

ACA^H

ACADEMY OF CHILD &
ADOLESCENT HEALTH



Newsletter August 2025



<https://acah.org.au/>



admin@acah.org.au



Academy of Child and Adolescent Health



academycah

There are many factors that influence the health and wellbeing of children and young people and many of these determinants lie outside the direct control of the child, young person or their family.

Commercial determinants of health that are the private sector activities that affect people's health directly, or indirectly, positively or negatively with young people particularly at risk. You can read more here <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/commercial-determinants-of-health>. Commercial determinants of health underpin some of the upcoming Webinars that are being planned- stay tuned!

The ACAH is moving into a busy period of the year with planning underway for the Annual General Meeting (AGM), general webinars, ACAH26 Conference in Darwin and some general updates within the organisation.

The AGM is an opportunity for you to be updated and discuss how the organisation is travelling and what we have been doing in the past year- please join us on 25.09.2025. At the AGM, I will talk about the Interim Strategy approved by the Board and how you can contribute to a more comprehensive strategy.

There are 2 Board vacancies and the call for nominations is now open (email sent to all current members On 01.08.2025- Check your Spam if you haven't received it). Please consider putting in a nomination and joining us on the Board.

I must thank Anysha Walia organiser of the recent and very successful ACAH Primary Care webinar. We are very grateful to all involved.

Michelle Pham, our wonderful admin support has recently had her first child. The Board remains very appreciative for her ongoing support through the busy newborn period and sends our congratulations on behalf of the organisation.

Warmest regards,

Jacqueline Small, Chair Board.

ACAH26 Conference

ACAH26 Conference dates to be held in Darwin have now been set 23rd to 25th April

2025 Board Nominations

Board nominations for two ACAH vacancies are now open to members. The Board encourages nominations from enthusiastic members who wish to help lead the organisation to deliver on its purpose to promote the health and well being of every newborn, child and young person in order that they may reach their maximum potential.

- Nominations close: Monday 25th August 2025 at 11:59pm
- https://acah.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/ACAH-Board-Nomination-2025.pdf?mc_cid=ccd142ae60&mc_eid=66bfb6d5fd

Making a Difference to Children's Health: *Participatory Approaches in Childhood Onset Disability Research*

Thursday 25.09.2025 6pm-7pm AEST Webinar

Featuring

Prof Olaf Kraus de Camargo, CanChild Centre for Childhood Onset Disability Research and Dept of Paediatrics at McMaster Uni, Canada.

Dr Laurel Mimmo, Snr Res Fellow, Nursing Research Unit, SCHN, Sydney

Dr Louise Butler, Community Paediatrician Child Development Programme, Children's Health Queensland.

Join ACAH- <https://acah.org.au/membership/apply-for-or-renew-membership/>

Making a Difference to Children's Health: *Participatory Approaches in Childhood Onset Disability Research*

This brief presentation provides an overview of research initiatives at the CanChild Centre for Childhood-onset Disability Research at McMaster University, Hamilton, ON, Canada. Throughout the history of family engagement, CanChild scientists have evolved from engaging families on an informal basis to become research partners and co-investigators. We now also include children with disabilities actively shaping our research, becoming active in the recruitment of participants, and reflecting on the analysis of results, as well as sharing their experiences at scientific meetings.

The presentation to be followed by panel reflection, discussion and questions.

Participants:

