Asia Pacific Autism Conference 2017
International Convention Centre, Sydney
7 - 9 September 2017
Pre-conference workshops 6 September 2017

Growing with autism

‘Growing with autism’ is the conference theme, reflecting the shift in autism research and practice to look beyond the early childhood and school years and focus on the whole lifespan for people on the spectrum.

The conference brings together people on the spectrum and their family members, service providers, researchers and policy makers as one community, so that people on the spectrum can realise their potential and achieve their very best.

Following on from the success of the Asia Pacific Autism Conferences held every second year over the last eight years beginning in Sydney in 2009, the Asia Pacific Autism Conference 2017 (APAC 17) returns to Darling Harbour, Sydney to the new International Convention Centre.

Twenty one world leaders in the field have already committed to speaking at APAC 17 including Peter Vermeulen from Belgium who will give the opening address and Dr Barry Prizant from the USA, author of Uniquely Human, who will give the closing address. The Conference Committee looks forward to welcoming you to the Asia Pacific Autism Conference in September 2017.
Dr Josephine Barbaro
Identification and Diagnosis of Autism in Australia: Driving change in developmental outcomes through Social Attention and Communication Surveillance (SACS)
(Co-presenting with Professor Cheryl Dissanayake)

Dr Josephine Barbaro is a Research Fellow at the Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre, La Trobe University, and Project Leader within Core Program 1 of the Autism Cooperative Research Centre (CRC). Dr Barbaro's research interests are in the early identification and diagnosis of autism in infants and toddlers, and family health and well-being following a diagnosis. Her developmental surveillance program for autism, the Social Attention and Communication Study (SACS), has been developed over the past 12 years, and is used amongst healthcare professionals in Australia, Europe, and the Asia-Pacific.

Michael John Carley will also be presenting a pre-conference workshop: Unemployed on the Autism Spectrum

Michael John Carley
Old Ways of Looking at Autism, New Ways of Looking at Autism - The New Look at the Needs of Adults and Teens on the Autism Spectrum

Michael John Carley graduated from Hampshire College and Columbia University.

Lee Casuscelli
Using ‘strong and deadly’ partnerships to raise awareness and increase understanding of autism in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Australia
(Co-presenting with June Riemer)

Lee Casuscelli is currently the National Manager for Positive Partnerships, a Commonwealth Government initiative to build capacity among teachers and parents of school aged children, managed by Aspect. Lee has a deep understanding of educational practices that best support students on the autism spectrum. She has been working in the education and disability field for over 30 years across all education sectors and K-12 settings in NSW.
Dr Trevor Clark
In Pursuit Of Happiness and Independence: identifying the strengths and exceptional abilities of people on the autism spectrum to enhance positive post-school outcomes.

Dr Trevor Clark is a special educator, researcher and author with comprehensive experience and knowledge of educational programs, service provision and research related to the education of students on the autism spectrum. He is Aspect’s National Director for Research. He completed his PhD in autism at the University of New South Wales in 2001 which involved a curriculum designed to make functional use of savant and splinter skills in children on the autism spectrum.

Professor Cheryl Dissanayake
Identification and Diagnosis of Autism in Australia: Driving change in developmental outcomes through Social Attention and Communication (SACS) (Co-presenting with Dr Josephine Barbaro)

Professor Dissanayake is the Founding Director of Australia’s first research centre dedicated to ASDs established in 2008. She has been an autism researcher since 1984, when she began her PhD at Monash University. On completion she undertook a postdoctoral fellowship in the Sigman lab at UCLA, and has established and led an active research program since joining La Trobe University in 1996. She is also a Project Leader in Core Program 1 of the Cooperative Research Centre for Living with Autism.

Dr Yuebo Fan
Current Situation of Services Related to Autism in China and Reflections on Its Future Development

Dr Yuebo Fan is Director of the Autism Research Centre at South China Normal University, senior paediatrician, guest professor for several universities, founder and previous Principal of Guangzhou Cana School (Guangzhou Rehabilitation & Research Center for Children with ASD), which is the first public special education school for children with autism in China mainland.

