

# HCF RESEARCH FOUNDATION YEAR IN REVIEW FINANCIAL YEAR 2022-23

*Putting our money  
where our members are*



# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

**The HCF Research Foundation has been delivering on our mission to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for HCF members and all Australians through health services research. This past year we were pleased to diversify our research investment across our three grant streams: Health Services Research Grants, Translational Research Grants and Innovation Research Grants, as well as through our long-standing partnership with the RACGP Foundation. Each of these streams provides much needed funding for Australian health services research focused on generating high-quality evidence to support innovative models of care and implementation of those practices by health service providers.**

In December 2022 the HCF Research Foundation renewed our support of the biennial HSRAANZ conference. The conference is the largest gathering of health service researchers from across Australia and New Zealand, as well as international leaders in their chosen field. We were pleased to highlight the quality of local research and enable knowledge sharing and collaboration across the sector.

## MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF THE HCF RESEARCH FOUNDATION

This year a total of nine projects were awarded grants through the HCF Research Foundation's three main funding streams. These projects cover a wide breadth of topics, including mental health, women's health, hip and knee replacement models of care and community care for the elderly. Each of these projects has the potential to significantly change lives by addressing an area of significant unmet need. An additional grant was awarded in conjunction with the RACGP Foundation.

In addition to getting these exciting new projects underway, we were delighted to see the progress made by each of our other ongoing grants. Our research projects across each of our three grant streams (Health Services Research Grants, Translational Research Grants and Innovation Research Grants) were all extremely productive, generating

The Foundation hosted a session during the conference where four of our leading researchers were able to present their innovative work enabled by our funding. Thank you to the presenters for their excellent presentations: Associate Professor Frank Sanfilippo (University of Western Australia), Professor Ilana Ackerman (Monash University), Dr Sarah Kourouche (University of Sydney) and Dr Lincoln Tracy (Monash University). A highlight of the conference was the final panel discussion involving key funding agencies for health services research, which included the HCF Research Foundation alongside the main government research funding agencies for health services research: NHMRC, MRFF and HRC (New Zealand).

The HCF Research Foundation webinar series has also been an informative showcase of some of our most successful research projects and an opportunity to facilitate awareness and translation of their findings across researchers, providers, policy makers and funders. I would like to thank our presenters for their stimulating presentations – Associate Professor Tarik

Sammour (Royal Adelaide Hospital), Associate Professor Isuru Ranasinghe (University of Queensland) and Drs Barbara Murphy and Michelle Rogerson (Australian Centre for Heart Health).

I would also like to take this opportunity to extend my thanks to the HCF Research Foundation Board, Research Advisory Committee and our external peer reviewers for their efforts over the past year. Your support for the Foundation is critical to helping us achieve our mission of improving healthcare outcomes for all.

**Professor Claire Jackson**  
Chair, HCF Research Foundation



high-quality research publications and impactful conference presentations. The Innovation Research Grant team, led by Professor Ilana Ackerman, provided their final report during the year, making a compelling case for broader uptake and safe utilisation of short-stay models of care for hip and knee replacements in Australia while highlighting the barriers that need to be addressed to encourage adoption.

Showcasing our wonderful research projects and their outcomes was a key focus this year, and we were pleased to present a variety of our funded research projects and results through the HSRAANZ conference, our webinar series and directly to our members through our Health Agenda newsletter.

By raising the profile of our funded research outcomes amongst our members, the public, and other key health stakeholders

we hope to further the dissemination and uptake of more efficient, high-quality and high-value healthcare, and make it more accessible to all Australians.

**Dr Christopher Pettigrew**  
Head of the HCF Research Foundation



# IMPROVING THE HEALTH OF ALL AUSTRALIANS

## OUR MISSION

The HCF Research Foundation's mission is to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for HCF members and all Australians by providing funding and support to encourage health services research for the benefit of all.

## OUR VISION

To be known as a leading independent funder of high-quality research that leads to the improvement of healthcare services for all Australians.

To drive more research by providing transparent and fair funding opportunities for all Australian researchers, institutions and organisations.

To facilitate easy-to-access funding so researchers can focus their efforts on delivering the benefits of their research projects.