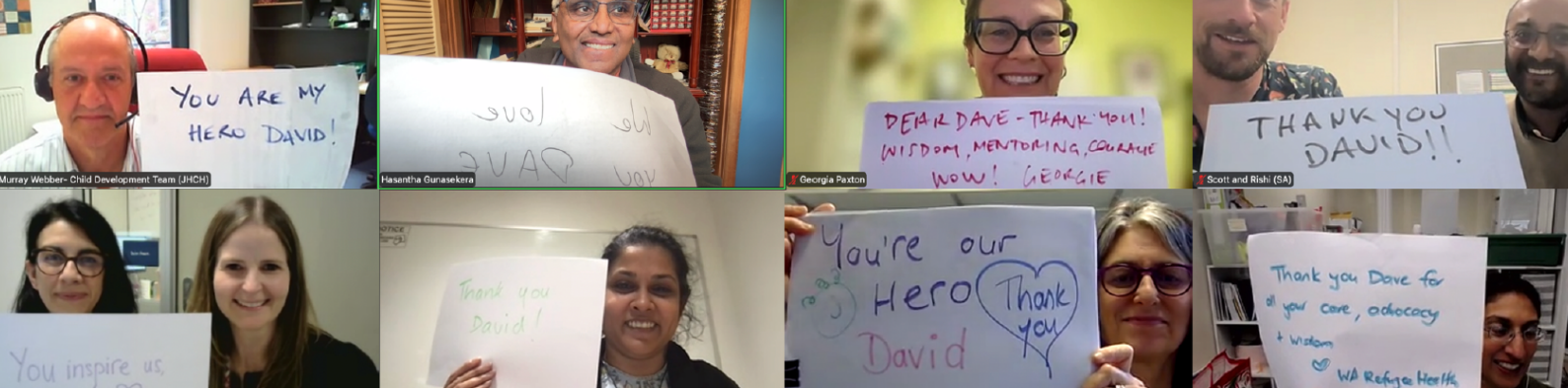


Dr Olaf Kraus de Camargo is Prof at Dept Paediatrics McMaster University, Co-Director at CanChild Centre for Childhood Onset Disability Research and Developmental Paediatrician at Ron Joyce Centre in Hamilton Ontario. Since 2001, he has been involved with the implementation of WHO ICF.

Dr Laurel Mimmo is Senior Research Fellow with Nursing Research Unit, SCHN, NSW. She has over 25 years of experience in paediatric healthcare and 10 years in quality and safety. Her interests include achieving equitable healthcare for children and young people with intellectual disability.



Dr Louise Butler is a Community Paediatrician in Child Development Programme, Children's Health, Queensland and is Vice President Australasian Society for Developmental Paediatrics. Her interests include complex comorbidity and integrated approaches to the care of children.



In Remembrance: Vale Professor David Isaacs

David Isaacs was a giant in paediatrics in Australia. He was an infectious disease physician, yet he also built his reputation through expertise and excellence in clinical ethics, refugee health, teaching, research and advocacy. Arising from his decades long service to children's health that was consistently effused with kindness and compassion, his passing on 2 August 2025 will leave a lasting legacy.

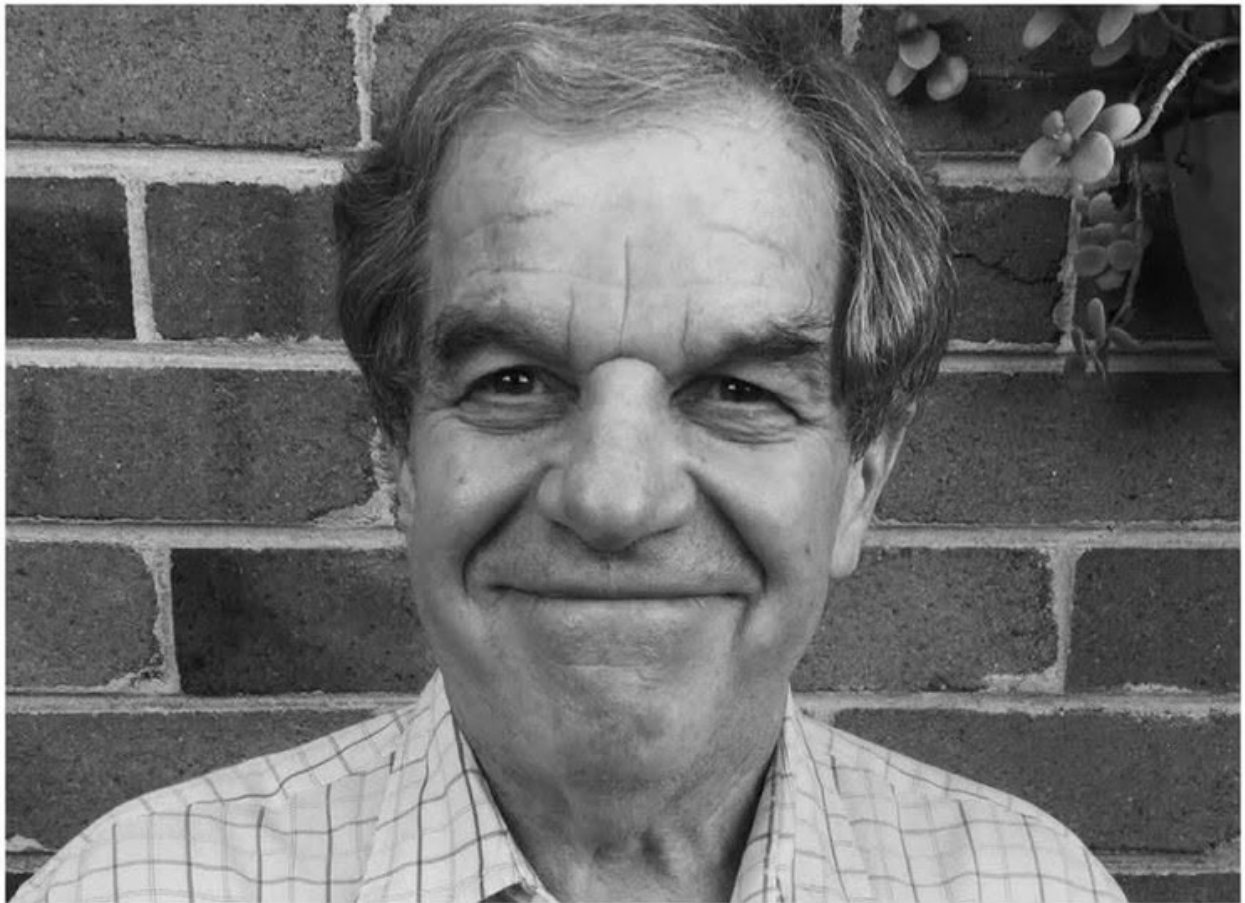
David graduated from medicine in 1976 at Cambridge University, making Australia home after arriving at Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children in 1982. His career was to be in infectious diseases and was appointed as specialist in 1989.