Dr Emma Goodall
Dinner, dating and relationships - Being safe and being sexual

Dr Emma Goodall is an autism consultant and researcher. She is the senior autism advisor for Department for Education and Child Development (DECD) in South Australia. Emma is an experienced educator and educational advisor with a passion for helping teachers and families to understand the autism spectrum and help children achieve their potential. Her doctoral research investigated teaching students on the autism spectrum. She is also on
the executive committee for the Australian Society for Autism Research and for the Autistic Self Advocacy Network of Australia and New Zealand/Oceania.

Dr Jake Gratten
Genetics, paternal age and the gut microbiome: latest research in autism

Dr Jake Gratten is a Research Fellow at the Institute for Molecular Bioscience, University of Queensland. He is also a Project Leader in Core Program 1 of the Cooperative Research Centre for Living with Autism. His research aims to improve understanding of autism and other psychiatric disorders through whole genome analyses. He leads an Autism-funded project on the systems genomics of autism. He received a NARSAD Young Investigator Grant to work on 'Genomic analysis of sex differences in psychiatric disorders' and a NHMRC grant to work on 'Genomic analysis of the relationship between parental age and risk of psychiatric disorders'. As part of a NHMRC Career Development Fellowship he also works on 'Understanding the etiology of psychiatric disorders through whole genome analyses'.

Dr Wenn Lawson, PhD, CPsychol. AFBPsS MAPs
The autism spectrum: issues of ageing

Psychologist, lecturer and author, Dr Wenn Lawson has run his own business for 25 yrs. At 2 years, he was misdiagnosed as intellectually disabled, being incapable of doing as he was told at school; at 17 years misdiagnosed with schizophrenia; in and out of mental health institutions; eventually age 42 years, diagnosed with an autism spectrum condition (ASC), ADHD, dyspraxia and learning difficulties.

Dr Lawson will also be conducting two pre-conference workshops: The Autism Spectrum and Gender Dysphoria; and, An Inclusive Approach to Autism Research

Mark Lever
Too Much Information: Changing public awareness in the UK

Mark Lever joined the National Autistic Society as CEO in March 2008. Since then he has led the organisation through significant strategic change. The NAS is the UK’s leading organisation for people affected by autism. It runs six independent autism specific schools, has developed inclusion units in mainstream settings and opened two free schools with a third free school in development. In addition, the Society delivers thousands of packages of community based support for adults affected by autism.
Professor Samuel Odom
Are School-Based Interventions the “Best Hope” for Children and Youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder? (Keynote plenary)

Dr Barry Prizant
Uniquely Human: A different way of seeing autism (Keynote plenary)

Dr Barry Prizant has more than 40 years’ experience as a scholar, researcher and international consultant for individuals with autism. He is an Adjunct Professor, Brown University, and Director of Childhood Communication Services, a private practice. Formerly, he was an Associate Professor of Child Psychiatry for the Brown University School of Medicine.

Dr Barry Prizant will also present a headline presentation: Reflecting on the Journey: 21 Years of a Parent Weekend Retreat (Headline presentation with Elaine Meyer)

Dr Selim Pullu
Our Journey with Autism: Works and Experiences

Dr Selim Pullu has been teaching ancient history and archaeology for more than two decades. Dr Selim Pullu has dedicated his last four years to understanding and helping his son Ege who was diagnosed with autism.

Dr Selim Pullu and his wife Handan worked with Positive Partnerships, a Commonwealth Government initiative to build capacity among teachers and parents of school aged children, to develop resources for culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Ms Denise Phua
Education and Employment Models for Persons with Autism: The Singapore Odyssey

Ms Denise Phua is the President of Autism Resource Centre (Singapore) and a Board member of Autism Association (Singapore). She supervises two special schools for persons with autism, the Pathlight School - which she co-founded - and the Eden School.

Dr Samuel L. Odom is Director of Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute and Professor in the School of Education at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. He is Principal Investigator of the National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders, Project AFIRM, The Efficacy Study of Elementary Learners with Autism (TESELA) Project, and the Center on Secondary Education for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders.

Professor Samuel Odom will also present a headline presentation: Families Supporting Early Communication of Toddlers with ASDs: Joint-attention Mediated Learning Intervention
Jeanette Purkis
*Mental Health and Autism: Strategies and Self-care*

Jeanette Purkis is an author, public speaker and autism advocate who has a diagnosis of Asperger Syndrome and atypical schizophrenia. Jeanette has worked full-time in the Australian Public Service since 2007 and has a Master's degree in Fine Arts. Jeanette is the author of three books on elements of autism and hosts an internet radio show. She has been speaking about autism since 2005.