## SUPPORTING HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH

Health services research examines healthcare and its accessibility, affordability and patient outcomes.

The HCF Research Foundation funds research proposals that use and enhance current knowledge to improve healthcare outcomes, including the quality, efficiency, equity of, and access to, health service provision.

Our grants program covers three streams, Health Services, Translation and Innovation. We also work with other organisations on research partnerships to create better outcomes for members and all Australians.

The HCF Research Foundation's program aims to address issues of scale and significance in healthcare, and make an impact in the delivery of health services to benefit our members and all Australians. We aim to deliver better health outcomes and access to affordable, high-quality healthcare when and where it's needed.

## OUR HISTORY

The HCF Research Foundation (the Foundation), now in its 23rd year, was established in 2000 as the HCF Health and Medical Research Foundation.

The HCF Research Foundation is a charitable trust which was set up to fund research into the provision, administration and delivery of health services in Australia for the benefit of HCF members and all Australians.

From 2008 the Foundation has focused on supporting health services research, an area of research that does not receive significant funding from other sources.

In 2013, the name was simplified to the HCF Research Foundation.

## FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

### \$55m

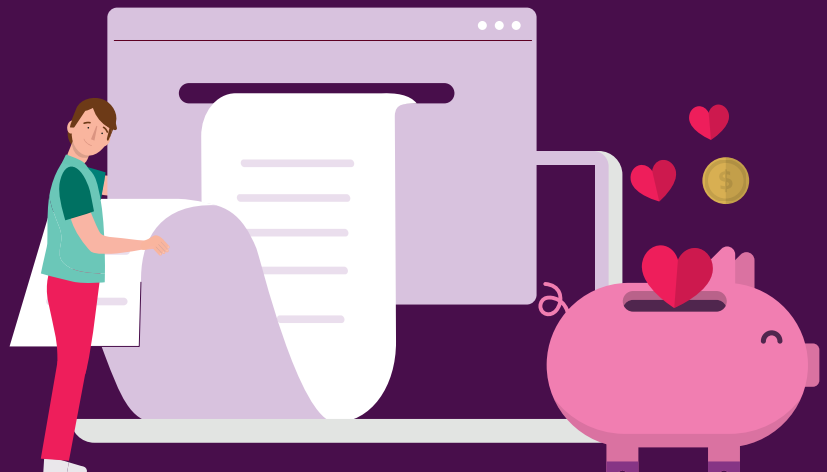
The corpus of the Foundation has been funded by donations from the net surplus of the health fund. Since 2000, HCF has contributed a total of **\$55m**.

### \$29.3m

The HCF Research Foundation has invested **\$29.3m** into health services research since its inception in 2000.

### \$2.62m

In FY23, the HCF Research Foundation awarded **\$2.62m** in funding to clinicians and researchers working to understand and improve the effectiveness, efficiency and quality of health treatments and services in Australia.



# 2023 PROJECT CASE STUDIES



## 2015

RESEARCH FOUNDATION AWARDED A GRANT TO DEVELOP AN ONLINE PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM

## 1,502

WOMEN PARTICIPATED IN THE FOLLOW-UP TRIAL

## ONLINE PREGNANCY AND POSTNATAL ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION PROGRAMS

### THE STUDY

In 2015 the HCF Research Foundation awarded a research grant to Professor Gavin Andrews and his team at St Vincent's Hospital Sydney to develop and trial an online perinatal mental health program. Lack of time, a new focus on baby, other check-up priorities, scheduling conflicts, and social stigma are just some of the reasons seeking in-person psychotherapy for perinatal depression and anxiety is put in the 'too hard basket', and what the online program sought to overcome. The online programs proved effective in clinical trials and have been made permanently available across Australia through This Way Up, an online mental health service hosted by St Vincent's Hospital in Sydney. The programs are free to access with a referral from a health professional.

### THE IMPACT

The Pregnancy and Postnatal Anxiety and Depression Programs, which use online cognitive behavioural therapy (iCBT), have now been clinically proven as effective in the treatment of perinatal depression and anxiety in a real-world setting. The follow-up trial involved 1,502 women who undertook the program (while either pregnant [529 participants] or postnatal [973 participants]) and found the severity of generalised anxiety and depressive symptoms, as well as psychological distress, were significantly reduced. The availability of the iCBT program means that thousands of women are able to access the mental healthcare they need quickly and confidentially, particularly those in rural, regional and remote settings. The flexibility of the program also empowers women to engage with the program independently, or while working with their clinician, midwife or psychologist.

