paediatrics, University of Adelaide**

Michael Sawyer is currently a Director with Australian Rotary Health. He has previously been Head, Department of Paediatrics and Associate Dean (Research) in the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Adelaide. In 2008, he was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for services to the field of child and adolescent mental health as a researcher and educator.



### *HDA Executive Officer*

**Ms Anne Jurisevic**

Anne Jurisevic graduated from Flinders University with a BSc Degree in 1992 and immediately joined the University of Adelaide's Department of Physiology as Laboratory Manager and Senior Animal Surgeon for Prof Caroline McMillen's research group. In 2004, Anne joined HDA and her role includes implementing HDA strategies, creating public awareness of HDA and fostering communication between universities + government + community, communication with members, organisation of meetings and events, overseeing the membership database, financial budget and website.

### *HDA's Role*

Promote, facilitate and enable multidisciplinary research that will advance an understanding of healthy development and ensure the physical, psychological and social health of infants, children and adolescents

### *HDA's Vision*

A major hub for research and innovation in South Australia that will advance an understanding of healthy development and ensure the physical, psychological, mental and social health of infants, children and adolescents

### *HDA's Objectives*

1. Develop effective communication and multidisciplinary interactions to inform and define research directions in developmental health research among all relevant institutions and individuals in South Australia
2. Facilitate a multidisciplinary research training program in Healthy Development across the state
3. Establish HDA as a focus for interactions with major international research networks and funding agencies
4. Build a positive image and profile of Healthy Development Adelaide to attract community, government and corporate support to achieving financial independency

## **HDA Steering Group**

### **HDA Convenors**

#### **A/Professor Pat Buckley**

Dean Research & Research Education  
Division of Health Sciences, UniSA

#### **Ms Miriam Daley**

Director

Strategic Initiatives, Early Childhood Services  
Department of Education & Children's Services

#### **Professor Maria Makrides**

Acting Executive Director

Women's & Children's Health Research Institute

#### **Ms Gail Mondy**

Chief Executive Officer

Women's & Children's Health Network

#### **Professor Barbara Pocock**

Director, Centre for Work + Life, UniSA

#### **Professor Claire Roberts**

Research Leader, Placental Development Group  
The Robinson Institute, University of Adelaide

#### **A/Professor Jane Scott**

Head of Academic Programs

Department of Nutrition and Dietetics  
Flinders University

#### **Mr Andrew Stanley**

Director, Strategic Planning Policy & Research,  
SA Health

## **HDA Working Groups**

### ***Research Synergies "oversee the planning and organisation of HDA Thematic Evenings"***

Chaired by Prof Claire Roberts (University of Adelaide); *Members include A/Prof Gordon Howarth (University of Adelaide), Dr Natalie Sinn (UniSA), Dr Genevieve Baratiny (UniSA), Dr Lisa Smithers (University of Adelaide), Anne Jurisevic (HDA)*

### ***Research Training Program "oversee the planning and organisation of HDA Scholars Program (mentoring & practicum placements); HDA Career Development Events; and HDA Travel Grants"***

Chaired by A/Prof Pat Buckley (UniSA); *Members include Ms Bernadette Richards (University of Adelaide), A/Prof Maree O'Keefe (University of Adelaide), Dr Janna Morrison (UniSA), A/Prof Jane Scott (Flinders University), Anne Jurisevic (HDA)*

***Oration "oversee the annual Oration"*** *Members include HDA Convenors, Anne Jurisevic (HDA)*

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## WHAT WE DO

### 1. HDA EVENTS

Organisation and implementation of an extensive and varied event program of ~12 events/year covering high priority research and career development topics in the form of thematic evenings, oration, seminars, symposiums, workshops and forums.

Our events provide effective communication and interactions across disciplines that provide the opportunities for networking and multidisciplinary research collaborations. They are well attended by a broad array of researchers, students, government and health service personnel and educators, organisations, teachers and the general community.