Yet in many ways, David's wide and deep impact on trainees, colleagues, and the wider community has come from enduring commitment to justice, compassion and the roles and responsibilities he continued to accept and nurture. He led the development of the clinical ethics service with much valued colleagues, championed the welfare of refugee children and provided clinics for Indigenous children.

David spearheaded actions to publicise the appalling conditions of refugee children held in off-shore detention at significant personal risk. He was joined by senior paediatric colleagues, other medical leaders and increasingly the wider medical community in shared outrage at the poor and deteriorating health of these children.

David received many awards in recognition of his valuable service, including the RACP John Sands Medal in 2015 and RACP Paediatrics and Child Health Division prestigious Howard Williams Medal in 2023.

Many of us will truly miss David and his humility, humor and wisdom. Our deepest condolences are with his family who were with him as he passed away.

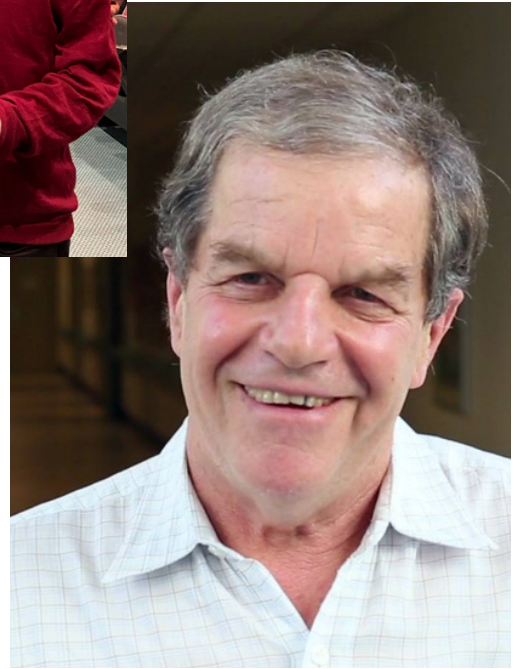


Celebrating the life of
DAVID ISAACS

Camelia Chapel, Macquarie Park Crematorium,
Cnr Delhi and Plassey Roads, North Ryde.

Thursday 14 August, 10:30am

For the live-stream link to the funeral and password, please contact Allan Drew funerals.



David and his family have requested donations in his memory to the Health Assessment of Refugee Kids (HARK), see below.

Option 1 ([NSW Health Payment Platform](https://paynswhealth.health.nsw.gov.au/donations))

<https://paynswhealth.health.nsw.gov.au/donations>

To direct your donation to the HARK program, please ensure the following fields are completed as below:

- Health Organisation: select 'Sydney Children's Hospitals Network'
- Hospital/facility: select 'Childrens Westmead & Randwick'
- Area: select 'Area of greatest need'
- Your full name: type (HARK) after your name

Option 2 (ANZ Bank)

BSB : 012-699

Account : 734403002

Include 'HARK' in the description.

Australian Refugee Child Health Network



In 2019, the Australian Refugee Child Health (ARCH) Network was formed under the auspices of the Academy of Child and Adolescent Health. ARCH brings together healthcare professionals working in the refugee health space from across Australia, with members from every Australian State bar Tasmania. As a multidisciplinary collective, we have paediatricians, trainees, nurses, social workers and anyone working to advance healthcare outcomes for this priority population.

