

## Upcoming Events...

### • 6-13 March

Early Childhood Research Seminar Series with Dr Fraser Mustard (Adelaide Thinker in Residence) to be held across all 3 Universities.

**6 March** - *International research agenda in early childhood development (Flinders University)*

**8 March** - *What are the challenges confronting us in conducting early childhood research (UniSA)*

**13 March** - *Informing and defining directions in early childhood research in South Australia (HDA / University of Adelaide)*

### • 27 March

HDA Workshop on NHMRC Career Development Awards & Training Awards to be held at Union House, University of Adelaide

### • 1-4 April

The 11th annual congress of the Perinatal Society of Australia and New Zealand (PSANZ) to be held in Melbourne, Australia.

*For further information visit our events page at:*

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

## HDA LATEST NEWS

We are very pleased to announce that HDA is back for another year with a successful outcome to our annual review last year. HDA will be continually striving to be an inclusive state-based research cluster.

We will be holding our popular annual events such as the Thematic Evenings, Oration and Research Day. We will also be delivering some new 'research impact' events in the format of workshops. *see below on how our first workshop went and*

*page 2 for our second workshop coming up.*

HDA is hosting a special seminar on 13 March as part of the Fraser Mustard, Thinker in Residence seminar series on early childhood. *Go to page 3 for more information.*

### HDA welcomes new members!

**Natalie Sinn** - Research Associate with the Nutritional Physiology Research Centre, UniSA.

**Maree O'Keefe** - Associate Dean (Learning & Teaching)

with the Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Adelaide.

**Cameron van den Heuvel** - Keith Sheridan Research Fellow within the Discipline of Paediatrics, University of Adelaide.

**Lisa Smithers** - Medical Scientist at the Child Nutrition Research Centre, Flinders Medical Centre.

**Prof Robert Norman**  
**Prof Caroline McMillen**  
**Prof Michael Sawyer**

## HDA'S 'BEHIND THE SCENES' NHMRC WORKSHOP

On 1 February, HDA held a unique workshop that highlighted a 'behind the scenes' look at the culture of an NHMRC panel. Attendees took part in the panel and contributed in a grant assessment process.

Some feedback from attendees:

*"I am just working on grant writing at the moment - my first time, and I have a long list of things to check off from what I gained in yesterday's panel. Thanks again to the HDA team for this idea. I think it would be beneficial to repeat it in future years, perhaps especially encouraging ECRs to attend".*

*"I thought the workshop was incredibly informative and useful. I will consider the comments raised about grants discussed when I write future grants. I*

*would attend another workshop if held again".*

*"Excellent, great feedback on what works and what doesn't including the variability of people's reactions...its helpful to know there is no one recipe, but there are definite rules".*

*"I thought it was extremely valuable and a great insight into the internal workings of the NHMRC committees! The format worked well and the debrief was excellent as well. I think it deserves to be an annual event!"*

*"I thought it was great. I feel privileged to have been involved. It particularly suits my style of learning and I felt very engaged with the process particularly as I had a role to play as 2nd spokesperson. It gave*

*us a taste of the 'psychology' of the process. Well done and thanks".*

*"I found the panel session very interesting and enlightening from the point of view of understanding the panel process, the "selling" of a good idea and the psychology of the interaction between the panel members. I've already encouraged other staff members to attend next year".*

*"The workshop was invaluable. It was an incredible opportunity to draw on the experience of very experienced researchers. What I picked up during the panel and discussions will help enormously in writing my own NHMRC applications".*

## MEMBER PROFILE - DR LISA SMITHERS

CHILD NUTRITION RESEARCH CENTRE, FLINDERS MEDICAL CENTRE

Volume 3, Issue 1



Dr Lisa Smithers is a postdoctoral researcher at the Child Nutrition Research Centre, Child Health Research Institute and the Women and Children Division of Flinders Medical Centre.