#### ORATION

*HDA's high profile event of the year where a senior HDA member is awarded the Healthy Development Adelaide Award for achieved excellence in research contributing to healthy development.*

**In 7 years (2005-2011)...67 events have been held with ~8250 people registering.**

- 25 Thematic Evenings
- 10 Forums
- 10 Career Development Events / Workshops
- 7 Orations
- 5 Seminars
- 4 Symposiums
- 4 Research Days
- Other events - Research Australia Thank You Day, Tall Poppy Information Evening

*A comprehensive view of HDA events can be found at [www.adelaide.edu.au/hda/news](http://www.adelaide.edu.au/hda/news)*

### 2. HDA TRAVEL GRANTS

\$35,000 has been awarded to 35 HDA Members (early career researchers) and PhD students supporting overseas conference travel since 2008. *Travel reports published in the HDA Newsletters.*

*"All in all, my attendance at SGI's 58th Annual Meeting has been an invaluable opportunity to gain an international perspective and has also contributed to my growth as a scientist" Lisa Nicholas - Sansom Institute, UniSA*

*"I am very appreciative of the support provided by HDA to attend this conference and hope that the research directions I take now as a result of what I have learned will continue to work towards the well being of children with craniofacial conditions" Dr Rachel Roberts - School of Psychology, University of Adelaide*

*"I am very grateful to HDA for supporting my trip to the United States. Going to the conference and visiting other researcher's labs provided me with an invaluable opportunity to network with other scientists and present our research on an international stage" Wei-Chun Tu - Foodplus Research Centre, University of Adelaide*

*HDA recipients can be found at [www.adelaide.edu.au/hda/support](http://www.adelaide.edu.au/hda/support)*

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### 3. HDA SCHOOL EDUCATION PROGRAM

HDA has offered a School Education Program for high schools since 2007 on the current cutting-edge research that is taking place in the areas of *reproductive health and healthy development*. Senior researchers and PhD students visit high schools for interactive class room sessions aimed at year 10-11 students in developing their career aspirations. A small number of sessions of up to 10 per year are offered due to time and availability of the researchers and students.

How life before birth affects your health?  
Infertility is on the rise - what is the cause?  
How reproductive cancers develop and spread?  
IVF & assisted reproductive technology - how does it work?  
*The Robinson Institute, University of Adelaide*

Mental health in young people - should we be worried?  
*Research & Evaluation unit, Children Youth & Women's Health Service*

What's new in nutrition and gut health?  
*School of Animal & Veterinary Sciences, University of Adelaide  
/ Gastroenterology Department, Women's & Children's Hospital*

Can dairy products give you better cognition, psychological wellbeing & cardiometabolic health?  
*Nutritional Physiology Research Centre, University of South Australia*

Physical activity and sedentary behaviour in young people  
*School of Education, Flinders University*

*Over 15 Schools have been involved with the Program.  
Further information on the Program can be found at  
[www.adelaide.edu.au/hda/school\\_edprogram](http://www.adelaide.edu.au/hda/school_edprogram)*

**Prof Claire Roberts and Dr Denise Furness present 'How life before birth affects your health?' session.**

*"I would really like to do work experience there"; "It is good to see how biology is used in a research area" - students, Gleeson College*

*"The HDA schools program provides a fantastic opportunity for researchers to share their experience with high school students, this program can open their eyes to the wonders of science and career options that are out there" - Dr Furness*

**Dr Michelle Lane and Ms Sarah Wakefield present "IVF & assisted reproductive technology - how does it work?" session.**

*"Wow, I never really thought of IVF in that way, she really made it simple to understand"; "I can now see why IVF might be such a controversial issue in society" - students, Annesley College*

*"Thank you for giving our school the opportunity to be involved with this program. We found it very valuable and would definitely recommend it to others in the future" - teacher, Annesley College*

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## 4. HDA AWARDS

### ➤ **Healthy Development Adelaide Award**

Awarded annually to HDA members who have achieved excellence in research contributing to healthy development. Award recipients have included Prof Graeme Hugo, Prof Alastair MacLennan, A/Prof Manny Noakes, Prof Barbara Pocock, Prof Eric Haan, Prof Maria Makrides and Prof John Lynch.