# 55,000

AUSTRALIANS EXPERIENCE  
A HEART ATTACK ANNUALLY

# 30%

HEART ATTACK SURVIVORS  
WHO ATTEND REHAB

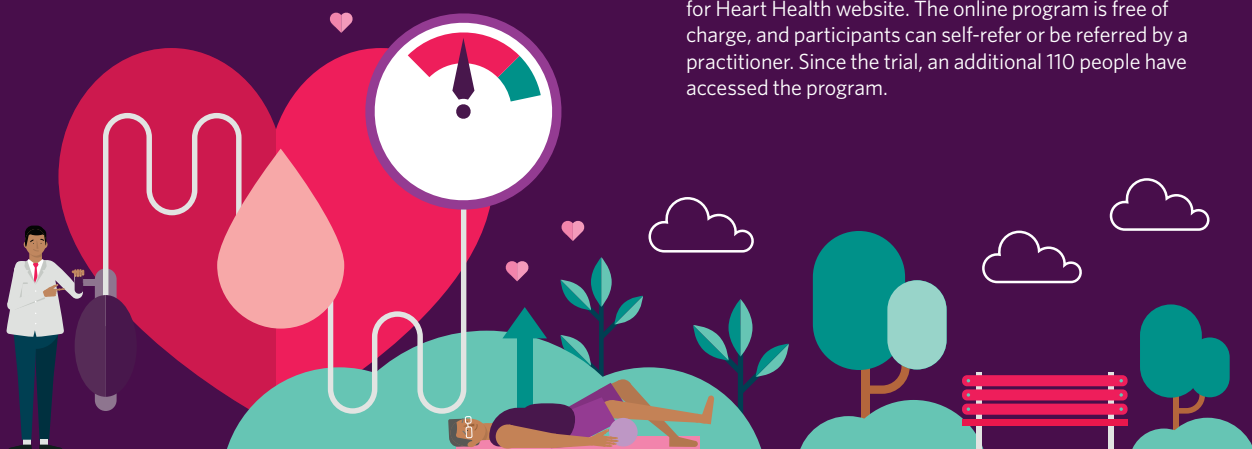
## GETTING BACK ON TRACK AFTER A CARDIAC EVENT

### THE STUDY

Over 55,000 Australians suffer a heart attack each year, however only around 30% attend rehabilitation programs. The Back on Track program was developed using HCF Research Foundation funding awarded in 2014 as an online self-paced program to support behavioural and emotional recovery post a cardiac event. Participants could self-select relevant modules relating to smoking cessation, physical activity, healthy diet and emotional wellbeing. In 2019 additional funding from the HCF Research Foundation enabled the team to conduct a clinical trial to assess the benefits of the program in the short and medium term, as well as comparing the outcomes from the online program alone versus the online program plus additional telehealth support.

### THE IMPACT

The clinical trial demonstrated the effectiveness of the Back on Track program for participants of all ages. Positive outcomes were most notable for physical activity and depression. The trial also demonstrated that the telehealth supported participants were more likely to complete their chosen modules, suggestive of increased engagement with the program. However, this did not translate to additional gains in program outcomes. The Back on Track program is accessible through the Cardiac Wellbeing Program on the Australian Centre for Heart Health website. The online program is free of charge, and participants can self-refer or be referred by a practitioner. Since the trial, an additional 110 people have accessed the program.



# TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH PROJECTS

Through the Translational Research Grants scheme, the HCF Research Foundation is focused on responding to real health issues identified by healthcare providers by helping to translate research findings into new practice for improved outcomes.

## HEALTHY AGEING

**Project: Age Well@Home program for rural Australians**

The Age Well@Home Program has proven and sustained positive outcomes relating to cognitive and physical mobility as well as daily functioning. The ability to age well and maintain social participation can minimise the risk of hospitalisations and reduce the need for premature residential aged care, particularly for people in rural communities.