Lisa's research interests are focussed on the role nutrition on health, with particular emphasis on clinical trials involving infant development. Lisa began laboratory-based research investi-

gating the effects of long-chain polyunsaturated fatty acids on the cells that line blood vessel. Her research experiences were extended beyond the laboratory into clinical trials with her PhD studies at the University of Adelaide's Discipline of Paediatrics. Her doctoral thesis was focused on the safety and efficacy of omega-3 long-chain polyunsaturated fatty acid nutrition on the development of vision in preterm infants. Omega-3 fats are important constituents of retinal cell membranes and population studies show that omega-3 nutrition may be important for the development of vision. Coupled with the knowledge that preterm infants have

special nutritional requirements, her studies provide new insights into the omega-3 nutritional needs of preterm infants. Her research was recently recognised at the International Society for the Study of Fatty Acids and Lipids where she won an award for best oral presentation in the clinical sciences. This work has been expanded into a national multi-centre trial to investigate the effect of omega-3 fatty acids on infant neurodevelopment by Associate Professor Makrides at the Child Nutrition Research Centre.

Lisa is currently working on a randomised controlled trial that

aims to determine whether supplementation with omega-3 long chain fatty acids during gestation will enhance the development of vision in infants. The data generated from this study will provide unique information on visual development in infancy.

Lisa plans to continue investigating the influence of early nutrition on later development, with the long-term aim of improving future health and cognitive outcomes of children.

*Dr Lisa Smithers can be contacted by phone 8204 5668 or [lisa.smithers@fmc.sa.gov.au](mailto:lisa.smithers@fmc.sa.gov.au)*

## NEW HDA WORKSHOP: NHMRC CAREER DEVELOPMENT AWARDS & TRAINING AWARDS

HDA will hold a workshop with experts from recent career development and training awards assessment committees. Original grant applications will be critiqued by the expert panel, workshop attendees will be required to participate in the assessment process.

The workshop will highlight strategies on how to apply for NHMRC Career Development Awards and Training Awards.

This workshop will be ideal for

PhD students and early-mid career researchers to gain the competitive edge in putting together the best possible grant application.

*Career Development Awards* are available to researchers in the early stages of their careers. They aim to develop their capacity for original independent research; develop their research leadership skills; and help them to establish themselves as independent self-directed health and medical

researchers in a research program or a research team.

*NHMRC Training (Postdoctoral) Awards* provide opportunities for Australian researchers to undertake research that is of major importance in its field and of benefit to Australian health. These Fellowships provide a vehicle for training in basic research either in Australia or overseas, to enable Fellows to work on research projects with nominated advisors.

**When:** Tuesday 27 March

**Time:** 3.00 - 5.30pm

**Where:** Union House (level 4), Equinox room, University of Adelaide

**RSVP** by Friday 16 March to **Anne Jurisevic** at [anne.jurisevic@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:anne.jurisevic@adelaide.edu.au) or phone 8303 8222

*For more information go to [www.adelaide.edu.au/hda/events](http://www.adelaide.edu.au/hda/events)*

## UPDATED STATE STRATEGIC PLAN



Premier Mike Rann released an update of South Australia's Strategic Plan on 24 January 2007 with a renewed focus on health, the environment, education and building a competitive economy.

The updated plan takes the number of targets to 98, up from the 84 in the first edition

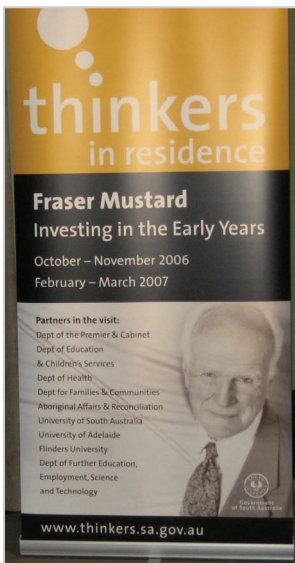
Of the Plan released nearly three years ago.

The changes to the plan have come about through a vigorous and unprecedented process of community consultation led by the plan update team and involving thousands of people across the state.

That followed an objective assessment by an independent and expert audit committee, which assessed the state progress against the targets of the original plan.

