ACADEMY OF CHILD & ADOLESCENT HEALTH

Newsletter August 2026

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Academy of Child and Adolescent Health

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@AcademyCAH

Dr Lily Chen

Newsletter producer

Chair's Report

My welcome to this month's newsletter will be brief.

Firstly, I want to express my gratitude to the many trainees and other early career professionals interested in in paediatrics who are making very valuable contributions to the ACAH. It's not easy working around long and ever changing shifts in your leadership roles in ACAH and other organisations. Your enthusiasm, vision and talents are central to who we are as an organization.

Perhaps the expertise and skills of our younger members bring to the organization opportunities for growth that Michelle Bullock, Reserve Bank Governor, recently described. She spoke of having a "reverse mentor" to assist her learning about AI. This was a younger professional assuming a role usually reserved for more senior professionals.

There are a few items I wish to draw to your attention:

- ACAH27 Conference A Shared Vision 6-8 May 2027, Sydney, is progressing. You can see a programme overview in this newsletter and find updates on the website
- Caught in the Crossfire: Safeguarding Children in Times of War Webinar: Thursday 10 September 2026, 6.00-7.15 pm features special international and Australian experts.
- ACAH Champion award. The Board is exploring renaming the award after a current or past member who has made major contributions to child and adolescent health in Australia. Please share your suggestions with us admin@acah.org.au.
- Other webinars are being planned see our website

Enjoy reading about ACAH activities and members. Please don't hesitate to reach out to us if you have suggestions, comments or advice admin@acah.org.au.

Jacqueline Small
Chair ACAH Board

ACAH 27

ACADEMY OF CHILD & ADOLESCENT HEALTH

A Shared Vision

6-8th May 2027

Sydney, NSW

ACAH27

A Shared Vision

Shaping the future of child and adolescent health-together.

6-8th May
2027

Aerial Function Centre
Sydney, Australia

HEALTH PROFESSIONALS
Across all disciplines and settings

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS OPENING SOON!

Join us in 2027 for the Academy of Child and Adolescent Health Conference, where a diverse community of professionals will come together around a shared vision: **improving the health and wellbeing of every newborn, child, and young person so they can reach their full potential.**

Grounded in collaboration and driven by purpose, this year's theme, **"A Shared Vision,"** reflects a collective commitment to high-quality, evidence-based care across disciplines and settings. The conference will highlight innovative approaches to clinical practice and research, while strengthening the connections between professionals, services, and communities that are essential for meaningful, lasting impact.

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

We invite submissions that showcase innovation, research, quality improvement, and lived experience across all areas of child and adolescent health.
More information and submission details coming soon

acah.org.au | company/academy-of-child-adolescent-health | academycah | @AcademyCAH

Agenda

Day 1: Thursday 6th May

Time	Stream 1	Stream 2
9:00	Conference opening	
9:30	Plenary: Health and wellbeing of children in Australia	
10:30	Panel: Impact of the Australian social media ban for children under 16 years old	
11:30	Morning tea	
12:00	Unravelling rare diseases: Paediatrician contributions to 35 years of the Australian Paediatric Surveillance Unit	Research presentations
13:00	Lunch	
14:00	Panel: Top 3 research papers and discussion	Research presentations
15:15	Afternoon tea	
15:45	Plenary: Decontextualised diagnosis and impact for children and families	
16:15	Can we move away from medicalisation and disorderism?	

Day 2: Friday 7th May

Time	Stream 1	Stream 2
8:30	Plenary: Child and adolescent health in Australia and New Zealand	
9:30	Panel: Climate change	
10:30	Morning tea	
11:00	Plenary: Early diagnosis of cerebral palsy	
11:30	Panel: Exploring the most important issues for young people.	
12:30	Lunch	
13:15	Symposium: Rare diseases	
14:00	Panel: Wellbeing and education: partners in care	
14:45	Afternoon tea	
15:15	Symposium: Population vaccine rates and vaccine hesitancy	Research presentations
16:15	Indigenous health	

Day 3: Saturday 8th May

Time	Stream 1
8:30	Plenary: Social prescribing
9:00	Panel: Integrated models of care and social prescribing
10:00	Morning tea
10:30	Plenary: Neuroimmunology
11:00	Panel: Reading books and storytelling for children
12:00	Close and wrap up
12:45	Lunch
14:00	Trainee and student: Narrative Medicine
15:00	Trainee and student: Speed dating
15:30	Trainee and student: Clinical pearls

ACAH27 Convenors

Dr Jacqueline Small
ACAH Chair

Dr Devin Deo

Dr Amelia Lewis

Prof Shanti Raman

Dr Sahani Jayawardane

Special Guest Speakers

Dr Tycho J. Dekkers

Psychologist and senior researcher at University Medical Center Groningen/Accare Child Study Center.