At the recent meeting in July, we discussed a range of topics, including the current clinical issues faced in this space, the different models of care and funding structures and facilitators and barriers to healthcare delivery across Australia. In particular, we discussed the particular barriers faced by children who are asking for but have not received refugee status, who are particularly at risk of falling through the gaps.

ARCH is a great example of what ACAH can do, bringing together likeminded healthcare professionals across the region. As well clinical discussions, we collaborate on education (medical student or trainees), research (e.g., our recent systematic review publication on the mental health harms of held immigration detention) and advocacy.

Australian Refugee Child Health Network



ARCH members, led by Dave Isaacs, were among those writing medical reports that led to Medevac of kids from Nauru and were then leaders of the #KidsoffNauru campaign that successfully removed all children from immigration detention.

Many of us working across Australia have been inspired and mentored by Professor David Isaacs. This screenshot from the last ARCH meeting with doctors, nurses and trainees from every Australian State shows the admiration we have for Dave. It was great to be able to send these messages to him and his family just before his passing.

The next priority for ARCH will be to develop national guidelines for the screening and management of children from refugee backgrounds. We plan to develop these guidelines into an App for ease of access and maximal transferability.

Anyone working in this space, from any discipline, who would like to join ARCH should contact Has:

Hasantha.gunasekera@health.nsw.gov.au

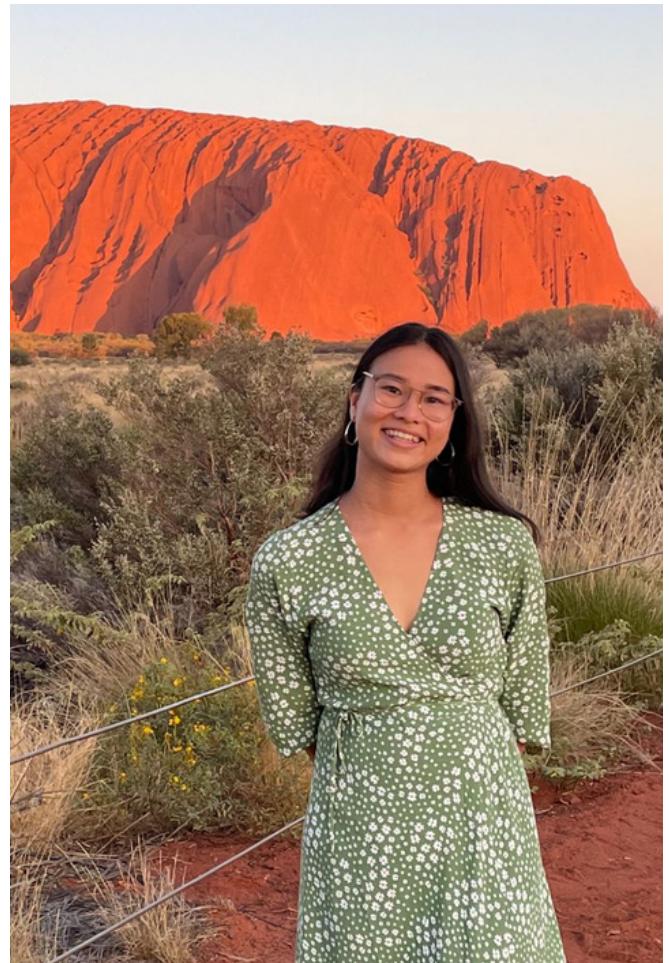
Who is the ACAH?

Reflections from some of our Prevocational Arm Committee

Dr Teresa Pham - intern, Flinders Medical Centre, Adelaide / Kurna Country

As part of the pre-vocational arm of ACAH, I have thoroughly enjoyed working alongside other members in bringing visions to life including webinars, promotional materials, a conference stall, and potential mentorship program. It's great being part of a team of people early in their paediatrics careers and working on projects beyond the clinical setting but still very much ties back in, as ACAH does so well.

I'm an intern based in Adelaide currently, with extensive student experience across parts of the NT and would love to work in paediatrics there in the future. In the meantime, it has been wonderful to engage with others interested or working in paediatrics through ACAH.



At previous ACAH conferences I was deeply inspired by the advocacy of clinicians around refugee and asylum seeker rights and how Australia's approach to youth criminal justice needs to change. Now, alongside Marissa Loh, Monica Parker, and Tara McFadyen, I am one of four co-convenors for our upcoming ACAH 2026 Conference. We are very excited to promote this conference which will be in Darwin, on beautiful Larrakia Country.