**Dr Kristy Robson, Charles Sturt University**

**\$216,514**



## FALLS PREVENTION

**Project: StandingTall eHealth balance exercise to foster mobility and prevent falls in older people receiving home care**

The project will examine the use of digital technologies to deliver support for fall prevention, fostering health self-management in our ageing population and increasing capacity of home carers for older people.

**Dr Kimberley Van Schooten, Neuroscience Research Australia**

**\$293,450**



## SUPPORTING INDEPENDENCE

**Project: Enabling functional independence at home — training support workers to deliver a fall prevention program to frail, older adults**

This project aims to improve older peoples' functional ability and reduce falls and injuries from falls through provision of a novel education program delivered by trained support workers (rather than clinical staff).

**Dr Jacqueline Francis-Coad, University of Western Australia**

**\$371,120**





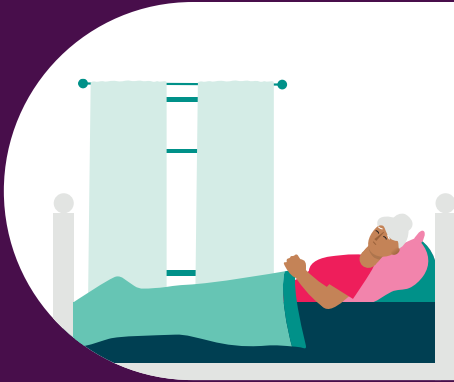
## REDUCING HOSPITALISATIONS

**Project: To identify and provide management support for people at risk of frailty in general practice to reduce potentially preventable hospitalisation**

Effective screening in the primary care setting would assist in early identification of risk of frailty and allows for better management with appropriate evidence-based preventive and rehabilitation support to slow or prevent further decline.

**Dr Caroline Nicholson, The University of Queensland**

**\$331,337**



## PALLIATIVE CARE

**Project: Implementing and evaluating an integrative palliative care model for older people in the community who wish to die at home**

While 70% of people would prefer to die at home, only 14% do so. Being supported to remain at home will enhance the quality of life of the person and increase the satisfaction of their carers. It can also reduce the burden on acute care services.

**Professor Josephine Chow, Ingham Institute for Applied Medical Research**

**\$195,383**



## PAIN MANAGEMENT

**Project: HeLP (a Healthy Lifestyle program for Pain) for older people with musculoskeletal conditions and comorbid chronic disease risks**

The project aims to develop clinician skills to deliver HeLP and identify the optimal way to provide HeLP to more patients, making the program scalable and more accessible to people with disabling musculoskeletal conditions.

**Simon Davidson, University of Sydney**

**\$312,760**



# HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH PROJECTS

This year the HCF Research Foundation funded two health services research projects, contributing to our mission to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for HCF members and all Australians.



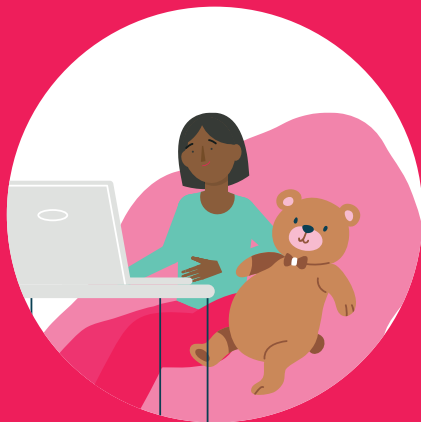
## WOMEN'S HEALTH

**Project: Understanding the variation in the use of hysterectomy to improve outcomes for women with heavy menstrual bleeding**

Hysterectomy for heavy menstrual bleeding should not be a first line treatment approach, yet rates of surgery vary widely across Australia. Understanding the patterns of care are essential before developing interventions in the Australian healthcare system to reduce this course of action if it's unnecessary.

**Professor Jenny Doust**  
The University of Queensland

**\$402,898**



## MENTAL HEALTH

**Project: Finding the right balance of 'support' — Testing a new digital model of care for child and adolescent anxiety in regional communities**

Accessible care for child and adolescent anxiety is an area of significant need, particularly for rural and regional communities. While mixed models (online and psychologist support) exist, this project aims to confirm the optimal use of psychologists alongside an iCBT to ensure the most successful use of limited resources.