**For more information on the updated Plan go to [www.saplan.org.au](http://www.saplan.org.au)**

## HDA EARLY CHILDHOOD RESEARCH SEMINAR WITH DR FRASER MUSTARD, ADELAIDE THINKER IN RESIDENCE



HDA will be holding an Early Childhood Research seminar with Dr Fraser Mustard on Tuesday 13 March.

The seminar is titled 'Informing and defining directions in early childhood research in South Australia, early childhood research: an agenda for South Australia'.

**Dr Mustard will be presenting an overview of his first visit last year, the current status of early childhood research in SA, and where the agenda for SA should be heading.**

Dr Mustard is an internationally recognised expert in the field of early childhood development and has led the growth of interest in this critical area. Dr Mustard is the Founding President of The Canadian Institute for Advanced Research, and the Founding Chairman for the

Canadian Council for Early Childhood Development and Parenting.

Dr Mustard's work will have a direct relationship with SA's Strategic Plan, the Council of Australian Government's priority focus on early childhood development and with the new South Australian Government partnership agreement with Manitoba, Canada. During his residency, Dr Mustard will highlight how investing in early childhood development promotes a healthier and fitter population, and promotes opportunities for all South Australian children to achieve their potential.

Dr Mustard's second residency stay will be from 5 February to 23 March 2007.

**When:** Tuesday 13 March

**Time:** 4.30 - 6.30pm (arrivals by 4.15pm).

**Where:** State Library Lecture Theatre (corner of Kintore Ave and North Terrace)

**RSVP by 7 March to Anne Jurisevic to 8303 8222 or [anne.jurisevic@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:anne.jurisevic@adelaide.edu.au)**

**NB: Only a small number of seats remain**



## HDA SCHOLAR PROFILE - SIEW LIM YOUNG WOMEN AND WEIGHT LOSS STUDY



**Siew Lim is in her second year of a Healthy Development Adelaide PhD scholarship. Siew is supervised by Prof Manny Noakes (CSIRO Human Nutrition), Dr Peter Clifton (CSIRO Human Nutrition & affiliate with Discipline of Physiology, University of Adelaide) and Prof Robert Norman (Research Centre for Reproductive Health, University of Adelaide).**

This year is the big intervention year for my PhD studies. We will be recruiting for 300 young women for the Young Women and Weight Loss Study. In this study, they will be randomized to three treatment arms: metformin, placebo and lifestyle for the first 12 weeks. After this phase, they will all be introduced to an internet-based structured lifestyle program for weight maintenance. We are currently in the process of developing the web. Recruitment is starting mid February.

Last year was spent on preparation for this year's trial. We've trialled dietary group sessions adapted from a successful American program in 6-month trial in young women with PCOS. We have learned valu-

able lessons from that experience, which helped us to modify the program to suit the needs for young Australian women in upcoming Young Women and Weight Loss Study. We have conducted a survey on feasibility and attitudes towards concept of internet-based lifestyle program for weight loss among young women of South Australia. We found that majority of young women access the internet at least weekly, thus an internet program which requires weekly access should be feasible.

In the broader context of PhD experiences, I've also received an interview from Radio Adelaide in regards to my experience as a PhD student from overseas background, and an

interview with Today Tonight for recruitment purposes. They have been exciting but nerve racking experiences!! A bit like exams, but one that the public knows about!!! Certainly good training for future career in controversial area such as nutrition! The PhD journey has so far been exciting and satisfying. Being able to work on a topic which I am passionate in, working with great supervisors and a fantastic support team, working towards better health for young women—a group which I identify myself with....All in all, it has just been such a positive experience, which I hope it will only get better with time!!!

To register interest in the study, please call Siew at 8303 8938 or email [siew.lim@csiro.au](mailto:siew.lim@csiro.au)

### EARLY ANNOUNCEMENTS:

**HDA ORATION - 7 JUNE (EVENING)**  
**HDA RESEARCH DAY - 8 JUNE**