



Research Advisory Committee

HeartKids has developed a peer-reviewed, transparent and efficient process to identify and allocate research funding. This ensures we obtain the best value from our funds and achieve the greatest impact for children affected by heart disease. We are assisted in this process by our Research Advisory Committee. Read about our dedicated committee members below:

Lisa A. Selbie, Ph.D. (Chair)

Dr. Selbie received her Ph.D. in Biochemistry, Molecular Biology and Cell Biology at Northwestern University. Dr. Selbie began her career as both a scientist and project leader at the Garvan Institute of Medical Research in Sydney, Australia studying the cloning and expression of neuropeptide receptor genes. Dr Selbie moved to England in 1994 where she worked at Queens Medical School at the University of Nottingham as a Wellcome Trust Research Fellow for four years, studying cell-based models of receptor signal transduction. Dr. Selbie then moved to the US and for the past 10 years, has developed and delivered on-ground and online courses as a lecturer for Johns Hopkins University's Advanced Biotechnology Studies Program MS/MBA Program. After returning to Sydney in 2003, Dr Selbie has

also been a consultant with an Australian management consultancy in the biotechnology and healthcare sectors and is currently an instructor with Biotech Primer Inc, a global company providing biotechnology training for the non-scientist. Dr Selbie is a member of the Heartkids Australia Research Advisory Committee.

Dr Julia Charlton (Gunn) MBBS FRACP Grad Dip Mental Health Sc PhD

Julia Charlton (Gunn) is a Consultant Neonatologist in the Newborn Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at the Royal Children's Hospital (RCH), Melbourne. Following her specialty fellowship, she completed her PhD studying brain injury and neurodevelopment in infants with congenital heart disease, based in the Cardiac Intensive Care Unit (CICU) at RCH.

Julia coordinates the neurodevelopmental follow up program for NICU graduates who have undergone surgery for congenital anomalies and for the national hypoplastic left heart syndrome program. Her research interests include perinatal stroke and neurodevelopment following neonatal surgery. She is also a Course Director for Advanced Paediatric Life Support. Her spare time is consumed by two toddlers who are NICU and CICU graduates themselves.

Jemma Lawson, Ph.D.

Jemma Lawson achieved her Ph.D. in Molecular Biology and Cell Biology at Flinders University of South Australia and started her career in the biotechnology industry at GroPep Ltd, undertaking roles in research, project management and scientific assessment of potential in-licensing opportunities.

In 2006 Dr Lawson embarked on her current career path in Clinical Research, initially working for a small Australian Clinical Research Organisation (CRO), operating in a dual role as a Clinical Research Associate (CRA) and a Clinical Project

Manager. Moving to a Global CRO in 2009, she has held positions in clinical monitoring as a Senior CRA, Clinical Team Leader, and in project management as a Senior Project Manager. Dr Lawson is currently a Project Director for a department that focusses on early-phase (Phase I) clinical trials, with responsibilities in project management, client relations, and business development. She also leads a team of project managers and project administrators, managing resourcing requirements, process improvement, professional development and performance management.

Jemma's journey with HeartKids commenced in 2009 when her 1 year old son was diagnosed with an Atrial Septal Defect (ASD), following investigation of a heart murmur. The ASD was successfully closed via a cardiac catheter procedure at the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne, in 2013.

Dr Siiri Iismaa, PhD.

Dr Iismaa graduated from the Australian National University with BSc (Hons I) and the University Medal, and then a PhD in Genetics and Molecular Biology. Dr Iismaa began her career at the University of California, Irvine as a US Biotechnology Program Fellow, where she coupled her molecular biology skills with protein engineering and protein structure-function studies. Dr Iismaa returned to Australia to the Heart Research Institute in 1990 as an NHMRC Australian Postdoctoral Fellow to work on heart disease, studying proteins of immunological importance and regulation of gene expression.

In 1994 Dr Iismaa embarked on her current career at the Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute, where she uses various transgenic mouse models to study proteins involved in receptor signal transduction. Her work is currently focussed on heart muscle cell division and differentiation, and on heart regeneration following cardiac stress or injury. Dr Iismaa is a highly regarded and internationally recognised senior scientist, who publishes in leading scientific journals and is an invited speaker at national and international meetings. In 2015, Dr Iismaa undertook a two-week lecture tour of Japan as a Japan Society for the Promotion

of Science Fellow.

Dr Clare O'Donnell MBChB FRACP MS FCSANZ

Dr O'Donnell is a consultant in paediatric cardiology and adult congenital heart disease at Starship/Auckland City Hospitals. In addition to general duties her particular interests include interventional cardiology for paediatric and adult congenital patients and care of patients with pulmonary hypertension.

She obtained her medical degree at Otago University in Dunedin, completing her clinical training in Wellington at the Wellington Clinical School. She completed a Diploma in Obstetrics and Gynaecology as a senior house officer before embarking on Paediatric training in Auckland. Following a registrar rotation at Green Lane Hospital she undertook to specialise in Paediatric Cardiology. Initial training in Auckland was followed by 2 years of paediatric fellowship and then senior fellowship at the Boston Children's Hospital. Following training she joined the Boston Adult Congenital Heart (BACH) team for a year on staff with a joint appointment to Boston Children's and the Brigham and Women's Hospitals. During this time she also completed a Masters in Science in epidemiology at the Harvard School of Public Health.

In late 2003 she returned to a specialist position in Auckland which she has held since. In addition to her clinical work Dr O'Donnell has ongoing involvement with both departmental and collaborative research projects. She holds representative posts within the International Society for Adult Congenital Heart Disease, the Asia Pacific Society for Paediatric Cardiology and the Pulmonary Hypertension Society of Australia and New Zealand.

Dr Graham Nunn AM ML FRACS

One of the most experienced paediatric cardiac surgeons in Australasia, Dr Graham Nunn has worked extensively in Australia and overseas. Dr Nunn has been Director

of the Queensland Paediatric Cardiac Service (QPCS) surgical team at the Mater Children's Hospital of Paediatric Cardiac Surgery, as well as Director and senior paediatric cardiac surgeon at the Children's Hospital Westmead and the Sydney Children's Hospital, the Westmead Medical Centre, Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children, and Prince of Wales Hospital.

Dr Nunn was also a longstanding Member of Operation Open Heart cardiac surgical programs in Myanmar and Papua New Guinea from 1994-2013 and was awarded Member Order of Australia in 2004. In his retirement, Dr Nunn generously provides the Research Advisory Committee with the benefit of his significant clinical and research expertise in this field.







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