**Professor Sonja March**  
University of Southern Queensland

**\$376,621**



# RESEARCH FOUNDATION PARTNERSHIPS

We're working together with researchers and our partners to help create better patient outcomes within the healthcare system.

## 2022 HSRAANZ CONFERENCE

The 12th Health Services Research Conference, facilitated by HSRAANZ, was held at the University of Sydney over three days and attracted over 400 delegates from Australia, New Zealand and around the globe. The HCF Research Foundation was a key sponsor of the event.

Many of the researchers funded by the HCF Research Foundation were in attendance and presented their research. The Research Foundation also facilitated a session, chaired by Professor Claire Jackson, showcasing some of our most successful projects. Here are some of the research presentations from the conference.



**Associate Professor Frank Sanfilippo (University of Western Australia):**  
Invasive coronary angiography in unselected patients presenting with chest pain to emergency departments in Western Australian teaching hospitals.



**Professor Ilana Ackerman (Monash University):**  
Short-stay joint replacement models of care in Australia.



**Dr Sarah Kourouche (University of Sydney):**  
A multicentre controlled implementation evaluation of a blunt chest injury care bundle (ChIP).



**Dr Lincoln Tracy (Monash University):**  
Using clinical registry data to improve outcomes in burns patients.

To close out the three-day conference Dr Christopher Pettigrew, Head of the Research Foundation, took part in a panel discussion on "The future of funding for health services research". The discussion was led by the President of HSRAANZ, Professor Rachael Morton, and other panelists included Professor Anne Kelso (CEO, National Health and Medical Research Council), Dr Masha Somi (CEO of the Health and Medical Research Office, Department of Health, representing the Medical Research Future Fund), and Mr Luke Garland (Senior Research Investment Manager, Health Research Council, New Zealand).

## HCF AND RACGP CO-FUNDED PROJECT

### Enhancing prevention and primary care efficiency

Led by Dr Gillian Singleton of the University of Wollongong, this study will assess the feasibility and acceptability of a digital pre-visit patient assessment in general practice.

This project will introduce a digital app that engages with patients before a visit to their GP and assesses their overall health. In addition, the app will provide patients with personalised access to resources designed to help them understand their risks for developing chronic disease and empower them to take action to improve their health. The app aims to help prevent 17 common chronic conditions including mental health issues, heart disease, diabetes and common cancers. This study will evaluate the effectiveness of the app, as well as the benefits and challenges that emerge from how patients engage with the app.



# SUPPORTING HEALTH INNOVATION

The HCF Research Foundation's Innovation Research Grants (IRG) scheme aims to evaluate innovative models of health services delivery that have the potential to offer better health outcomes.

## INNOVATION RESEARCH GRANT

**\$641m**

PROJECTED SAVINGS ACROSS PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SYSTEMS OVER 7 YEARS

**\$1,400**

POTENTIAL AVERAGE COST SAVINGS PER JOINT REPLACEMENT SURGERY BY 2030

**100,000**

ADDITIONAL JOINT REPLACEMENTS COULD BE DONE BETWEEN 2023 AND 2030

## SHORT-STAY JOINT REPLACEMENT

The inaugural Innovation Research Grant, led by Professor Ackerman, examined short-stay models of care for hip and knee replacements in Australia. Here are the key findings of the study.

Short-stay joint replacement programs are being used internationally but are yet to be widely adopted here in Australia. By implementing short-stay programs nationally, people would have greater access to affordable, convenient care options while reducing unnecessary strain on our healthcare system. It would also help to support the long-term sustainability of the healthcare sector in Australia. With an expected increase in joint replacement demand driven by an ageing population, longer life expectancy and a higher rate of obesity, it will be critical to invest in healthcare innovation and look for new ways to offer Australians access to affordable, safe and convenient out-of-hospital care options. The HCF Research Foundation is now working with key stakeholders across the healthcare continuum to implement the recommendations of the report and enable more providers to offer these effective procedures where clinically appropriate.