### ➤ **HDA Leadership Awards 2010**

Two senior HDA members were awarded a HDA Leadership Award of \$2,000 each for their significant and steadfast contributions to HDA. *The HDA Leadership Awards were an outcome from the SA Science Excellence Awards 2009.*

#### **Professor Claire Roberts**

*Senior Research Fellow, The Robinson Institute, University of Adelaide*

Claire has made valued contributions to HDA as Chair of the Research Synergies Working Group for several years and continued support within HDA. The Thematic Evenings have been a great success in HDA's event program in their topics and multidisciplinary speaker diversity across institutions. These events directly meet one of HDA's objectives in developing effective communication and multidisciplinary interactions to inform and define research directions in developmental health research among all relevant institutions and individuals in South Australia.

*"I feel very honoured to have this bestowed upon me. I think that HDA is a fantastic organisation and I greatly value its cross disciplinary and cross institutional nature and the way in which it brings together such a broad range of researchers, government and community stakeholders in this highly important field of Development".*

#### **A/Professor Pat Buckley**

*Dean: Research and Research Education, Division of Health Sciences, UniSA.*

Pat has made valued contributions to HDA as Chair of the Research Training Program Working Group since its inception and continued support within HDA. The Research Training Program has been a great success in HDA's program around specific career development and translational research events and running of the HDA Scholars program (1<sup>st</sup> cohort in 2006 of 4 Scholars and 2<sup>nd</sup> cohort in 2009 of 6 Scholars). This also includes the overview of the Scholars mentoring and practicum placement components. This program meets one of HDA's objectives in facilitating a multidisciplinary research training program in healthy development across the state.

*"I am delighted to accept this award - I've certainly seen HDA become a significant and meaningful research cluster since it started up, and I've very much enjoyed playing a role in that"*

### ➤ **HDA Collaboration Awards 2010**

The following HDA members were awarded a HDA Collaboration Award of \$1,000 each towards their collaborative research endeavours in the area of healthy development. *The HDA Collaboration Awards were an outcome from the SA Science Excellence Awards 2009.*

Dr Janna Morrison, Senior Research Fellow, Sansom Institute for Health Research, UniSA.  
*Developmental origins of healthy heart workshop.*

Dr Lisa Smithers, Research Fellow, Sansom Institute for Health Research, UniSA.  
*Diet quality of infants and young children workshop.*

Dr Kate Ridley, Senior Lecturer, School of Education, Flinders University.  
*Children's physical activity workshop.*

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## 5. HDA SCHOLARS PROGRAM

HDA Scholars are awarded PhD Scholarships (competitive selection from the APA scholarship pool) with additional financial stipends (per student for 3 years) on the basis of individual merit and the multidisciplinary nature of the project.

A unique research training program that includes:-

- engagement to network in HDA's event program - career development and research events
- mentors identified and established on needs identified basis by the Scholars
- translational research practicum placements offered to enhance and broaden their research training and career development

### **HDA Scholars - *first cohort***

The following inaugural HDA scholars were awarded Healthy Development Adelaide PhD top-up scholarships 2006-2008.

Leigh Guerin: Discipline of Obstetrics & Gynaecology, University of Adelaide and School of Pharmacy and Medical Science, University of South Australia. PhD Project: Role of maternal T regulatory cells in healthy pregnancy.

Siew Seen Lim: CSIRO Human Nutrition and Robinson Institute, University of Adelaide. PhD Project: Determinants of responsiveness to dietary intervention in Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS) women to improve reproductive outcomes.

Anne Raimondo: Discipline of Biochemistry and Discipline of Genetics, University of Adelaide. PhD Project: Studying the Single-Minded protein 1 (SIM1), a transcription factor which is thought to possess roles in early neural development and regulation of the feeding response in adults.

Lynlea Simmonds: Discipline of Pharmacology and School of Psychology, University of Adelaide. PhD Project: Pharmacological, cognitive and emotional outcomes of ecstasy use in young people.