Dr Dekkers is an expert coordinator for ADHD at Levvel, Academic Center for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Amsterdam, The Netherlands. His research primarily focuses on children and adolescents with ADHD and behavioral issues. His research interests include the effectiveness of psychosocial ADHD interventions, examining the potential negative effects of receiving an ADHD diagnosis, and risk-taking behaviors in adolescents with ADHD. Tycho is also an editor for Child and Adolescent Mental Health and the Journal of Attention Disorders.

Professor Michael Kidd AO

Chief Medical Officer for Australia

Professor Kidd is the Chief Medical Officer for Australia. He also holds appointments as Director of the International Centre for Future Health Systems at the University of New South Wales, and as Professor of Global Primary Care and Future Health Systems at the University of Oxford. He is a past President of both the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and the World Organization of Family Doctors.

Professor Dame Helen Stokes-Lampard

National Clinical Chief Medical Officer for Health New Zealand / Te Whatu Ora and Specialist General Practitioner (GP)

Professor Stokes-Lampard, has been the National Clinical Chief Medical Officer for Health New Zealand / Te Whatu Ora since November 2024 and also works as a Specialist General Practitioner (GP). Until late 2024 she lived in the UK and was an NHS GP, Professor of GP Education at the University of Birmingham and a Non-Executive Director on the board of NHS England. She has held several prestigious positions in the medical field, most notably serving as the Chair of the UK Academy of Medical Royal Colleges (AoMRC 2020-2023) and Chair of the Royal College of General Practitioners (2016-2019). She was the founding Chair of the National Academy for Social Prescribing, founding Chair of the Dames Commander Society and a trustee at Macmillan Cancer. Her personal clinical interests include holistic approaches to health and care, disease prevention, authentic medical leadership and embracing innovation in healthcare in safe responsible ways. Her contributions were recognised by award of DBE (New Year Honours 2022).

Professor Paul Kelly

Founder and Principal, PK Public Health Advisory; Honorary Enterprise Professor, University of Melbourne

Professor Kelly is a widely recognized leader in population health with over three decades of experience spanning communicable and non-communicable disease control, public health policy and health emergency management. He was Australia's Chief Medical Officer (2020–2024) where he was the primary medical advisor to the Australian Government through the COVID-19 pandemic and led major national reforms in environmental health, climate change policy, and communicable disease control.

Meet our expert speakers

Professor Andrew Baillie

BSc(Hons) UNSW, MPsychol(Clin) UNSW, PhD Macq, FCCLP

Professor Baillie is a clinical psychologist, Professor of Allied Health with Sydney Local Health District (SLHD), and Senior Advisor with Sydney Health Partners. He works in SLHD to build Allied Health Research Capacity and with Sydney Health Partners on their Implementation Science Academy and Clinical Academic Groups. He also works with Drug Health Services at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and the Psychology Team at Sydney Virtual.

Shankari Chandran

Writer and lawyer; 2023 Miles Franklin Literary Award

Shankari Chandran is an Australian Tamil writer and lawyer. Shankari is the winner of the 2023 Miles Franklin Literary Award for Chai Time at Cinnamon Gardens and has published five novels. Her next book, Daughters of the Red Earth (Ultimo Press, 2027) focuses on religious extremism and its intersection with ethno-nationalism and transcendence. Shankari has previously led the pro bono legal teams for Allen & Overy (globally) and Ashurst (Australia).

Professor Elizabeth Elliott MD FRACP FRCP FRCPCH

University of Sydney and Consultant Paediatrician at the Sydney Children's Hospitals Network.