# ACTIVE RESEARCH PROJECTS

## QUEENSLAND

**Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital**  
Associate Professor Shaun O'Leary



**The University of Queensland**  
Dr Caroline Nicholson, Professor Jenny Doust,  
Dr Isuru Ranasinghe



**University of Southern Queensland**  
Professor Sonja March



## SOUTH AUSTRALIA

**South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute**  
Associate Professor Tarik Sammour



**Professor Ian Harris**  
Whitlam Orthopaedic Research Centre



## WESTERN AUSTRALIA

**University of Western Australia**  
Associate Professor Tom Briffa,  
Dr Jacqueline Francis-Coad



## TASMANIA

**University of Tasmania**  
Professor Luke Bereznicki



UNIVERSITY OF  
TASMANIA

## ACT

**University of Canberra**  
Professor Jennie Scarvel



## VICTORIA

**Australian Centre for Heart Health**  
Dr Barbara Murphy



**Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute**  
Associate Professor Melinda Carrington



**Deakin University**  
Professor Andrea Driscoll



**Monash University**  
Associate Professor Peter Malliaras,  
Associate Professor Victoria Manning,  
Professor Ilana Ackerman, Associate  
Professor Denise O'Connor,  
Dr Jason Wallis



**Murdoch Children's Research Institute**  
Associate Professor Amanda Gwee



**Northern Health**  
Dr Sanjeevan Muruganandan



**Orygen**  
Professor Sue Cotton



**Spine Society of Australia Limited**  
Dr Michael Johnson



**University of Melbourne**  
Professor Gustavo Duque,  
Dr Chris Schilling



## NEW SOUTH WALES

**Charles Sturt University**  
Dr Kristy Robson



**Ingham Institute for Applied Medical Research**

Professor Josephine Chow



**Macquarie University**  
Michael Doumit, Dr Kathryn Mills,  
Dr Mitchell Sarkies



**Neuroscience Research Australia**  
Dr Kimberley Van Schooten



**Northern Sydney Local Health District**  
Professor Thomas Hugh,  
Professor Geoffrey Tofler



**South Western Sydney Local Health District (Liverpool Hospital)**  
Conjoint Associate Professor Alwin Chuan



**St Vincent's Hospital Sydney**  
Dr Jane Wu



**Sydney Local Health District**  
Professor Ian Harris,  
Professor Vasi Naganathan



**University of New South Wales**  
Professor Kei Lui, Associate Professor Jill  
Newby, Dr Ursula Sansom-Daly



**University of Sydney**  
Dr Gustavo Machado, Simon Davidson



**Western Sydney University**  
Professor Vivienne Chuter



# PUBLICATION HIGHLIGHTS 2022-23

## Dr Chris Schilling

Implementing predictive tools in surgery: A narrative review in the context of orthopaedic surgery

*ANZ Journal of Surgery* (2022) Dec; Vol 92, 12, 3162-3169.

SMART choice (knee) tool: a patient-focused predictive model to predict improvement in health-related quality of life after total knee arthroplasty

*ANZ Journal of Surgery* (2023) Jan/Feb; Vol 93, 1-2, 316-327

## Michael Johnson

Comorbidity data collection across different spine registries: an evidence map

*European Spine Journal* 32(3):753-779

## Michael Doumit

Clinical outcomes of adults and children with cystic fibrosis during the COVID-19 pandemic

*Journal of Cystic Fibrosis* (2023) May; Vol 22, 3 P581-586

## Associate Professor Alwin Chuan

Feasibility of virtual reality-delivered pain psychology therapy for cancer-related neuropathic pain: a pilot randomised controlled trial

*Anaesthesia* (2023) Apr, Vol 78, 4 449-457

## Dr Gustavo Machado

Management of patients with low back pain admitted to hospital: An observational study of usual care

*International Journal of Rheumatic Diseases* (2023) Jan; Vol 26, 1 60-68

Global prevalence of hospital admissions for low back pain: a systematic review with meta-analysis

*BMJ Open* 2023; 13: e069517

Implementation of a model of care for low back pain produces sustained reduction in opioid use in emergency departments

*Emergency Medicine Journal* 2023; 40:359-360

Process evaluation of the implementation of an evidence-based model of care for low back pain in Australian emergency departments

*Musculoskeletal Science and Practice*, Volume 66, 2023, 102814

## Professor Ian Harris

Discharge to inpatient rehabilitation following arthroplasty is a strong predictor of persistent opioid use 90 days after surgery: a prospective, observational study