### **HDA Scholars - *second cohort***

The following HDA scholars were awarded Channel 7 Children's Research Foundation PhD top-up scholarships 2009-2011. We thank the *Channel 7 Children's Research Foundation* for their financial support.

Lisa Akison: Robinson Institute, University of Adelaide. PhD Project: The molecular mechanisms regulating ovulation.

Georgie Crichton: Nutritional Physiology Research Centre, University of South Australia. PhD Project: Investigating effects of low fat dairy consumption on cognitive functioning, psychological wellbeing, and cardiometabolic health.

Luca Prisciandaro: Discipline of Animal Science, University of Adelaide; Department of Gastroenterology, WCH. PhD Project: Identifying probiotics that can provide beneficial therapy for chemotherapy-induced mucositis.

Zhi Yi Ong: Foodplus Research Centre, University of Adelaide (moved from UniSA in mid2010). PhD Project: Determining whether exposure to maternal junk food diet during fetal life leads to altered development of central reward pathway.

Natasha Schranz: School of Health Sciences, University of South Australia. PhD Project: Running a resistance training intervention for overweight and obese adolescent males.

Dorota Zarnowiecki: School of Health Sciences, University of South Australia. PhD Project: Exploring resilience in relation to dietary behaviours among children from neighbourhoods of low socioeconomic position.

*A third cohort of Scholars will commence in 2012 supported by the Channel 7 Children's Research Foundation.*

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## WHO WE REACH

*“Multidisciplinary research advances our understanding of the overall impact of research relating to infants, children and adolescence.”*

### 1. HDA MEMBERS

HDA’s membership encompasses 24 research disciplines with senior and early career researchers, PhD students, government personnel and affiliates collectively dedicated to bringing together multidisciplinary aspects of research related to investigation and improvement in developmental health spanning embryo, infant, child and youth health.

*biochemistry, biomedical engineering, demographics, dentistry, economics, education, endocrinology, epidemiology, ethics, genetics, immunology, indigenous health, law, nutrition, obstetrics and gynaecology, paediatrics, pharmacology, physiology, politics, psychology, psychiatry, public health, sociology and virology.*

HDA’s membership has steadily increased from 80 in 2004, 140 in 2009 to 165 in 2011 to date. Interest in HDA continues to grow steadily that include membership requests to involvement in committees and events.

*An A-Z membership listing can be found at [www.adelaide.edu.au/hda/people](http://www.adelaide.edu.au/hda/people)*

### 2. HDA AFFILIATES AND MEMBER GROUPS

A Full listing of our affiliates and member groups can be found on the HDA website at [www.adelaide.edu.au/hda/research](http://www.adelaide.edu.au/hda/research)

### 3. HEALTH SERVICE & GOVERNMENT

We receive a strong interest from the health service and government sectors.

### 4. GENERAL COMMUNITY & ORGANISATIONS

Our reputation and brand of events cater to the general community also and is wide reaching to various organizations. *HDA’s mailing list continues to grow to incorporate all of the above sectors.*

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## HDA Partners

In 2008, HDA officially became *A Research and Innovation Cluster in South Australia* with partners financially contributing to HDA initiatives and programs. Our Partners provide continued sustainability and further strengthen and broaden our objectives to continuously improve the health and wellbeing of young children in South Australia.



*An initiative of the University of Adelaide since 2004*

### Inaugural Partners



### 2010-2011 Partners



**Government of South Australia**  
SA Health



### HDA Scholars 2009-2011 top-up Scholarships



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## ***HDA will continue to strive to advance our role as the prominent health Research & Innovation Cluster in South Australia***

### ***For further information contact:***

Anne Jurisevic  
HDA Executive Officer  
HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT ADELAIDE (HDA)

University of Adelaide  
Ground Floor, Norwich Centre  
55 King William Road  
North Adelaide SA 5006

T: +61 8 8313 8222  
F: +61 8 8313 1355  
E: [anne.jurisevic@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:anne.jurisevic@adelaide.edu.au)  
W: [www.adelaide.edu.au/hda](http://www.adelaide.edu.au/hda)

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