Professor Elliott leads the NSW fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) assessment service. In 1993, she established the Australian Paediatric Surveillance Unit and remains its Director. APSU has conducted over 75 studies on rare childhood diseases that have informed policy and practice. She was instrumental with colleagues from the UK and Canada in developing the International Network of Paediatric Surveillance Units and was elected Convenor in 2000. Her research, clinical work and advocacy involve disadvantaged children living with rare diseases, in remote Aboriginal communities, in immigration detention and in South East Asia. FASD has been a major focus and she chairs the Australian Government's FASD Advisory Group.

Elizabeth is an elected Fellow of the Australian Academy of Health and Medical Science and the Royal Society of NSW. She was made an Officer of the Order of Australia in the 2026 King's Birthday Honours.

Professor Sharon Goldfeld

Director, Centre for Community Child Health (CCCH) the Royal Children's Hospital, and Theme Director, Population Health at the Murdoch Children's Research Institute

Professor Goldfeld has a decade of experience in state government as a senior policymaker in the Victorian health and education departments. Her research program is made up of complementary, synergistic and cross-disciplinary streams of work focused on investigating, testing, and translating sustainable policy relevant solutions that eliminate inequities for children. In 2024 she received an Order of Australia (AM) and was elected a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Health and Medical Sciences (AAHMS).

Dr Karl Pobre

Paediatric emergency Staff specialist and Paediatrician, CHW; Motivated for Change ED Lead

Dr Karl Pobre is a Paediatric Emergency Physician and Co-Director of Emergency Medical training at The Children's Hospital at Westmead. He leads Motivated for Change, a multidisciplinary, co-designed program focused on improving the experience, safety and quality of emergency care for children with disability and their families.

Dr Manjekah Dunn

Advanced metabolic and clinical genetics trainee; PhD candidate

Dr Manjekah is an advanced metabolic and clinical genetics trainee and PhD candidate researching accessible and inclusive genomic testing for people with intellectual disability. Her work bridges research and clinical practice, co-producing practical resources with people with intellectual disability and health professionals to drive equitable genomic healthcare.

Felicity Wright, PhD

Director of Pharmacy, Sydney Children's Hospital; Net Zero Clinical Lead

Dr Felicity Wright trained as a paediatric cellular therapy and oncology pharmacist, is a Board Certified Oncology Pharmacist (USA), and holds an MPH Policy and PhD in pharmacogenetics. She leads pharmacy across clinical, production and leadership domains, driving pharmacy-led models of care, specialised production, and automation to improve efficiency, quality and workforce sustainability.

Professor Ju Lee Oei

Inaugural Chair of Neonatology, Mater; Conjoint Professor UNSW

Professor Ju Lee Oei is the inaugural Chair of Neonatology at Mater. She has extensive expertise in newborn resuscitation and in the care of families affected by drug dependency, and is Conjoint Professor at UNSW. She has authored more than 190 papers and contributes to state, national and international neonatal guidelines.

Professor Raghu Lingam

Paediatrician, population health researcher and Professor of Paediatric Population Health, UNSW Sydney.

Professor Lingam leads the Population Child Health and Health Services Research Group at UNSW and the GenV Intervention Hub, a national platform within Generation Victoria that accelerates the development, testing and implementation of interventions to improve outcomes for children and families at scale.

His research focuses on prevention, health-system innovation, integrated care and implementation science, with the goal of improving child health outcomes and reducing inequities. Working across primary care, community, hospital and policy settings, he develops and evaluates models of care that strengthen health systems and support children and young people to thrive.

Professor Sue Woolfenden

Director of Community Paediatrics; co-chair, Sydney Institute for Women, Children and their Families, SLHD; Professor of Community Paediatrics, University of Sydney

Professor Woolfenden is Director of Community Paediatrics and co-chair the Sydney Institute for Women, Children and their Families at Sydney Local Health District and Professor of Community Paediatrics at the University of Sydney. Her clinical, service development and research work addresses child health inequities in Australia and globally through integrated health–social care models, including hubs and social prescribing working in partnership with Priority Populations. She has > 200 publications.

