The Royal Children's Hospital
Human Research Ethics Committee
Membership & Biographies (2025)

Members	NHMRC Category	Category
Prof Robyn Langham	Chairperson	(a)
Mary Scopas	Community representative	(b)
Priscilla Seyfort	Community representative	(b)
Kelly Griffiths	Community representative	(b)
Jeremy Bretherton	Community representative	(b)
Louis Lee	Community representative	(b)
Jaclyn Dorland	Nurse	(c)
Prof Jane Munro	Medical Professional	(c)
Prof Ed Oakley	Medical Professional	(c)
Prof David Amor	Medical Professional	(c)
Benjamin Briggs	Nurse	(c)
Erin Lane	Pastoral Care	(d)
David Wright	Pastoral Care	(d)
Varsha Patki	Lawyer	(e)
Jessica Mackay	Lawyer	(e)
Catherine McGauran	Lawyer	(e)
Dr Zeffie Poulakis (Deputy Chair)	Researcher (Allied Health)	(f)
Dr Jonathan Payne	Researcher (Allied Health)	(f)
A/Prof Claire Von Mollendorf	Researcher	(f)
Ken Knight	Researcher	(f)
Chris Gyngell	Researcher	(f)
Kate Richichi	Chair, Drug Trial Subcommittee	Other
Technical Expert Panel	Category/Role	
Kate Paton	Research Experience/Qualitative Research	(f)
Dr Daniel Wilks	Medical Professional/ Surgeon	(c)
Dr Laila Ibrahim	Research Experience/ Paediatric Clinical Care	(f)

Attendees

Kaya Gardiner	Director Research Operations
Sophie Gatenby	Research Ethics Manager
Margarete Kleinschmidt	Research Ethics & Governance Officer (HREC)
Sarah Wolfe	Research Ethics & Governance Officer (DTS)

The Royal Children's Hospital Ethics in Human Research Committee is constituted and complies with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2025) and all updates.

Member Biographies

Professor Robyn Langham (Chair)
Professor Langham is an adult nephrologist and clinician researcher and has spent much of her career in public hospital and university roles, as Director of the Renal Unit at St Vincent's in Melbourne, and then as the Head of School of Rural Health at Monash University. As a researcher, she has worked in translational research part of the team successful in the development of novel anti-inflammatory and anti-fibrotic agents. A member of the Therapeutic Goods Administration Advisory Committee on Medicines, and a past Chair of the St Vincent's HREC, she brings a novel breadth to the world of paediatric clinical research."

Mary Scopas
Mary Scopas has held executive level roles and has worked as a management consultant for large corporations and NGOs. Her roles have been in strategy, finance and marketing and currently she is a Strategy Manager of an International NGO. She has a Bachelor of Business (Accounting), a Graduate Diploma in Applied Information Systems, a Graduate Diploma in Law, and a Master in Legal Studies, specialising in International Human Rights Law. She is also a member of the Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand. Mary has undertaken many voluntary and pro-bono roles and is the mother of a young daughter.

Dr Priscilla Seyfort
Priscilla has always had a passion for the wellbeing and interests of children and has a background in children's services as a practitioner, policy analyst and advisor. She has a particular interest in optimising the wellbeing of children from disadvantaged and vulnerable backgrounds, having worked as a policy advisor to the Victorian Commissioner for Children and Young People, and served as a Commissioner of the Victorian Multicultural Commission. Priscilla has a PhD from the University of Melbourne, and now serves on not-for-profit Boards who champion these interests. Priscilla has 4 adult children.

Ms Kelly Griffiths
Kelly is an experienced company director, lawyer and corporate affairs professional. She has particular expertise in the healthcare industry (biopharmaceutical, mental health, patient advocacy, primary care and public health), medical and scientific research, the creative arts industries, financial services, public/ government administration and social justice.

Jeremy Bretherton
Jeremy is a 36 year old Marketing professional and Senior Product Manager. He has completed a Bachelor of Applied Science (Psychology) at RMIT. He has been involved in various community volunteer roles such as coaching youth basketball, as a tutor with a homework club for South Sudanese children and as a workplace pathways mentor to recent migrants. Having successfully been treated for a cancer diagnosis he is acutely aware and interested in the progression and development of the medical/scientific field. His 18 month old son is a part time daredevil which keeps him busy.

Louis Lee
Louis Lee is a Governance, Risk and Compliance professional with extensive experience across Defence and the Federal Government. He currently works at Hanwha Defence Australia, where he leads initiatives to strengthen enterprise risk and organisational governance frameworks aligned with ISO standards. Louis previously worked in the consulting GRC team at KPMG Australia, where he partnered with Federal Government and Defence clients on governance, risk, and compliance initiatives. He currently serves in the Army Reserve and is committed to advancing ethical governance and strengthening integrity across complex organisations.