With a theme of ***Building Brighter Futures***, we are bringing together passionate speakers from near and far. Topics will range from perinatal medicine, early childhood health, adolescence, and population health, with a focus on Indigenous voices and community led solutions. It's set to be a meaningful experience bringing together people across disciplines, with opportunities for research presentations and social activities to get the most out of your visit to Larrakia Country.

Feel free to reach out if you would be keen to be involved with the prevocational arm and or the conference, we would love to have you!

Who is the ACAH?

Reflections from some of our Prevocational Arm Committee

Dr Clara Charbine – basic trainee, The Royal Children’s Hospital, Melbourne

When I was an intern interested in paediatrics, I was thrilled to first immerse myself in the world of ACAH at their 2023 conference in Melbourne and to instantly feel a sense of belonging in a tight-knit community passionate about child health and advocacy.

Since becoming a member of the pre-vocational committee, I have come to appreciate the ways ACAH unites and empowers doctors, nurses, students and allied health professionals at any career stage across Australia, and provides a platform to share knowledge and experiences, and work together to foster wellbeing for all children in Australia and globally.



I am looking forward to the upcoming initiatives with the Pre-Vocational Arm, with our vision being to foster an interest in paediatrics and provide educational, networking and advocacy opportunities for junior doctors and medical students. I have always been very grateful for the mentors within and outside of ACAH who have helped me in my path into paediatrics, and look forward to establishing a mentorship program that will aim to connect pre-vocational doctors, students and basic paediatric trainees with senior trainees and consultants.

The approaching 2026 ACAH conference in Darwin will be another exciting opportunity to grow our community, and spark interest and connections among experienced as well as budding paediatric health care professionals, with the common goal of driving meaningful change in our paediatric population.

Meet the Board



Dr Jacqueline Small, Chair

Jacki is a Community Child Health Consultant in SLHD and has over 27 years experience in multidisciplinary teams for children with developmental disabilities. She was RACP President/Board Chair 2022-2024 and President Australian Association Developmental Disability Medicine (2015-2020).

Stephanie Dowden, Deputy Chair

Stephanie is a Nurse Practitioner based in Perth and has worked for over 25 years in child health in Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand and UK. She has experience as a Director and is passionate about equitable and evidence based child health.



Dr Has Gunasekera, Treasurer

Has is a Clinical Academic and Professor of Paediatric Priority Populations at CHW and University of Sydney. He is engaged in research with ACCHOs and worked in Health Assessment for Refugee Kids clinic for over two decades.

Dr Paul Bauert OAM, Secretary

Paul is a Paediatrician in Royal Darwin Hospital. He won the RACP Rural Medal in 2008 and twice won the AMA President's Medal for passionate and persistent advocacy for improvements in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.



Sam Harkus

Sam is an audiologist based in Gadigal, Sydney NSW. Her work has predominantly focussed on equitable and earlier access to ear health and hearing care for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

Meet the Board

Dr Kim Oates AO

Kim is a paediatrician who trained across 3 countries and was the first holder of University of Sydney's Chair of Paediatrics and Child Health (1985-1997) and subsequently, CE from 1997-2006. Kim retains his international reputation as an expert in child abuse and neglect and as a teacher of medical students.



Dr Jenny Proimos

Jenny has served the ACAH as a Board Director since it was established. She has also been Board Chair and Treasurer. She is a consultant adolescent physician and previously was the Principal Medical Adviser in the Victorian Department of Education and Training and President of Paediatrics and Child Health Division, RACP, from 2008-2010.



Simone Sherriff

Simone is a Wotjobaluk woman who lives and works on Wiradjuri country and is a Research Fellow at the Poche Centre for Indigenous Health at Sydney University. Simone has extensive experience working in the Aboriginal community-controlled health sector in NSW and has worked with Aboriginal community organisations for the last 15 years on health research and the implementation of services around key priority areas for communities. Simone's research interests are around food security, breastfeeding, and child health.



Dr Anysha Walia

Anysha is a paediatric trainee in Victoria and was shortlisted as Intern of the year in 2022. She has been active in the ACAH since she was a medical student and was co-convenor of ACAH2023. She is a volunteer for Water Well project and involved in refugee health research.



Prof Nitin Kapur,

Prof Kapur is a Respiratory & Sleep Paediatrician and Director of Paediatric Education at the Queensland Children's Hospital. He was the past President of the Paediatric & Child Health Division of the RACP and the newest board member of the ACAH.



Newsletter
Produced by
Dr Devin Deo



ACAHA 2023 CONFERENCE MOMENTS

*A look back at the wonderful
moments at the ACAHA 2023
Conference*