Professor Shanti Raman, MBBS, FRACP, MAE, PhD

Director- Department of Community Paediatrics, South Western Sydney Local Health District
Senior Clinical Advisor-Child & Family Health, NSW Ministry of Health, Conjoint Professor, University of New South Wales, School of Women's & Children's Health

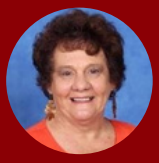
Shanti Raman is a Consultant Paediatrician, with training in epidemiology and public health. As the Director of Community Paediatrics - South Western Sydney, she is responsible for clinical services in Child Development and Child Protection across the region, providing leadership and directing research and training. In her Ministry of Health role, she supports the quality, safety, and integration of child and family health services through the development of statewide healthcare policy. Her research and teaching interests include health of migrants and refugees, indigenous child health, child rights and child maltreatment, quality and safety in health, global maternal, newborn and child health. She is involved with policy development at State, national and international levels promoting a rights-based perspective to child health and child rights. She is the Editor-in-Chief of BMJ Paediatrics Open; over the past two years the journal has pioneered several specialised collections that explore critical issues impacting child and youth health globally.

On the community engagement front, Dr Raman has been involved with a range of civil society organisations, responding to social justice, gender issues, human rights and support to refugee and migrant groups.

Dr Amelia Lewis

Senior Clinical Neuropsychologist at the Disability Specialist Unit, Sydney Local Health District and a Board Member of the Academy of Child and Adolescent Health.

Dr Amelia Lewis holds a Doctorate of Clinical Neuropsychology and a Master of Philosophy (Psychology) from Macquarie University as well as a Master of Health Policy from the University of Sydney. She is also a traditionally-published children's picture book author. With over a decade of experience supporting children and adolescents with neurodevelopmental differences and disabilities, she brings expertise in clinical neuropsychology, clinical research, and health policy alongside a deep commitment to child and family-centred care. Her work is guided by a passion for storytelling that fosters connection, identity, and joy.