Jaclyn Dorland
Jaclyn Dorland is a Clinical Nurse Consultant for Research & Clinical Trials at RCH. She has more than 15-years experience as a paediatric nurse. She has specialised in paediatric intensive care completing both a post graduate diploma in paediatric intensive care and further training to be a extracorporeal life support specialist. Jaclyn has always had a strong interest in research and completed a thesis based Masters early in her career focusing on foetal development in high risk pregnancies. She has worked in clinical trials across a number specialities including: intensive care, cardiology and rare genetic diseases. Jaclyn is passionate about improving the participant and family experience within clinical trials across the campus.

Professor Jane Munro MBBS (Hons), FRACP, MPH, MHSM
A/Prof Jane Munro is a paediatric rheumatologist at the Royal Children's Hospital and lead of rheumatology research at the Murdoch Children's Research Institute. She was Head of Rheumatology for nearly ten years and stepped down in 2020. In 2021/2022 she was the senior medical adviser in the Office of the Deputy Chief Health Officer, COVID19 Division at Department of Health. She co-founded Pandemic Kindness Movement during the pandemic. Jane is passionate about improving healthcare worker wellbeing and believes in building community, storytelling, spreading kindness and the need for health systems change.

Professor Ed Oakley M.B.B.S, FACEM
Ed Oakley is a paediatric emergency physician and Chief of Critical Care at The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne, Clinical Professor with the University of Melbourne, and an Honorary research fellow at MCRI. His research interests include providing evidence for emergency care of children, incorporating best care into clinical practice in emergency departments, and system monitoring to highlight variation in care and ensure sustainable change. He is a researcher in the Paediatric Emergency Medicine Centre of Research Excellence in Australia, which has research capacity building and fostering the next generation of researchers as a core goal. His research is conducted through the Paediatric Research in Emergency Departments International Collaborative. He holds appointments to the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine Council of Advocacy, Practice and Partnership; Events Advisory Committee; Foundation Advisory Committee; Quality and Patient Safety Committee; Research Committee; Clinical Trials Network executive and the Trainee Research Advisory Panel.

Professor David Amor
David trained in paediatrics and genetics at the Royal Children's Hospital before completing a PhD in Chromosome Biology at the Murdoch Children's Research Institute. In 2016 he was appointed to the Galli Chair in Developmental Medicine at the University of Melbourne, prior to which he was Director of Victorian Clinical Genetics Services. His current research focuses on the genetics of intellectual disability, the translation of new genetic technologies into clinical practice and the identification of genes for rare syndromes.

Mr Daniel Wilks
Daniel is a UK qualified Consultant Plastic Surgeon who works full-time as a paediatric plastic surgeon at the Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne. He also holds honorary appointments at The University of Melbourne, Department of Paediatrics and Murdoch Children's Research Institute. He specialises in surgery of the hand, nerve surgery, reconstruction, transplantation, and microsurgery.
Daniel is involved in a range of research activities and has a strong interest in surgical innovation. Prior to moving to Australia, he established the only licenced UK centre for upper limb transplantation – a novel technique to reconstruct absent hands available in only a small number of international centres.

Benjamin Briggs
Benjamin Briggs is a highly dedicated and accomplished healthcare professional with a diverse background in both clinical practice and research, specialising in family-centered care within the realm of oncology clinical trials. His career journey began at The Alfred Hospital, and a passion for pediatric care led him to The Royal Children's

Hospital, where he has continued to work for almost 10 years. Ben assumed the role of a Research Consultant for Bone Marrow Transplant withing the Children's Cancer Centre Clinical Trials Unit, and concurrently took on the position of Oncology Nursing Research Consultant within the same unit.

Erin Lane

Erin Lane has spent ten years teaching in secondary schools, focusing on Wellbeing, especially in Trauma-Based Practice and embedding the implementation of Respectful Relationships. She's particularly interested in helping students transition from primary to secondary school and enjoys working with adolescents. Erin has furthered her studies in these areas and collaborates with external organisations to support families in caring for children and developing parent's capacity. At home, she's a mum to three young girls and loves to read in her spare time.

David Wright

David brings more than 40 years of professional experience, which has included working extensively across the Early Childhood sector in both local government and the not-for-profit arenas. David's roles have ranged from hands-on practice to positions of leadership and management,

This work has included both strategic and operational covering service planning and policy development, human resources and financial management to ensure high quality deliverables.