*BMC Musculoskeletal Disorders* (2023) 24, 31

## Professor Tom Hugh

The ANZ hernia repair practices study: low consensus on inguinal and small ventral hernia management and infrequent long-term follow-up

*ANZ Journal of Surgery* (2023) Jul-Aug;93(7-8):1758-1762  
Jul-Aug;93(7-8):1758-1762

## Dr Barbara Murphy

Behavioural and psychological telehealth support for people with cardiac conditions: randomised trial of the 'back on track' self-management program

*European Journal of Cardiovascular Nursing* (2023) Mar29; zvad034



# 2022-23 REVIEWERS

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Royal Hobart Hospital

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Southern Cross University

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Torrens University Australia

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NSW Health

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HCF

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University of Sydney

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The University of Queensland

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University of the Sunshine Coast

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University of Melbourne, Monash

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HCF

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Ramsay Health

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Research, Uni of Tasmania

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of Technology

**Dr Kwang Chien Yee**  
University of Tasmania

# THE BOARD

## HON ACCOUNTANT (HCF CFO)



### Claire Jackson

MBBS, MD, MPH, CertHEcon, GradCert Mgmt, FRACGP, FAICD  
Chair  
Professor Jackson was appointed as a Trustee in 2013, has been a director of the Corporate Trustee since its registration in 2015 and was appointed Chair in December 2020.



### John Barrington

BComm, LLB, FAICD  
Director  
Mr Barrington was appointed to the Board of Directors of the Corporate Trustee in 2017.



### Lisa McIntyre\*

BSc (Hon), PhD, GAICD  
Director  
Ms McIntyre was appointed as a Trustee in 2013, served as Chair from March 2014 to December 2020 and has been a Director of the Corporate Trustee since its registration in 2015.



### Harry Robertson

BComm (Hons), CA, ANZIIF (Fellow) CIP  
Hon Accountant  
Mr Robertson served as Company Secretary of the Foundation from July 2018 to March 2019 and is now Honorary Accountant.

## COMPANY SECRETARY

## MANAGEMENT



### Sheena Jack

BA (Acc), CA, GAICD  
Managing Director  
Ms Jack was appointed to the Board of Directors of the Corporate Trustee in 2017.



### Michael Bassingthwaight

FAICD  
Director  
Mr Bassingthwaight was appointed as a Trustee and a Director of the Corporate Trustee in December 2020.



### Nathan Francis

BBus, CA, FGIA, FCIS, GAICD  
Company Secretary  
Mr Francis has served as Foundation Company Secretary since March 2019.



### Julie Andrews

BAppSc, GradDipBM, MAICD  
Research Advisory Committee Chair  
Ms Andrews has served as the HCF Research Advisory Committee Chair since inception in April 2019.

\* Retired on 31 August 2023.

Full details of the directors' skills, experience and expertise can be found at [hcf.com.au/foundation](https://hcf.com.au/foundation)

# THANK YOU

*"The HCF Research Foundation wishes to thank the members of the Research Advisory Committee for their contributions throughout the year.*

*"We thank our partners for their continued support for health services research, and we'd also like to acknowledge the significant contributions of our peer reviewers from across the country, volunteering to lend their expertise to review our 2023 research projects."*

**Dr Christopher Pettigrew**

LLB, BSc, BBiotech (Hons), PhD  
Head of the HCF Research Foundation



## REGISTRATION & REGULATION

### AUSTRALIAN CHARITIES AND NOT-FOR-PROFITS COMMISSION

The HCF Research Foundation has been regulated by the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) since the ACNC began in 2013. Further details about the ACNC can be found at [acnc.gov.au](https://www.acnc.gov.au)

The ACNC's purpose is to maintain, protect and enhance public trust and confidence in the sector through increased accountability and transparency.

HCF Research Foundation is a charitable trust and its trustee is HCF Research Foundation Limited (Corporate Trustee).

Go to [hcf.com.au/foundation](https://hcf.com.au/foundation) for more information and to subscribe to the HCF Research Foundation enewsletter.

 [hcf.com.au](https://www.hcf.com.au)