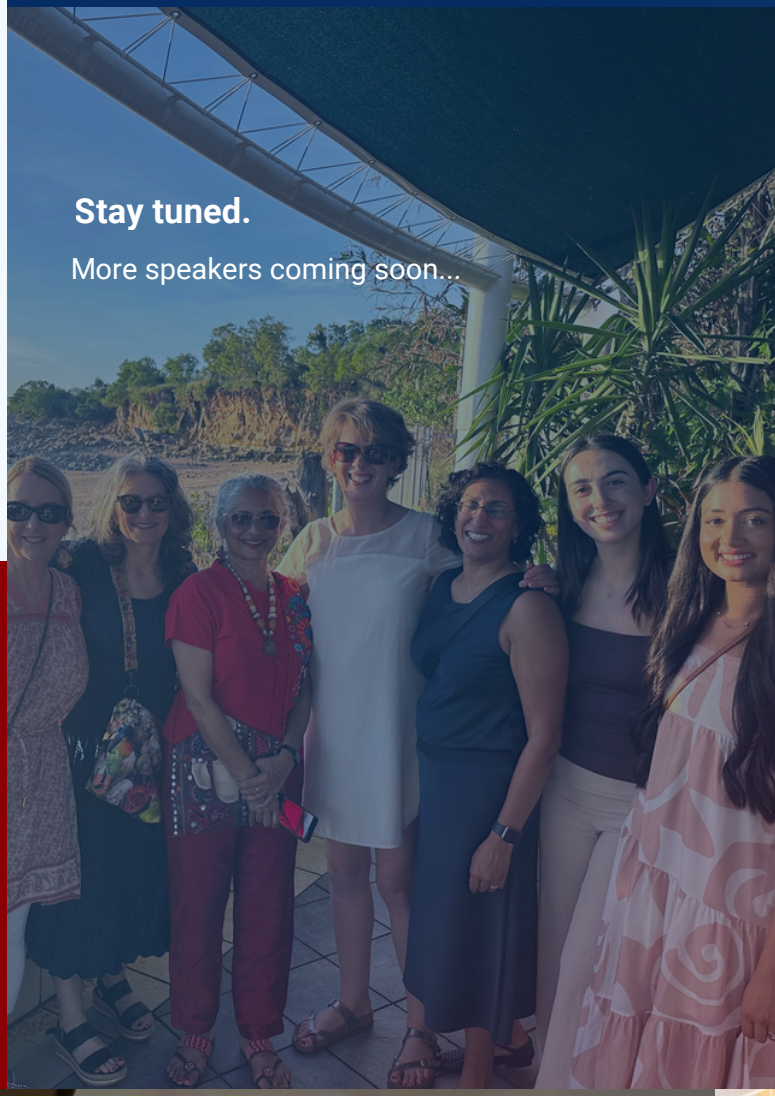


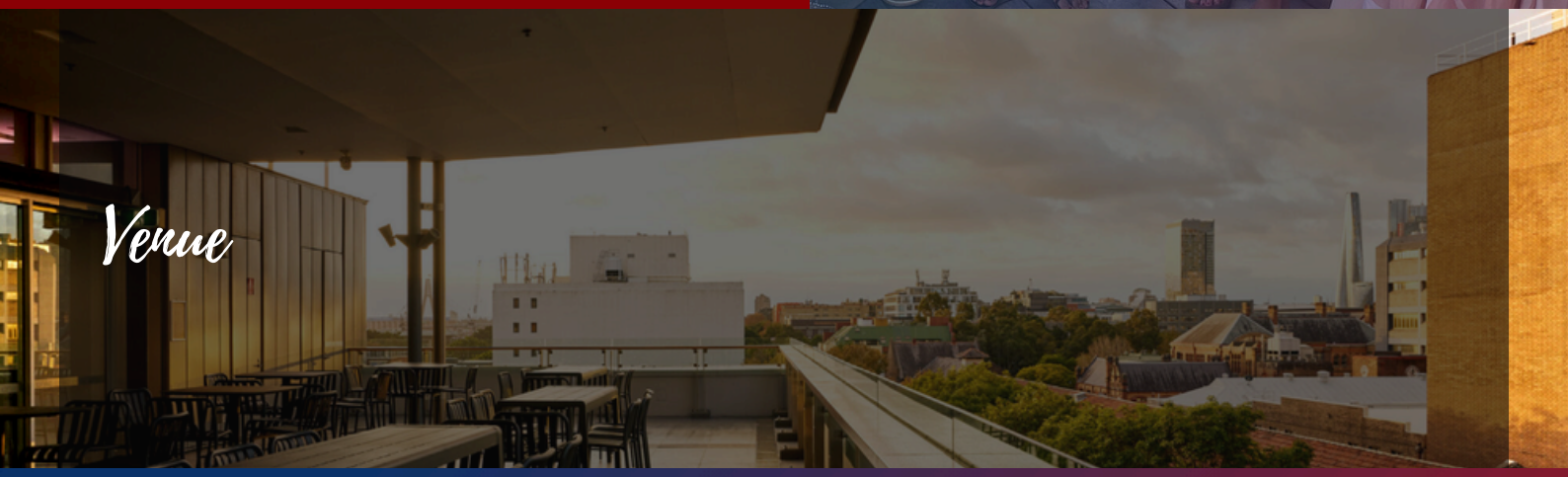
Lesley Bruce

Principal, Cairnsfoot Special School, Brighton Le Sands

During her forty working years with the Department of Education, she has gained vast experience in the following fields of education – Early Childhood, Primary and Special Education.

As Principal of Cairnsfoot, she is committed to supporting students with complex needs and their families by working through an interagency model. Her knowledge in working with students with disability and their families, is regularly sought by her mainstream colleagues.





Venue

Aerial Function Centre, Sydney

University of Technology, Sydney campus, Ultimo.

Located in the heart of Sydney at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) campus, Aerial Function Centre is an award-winning conference and events venue renowned for its stunning rooftop setting, modern facilities and panoramic views of the Sydney skyline and Darling Harbour. Offering flexible, pillarless event spaces accommodating up to 450 delegates, Aerial is ideally suited to conferences, exhibitions, workshops, networking events and gala functions. The venue features multiple configurable function rooms, expansive outdoor terraces, state-of-the-art audiovisual capabilities and premium catering services, providing a seamless experience for organisers and delegates alike.