June Riemer
*Using 'strong and deadly' partnerships to raise awareness and increase understanding of autism in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Australia*

(Co-presenting with Lee Casuscelli)

June Riemer is a descendant of the Dunghutti people of the Kempsey region of Northern NSW and comes from a long line of strong Aboriginal women, the empowerment and education of her people has been her life's journey. Currently she is the Deputy Chief Executive Officer for First Peoples Disability Network (Australia).

Professor Jacqueline Roberts
*Autism and Education: The Art and The Science*

Jacqueline Roberts holds the Chair of Autism in the Autism Centre of Excellence (ACE) at Griffith University. She worked in Aspect schools for children with autism as a teacher, speech pathologist, principal and Director of Services, as a consultant and held several short-term fractional research appointments at different universities teaching autism studies and leading/managing research projects.

Associate Professor Stephen Shore
*Success with Autism: Using our Strengths for Achieving a Fulfilling and Productive Life – Just like Everyone Else*

(Keynote plenary)

Diagnosed with “Atypical Development and strong autistic tendencies” and “too sick” for outpatient treatment Dr Shore was recommended for institutionalisation. Nonverbal until four, and with much support from his parents, teachers, wife, and others, Stephen is now a professor at Adelphi University where his research focuses on matching best practice to the needs of people with autism.

Associate Professor Stephen Shore will also present a pre-conference workshop: *Bullying: Practical solutions for eradicating bullying for individuals with autism.*
Judy Singer identifies as being "in the middle of 3 generations of women somewhere on the autistic spectrum". Her 1998 Honours Thesis from the University of Technology Sydney, was the pioneering sociological study of this, then new, kind of thinking about autism. In her thesis, Judy Singer argued that AS was not a new medical condition, but a 'socially constructed' disability which emerged due to social changes in the post-modern era. She was credited with coining the term "Neurodiversity" to call for a new "liberation" movement for people who were neurological atypical.

Dr Peter Vermeulen

Autism and happiness: from neurodiversity to neuroharmony (Keynote plenary)

Since 1998 Dr Peter Vermeulen has been working as an autism consultant, lecturer and trainer at Autisme Centraal, in Belgium. He is also the Chief Editor of "Autisme Centraal", the bi-monthly magazine of Autisme Centraal. Dr Peter Vermeulen holds a Master in Psychology and Pedagogical Sciences (University of Leuven, Belgium - 1985) and a PhD in Psychology and Pedagogical Sciences (University of Leiden, The Netherlands -2002).

Dr Peter Vermeulen will also present a pre-conference workshop: Autism and the Predictive Mind

Winthrop Professor Andrew Whitehouse

Australia’s first national guidelines for autism diagnosis

Professor Andrew Whitehouse directs the Autism Research Team at the Telethon Kids Institute (University of Western Australia), and is a Program Director within the Autism Cooperative Research Centre. His research team use a range of methodologies to develop new and improved methods for the early identification and intervention for children with autism. He is the Director of the Diagnosis Research Program at the Autism Co-operative Research Centre (Autism CRC).

Registration

Early Bird Registration is now open, closing 1 June 2017.
Presentation Styles

Other sessions throughout the Conference will represent a diversity of presentation types which will enable audience interaction and provide a platform to highlight the lived experiences and insights of people on the autism spectrum, as well as their families, carers and advocates.

- personal stories and narratives
- lightning talks (quick updates that allow for question and discussion time)
- oral presentations
- traditional posters
- guided posters with facilitated presentations by the author, and
- interactive sessions - learning opportunities to demonstrate strategies for use in the home, school, workplace or community

Creative Program

The strengths and interests of people on the autism spectrum of all ages will be celebrated at the Conference with a creative program that highlights the strengths and artistic talents of people on the autism spectrum. Our working group of experts have collated a series of amazing works of art (including photography, painting, sculpture, and video works) that promote strengths and the work of talented artists. These works will be displayed in different ways throughout the conference including in brochures, electronic information screens and in presentation breaks.

Registration

Early Bird Registration is now open, closing 1 June 2017.

Subsidised registration rates are offered to people on the autism spectrum, parents and carers and delegates coming from developing nations.

For more information about the program and to register: www.apac17.org.au