Conveniently located within walking distance of Central Station and Sydney's major accommodation precincts, Aerial combines accessibility, flexibility and exceptional event delivery, making it an ideal venue for national conferences and professional gatherings. For ACAH 2027, Aerial provides a vibrant and contemporary setting that supports collaboration, learning and connection, offering delegates a memorable conference experience in the heart of Sydney

Caught in the Crossfire

Safeguarding Children in Times of War

10
Sep 2026

Thursday 10th September 2026

This webinar will feature leading paediatric and child health professionals discussing how to safeguard and support the more than 500 million children globally living in conflict-affected areas.

→ Register here

Around the world, children caught in conflict and disaster face challenges they did not create and cannot control. Their lives are being uprooted by violence, the threat of famine, and extreme weather. In many places, the basic services children need to survive and thrive — including healthcare and education — have failed or become inaccessible.

Earlier this year, UNICEF highlighted humanitarian emergencies requiring greater international attention and support. Beyond the highly visible crises in Gaza and Ukraine, children in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Haiti, Latin America, Myanmar, Somalia, South Sudan and Syria continue to face profound and ongoing challenges.

More than **500 million children globally are living in conflict-affected areas**.

This Academy of Child & Adolescent Health (ACAH) webinar will highlight the urgent health needs of children living amid humanitarian crises, with a particular focus on war and armed conflict. Paediatric and child health professionals have critical and complementary roles to play in the global response to the impact of conflict on children. The webinar aims to spotlight the work of paediatric healthcare professionals serving children in crisis-affected regions, while exploring practical and actionable opportunities for advocacy and engagement for all child health professionals interested in this space.

Caught in the Crossfire

Safeguarding Children in Times of War

Whether working directly in humanitarian settings, caring for children and families displaced by conflict, or advocating from afar, every child health professional has a role to play.

Join us for an important conversation about how our profession can bear witness, respond to urgent needs, advocate effectively, and help safeguard children whose lives are shaped by war and conflict.

We invite all child health professionals, trainees and students to join us for this timely and important discussion.

Program

Humanitarian Paediatrics: Understanding the Humanitarian Space

Dr Daniel Martinez-Garcia — MSF, Geneva

Daniel Martinez Garcia is a Mexican paediatrician with 20 years' experience caring for children affected by war and displacement across 25 countries, primarily with Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF). He leads TACTIC, improving paediatric TB care in humanitarian settings, and founded MSF Paediatric Days, EveryWhereSchools, and the Global Society for Humanitarian Paediatrics.

Humanitarian Paediatrics on the Ground: Needs, Contexts and Clinical Realities

Dr Nikola Morton — MSF

Dr Nikola Morton is an Australian paediatrician with extensive experience in humanitarian settings. She worked with Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) across multiple countries before serving as MSF's paediatric advisor in Paris for over seven years. She now leads Paediatric Refugee Services at Westmead and serves as President of MSF Australia.

Caught in the Crossfire

Safeguarding Children in Times of War

Panel: Opportunities, Limits and Advocacy in Humanitarian Paediatrics

Moderator:

Prof Shanti Raman

Shanti Raman is a Consultant Paediatrician and Director of Community Paediatrics in South Western Sydney. Her work spans child health policy, migrant and refugee health, Indigenous child health, child rights and global child health. She is Editor-in-Chief of BMJ Paediatrics Open and advocates for child rights and social justice.

Panellists:

Dr Georgia Paxton

A/Prof Georgia Paxton OAM holds clinical, academic and research appointments in child refugee health and advisory roles with the Department of Home Affairs, the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, and the WHO Technical Advisory Group on Health, Migration and Displacement.

Professor Karen Zwi

Professor Karen Zwi is a Consultant Community Paediatrician at Sydney Children's Hospital Randwick, Conjoint Professor at UNSW Sydney, and Clinical Services Director for Child, Youth and Family at NSLHD. She specialises in caring for children from priority populations and advocates for strengths-based, equitable, and family-centred healthcare.

Prof Hasantha Gunasekera

Dr Hasantha Gunasekera is Professor of Paediatric Priority Populations at the University of Sydney and a paediatrician at Westmead. He has two decades' experience in refugee and Aboriginal health, including at the HARK refugee clinic. He serves on the ACAH Board and the Riverina Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation.

ACAH Webinar Updates

Upcoming Webinars

Caught in the Crossfire: Safeguarding Children in Times of War

10
Sep 2026

Thursday 10th September 2026

This webinar will feature leading paediatric and child health professionals discussing how to safeguard children in conflict zones.

→ Register here

AI Ethics and Law: Responsibility of clinicians in direct patient care

03
Dec 2026

Thursday 3rd December 2026

This webinar will address AI ethics and law and the responsibility of clinicians in direct patient care.

→ Register here

Please contact us to suggest topics or speakers (such as international experts visiting Australia) for webinars, your contributions are very welcome.

These webinars are recorded for later viewing by members. Join ACAH to get access to these.

Who is the ACAH?

Reflections from members

Dr Sahani Jayawardane

I am currently undertaking advanced training in Community Child Health, working at The Children's Hospital at Westmead. Although I was born and raised in Sydney, I have always had a passion for rural and regional medicine. This began when I completed a yearlong medical school placement in Dubbo and has culminated in me completing paediatric training at Gosford Hospital and Dubbo Base Hospital. This has broadened my understanding of the diverse challenges faced by children in regional and rural communities. Dubbo also gave me exposure to the provision of health care to local Aboriginal communities.

Through my rotations, I've developed a particular interest in developmental paediatrics, along with a strong commitment to supporting culturally and linguistically diverse families and promoting equitable and inclusive health care practices. Working in paediatrics has given me the privilege of doing meaningful work with children and families, while also learning invaluable lessons from clinician mentors. One of the most important lessons I have learnt is the need to remain child focused and to advocate for what is truly in the best interests of the child.

I am really excited to be part of the organisational committee for the ACAH 2027 conference. The theme 'A Shared vision' is very relevant to the current times, and the conference will highlight several important health and social initiatives for children and adolescents. What an exciting event to help create, that brings together multidisciplinary colleagues. I hope to contribute my project management and organisational skills, while also learning from my colleagues at the conference.

ACAH 26 MOMENTS

Panel Discussion:
Youth Justice

27%
preventable public health

Law/lore

ACA
ACADEMY
ADOLESCE
Promoting the health and wellbeing of every newborn, child and young person through education, advocacy and building community

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).

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 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.

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.

Meet the Board

Dr Devin Deo

Devin is a Paediatric Trainee at The Children's Hospital at Westmead, NSW. He completed his undergraduate medical degree from The University of Newcastle in 2020, before completing his internship in rural Taree. He is currently the President of the Kids Resident Medical Officer Association at Westmead Kids and also a member of the Clinical Council of the Sydney Children's Hospital Network. Devin also serves as the Hospital Representative for Westmead Kids in the Australian Medical Association NSW Doctors-In-Training Committee.

Peter Barclay

Peter is the Sydney Children's Hospitals Network Director of Pharmacy. Having worked as a Hospital Pharmacist for over 40 years, Peter is passionate about enabling access to appropriate medications for children and families and removing barriers that exist in the health system. Actively engaged in the provision of precision medicines including gene therapies for children at SCHN. Peter is experienced using pharmacy technology to deliver patient safety and business efficiency. He has been a strong advocate for the role of Hospital Pharmacists as clinicians, advocates for patient safety, efficient pharmaceutical procurers and key stakeholders in medication related clinical governance.

Dr Amelia Lewis

Amelia is the Senior Clinical Neuropsychologist at the Disability Specialist Unit, Sydney Local Health District. With over a decade of experience supporting children and adolescents with neurodevelopmental differences and disabilities, she brings expertise in clinical neuropsychology, research, and health policy. Amelia's work is guided by systems thinking, collaboration, and child-and-family-centred care. She is deeply committed to promoting the wellbeing of children and young people, as well as their families and communities.

Dr Davina Buntsma

Davina is an an early career fellow working in Adolescent Medicine, Aboriginal Health and Refugee & Immigrant Health. She holds consultant positions at the Royal Children's Hospital, Monash Health and the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service. She is passionate about children of all backgrounds in Australia and New Zealand achieving equitable access to opportunities which will support them to reach their full social, emotional and health potential.