David has used his years of leadership experience to display his personal values of respect, collaboration, accountability and integrity. David has years of experience of strengthening and building strong teams in a variety of settings and have achieved this through a distributed leadership style and good interpersonal and communication skills. He has fostered a positive work culture, to reflect the organisational values that encourages and builds high performance, to ensure that everyone was able to meet the organisational and community expectations.

In addition to his professional background, he recently completed the Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) course. This strengthened his skills in reflective practice, attentive listening, and engaging with people in times of vulnerability. These skills complement David's qualifications in education and reinforce his commitment to ethical decision-making, compassion, and care.

Varsha Patki

Varsha is a legal professional with over 15 years experience in advising government, private and not-for-profit organisations on enterprise risk, corporate governance, compliance and strategic matters. Having particular expertise in the health and biotechnology sector, Varsha has successfully navigated heavily-regulated environments to deliver novel large scale health innovation initiatives including establishment of the Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority, and Australian Red Cross Lifeblood's Human Milk Bank. Varsha holds Bachelor of Arts/Law (Honours) and Master of Laws degrees, and is alumnus of the Cranlana Centre for Ethical Leadership.

Jessica Mackay

Jessica is a lawyer at the Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority (Triple Zero Victoria), managing Coronial Inquests and associated civil litigation. Prior to working in the Emergency Services sector, she has spent the majority of her career in private firms practising in the areas of insurance litigation and health law, acting for insurers, large public hospitals, medical practitioners and ambulance services, in defence of medical negligence claims.

Catherine Mc Gauran

Catherine is a lawyer who practices in the areas of commercial and employment law and has a broad client base across the private and public sectors. She helps clients navigate complex frameworks that regulate areas such as biosecurity and water rights and resource use, as well advising on the commercial aspects of their operations. Catherine especially likes working with clients to ensure they are fully informed and understand the process they are involved in.

Dr Zeffie Poulakis

Zeffie Poulakis is a clinical psychologist who commenced a research career by joining the Victorian Infant Hearing Screening Program (VIHSP) at its inception in 1992. Since that time Zeffie has engaged in child health research,

health service management, and clinical work with paediatric populations. Zeffie is currently the Director of the Victorian Infant Hearing Screening Program at the Royal Children's Hospital's Centre for Community Child Health, a senior clinical psychologist with the Royal Children's Hospital's Department of Adolescent Medicine and Department of Neurology, and a research officer with the Murdoch Children's Research Institute.

Dr Laila Ibrahim

Laila Ibrahim is a Consultant Paediatrician in General Medicine at the Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne (RCH), Clinician Scientist-fellow at the Murdoch Children's Research Institute (MCRI) and Honorary Lecturer at the University of Melbourne (UoM). Her main research interest and vision is in avoiding unnecessary hospitalisation in children. For her PhD, she conducted a randomised controlled trial (RCT) of home versus hospital intravenous antibiotics in children and developed a clinical scoring system to determine which children with cellulitis should be treated with intravenous antibiotics, both of which had an immediate translation into clinical practice and incorporated into national and international clinical guidelines. She leads single site and multi-site research studies, answering research questions relevant to paediatric clinical care.

Dr Jonathan Payne

Associate Professor Jonathan Payne is co-group leader of the Brain and Mind Research Group at the Murdoch Children's Research Institute, a senior clinical neuropsychologist at the Royal Children's Hospital and an Honorary Principal Fellow in the Department of Paediatrics, University of Melbourne. His research aims to increase understanding of the neurobiological mechanisms underlying complex neurodevelopmental disorders by studying the cognitive, behavioural, and neurobiological phenotypes that arise in monogenetic syndromes.

A/Prof Claire Von Mollendorf

A/Prof Claire von Mollendorf is a medical epidemiologist currently working as a principal research fellow in the New Vaccines and Asia-Pacific Research Groups at the Murdoch Children's Research Unit (MCRI). She is Team Leader for the New Vaccines Group and is a member of the Melbourne Children's Global Health Leadership team. She has been with MCRI since 2017 and over this period has predominantly led and managed adult and paediatric pneumonia surveillance studies in Mongolia exploring the impact of the pneumococcal conjugate vaccine. She also provides support for other projects in the Asia-Pacific Region and is the project manager for the NHMRC Centre of Research Excellence for Pneumococcal Disease Control in the Asia-Pacific grant. She is a co-principal investigator for the Australian site of three COVID booster vaccine studies funded by CEPI. She has an honorary appointment as a Principal Fellow within the Department of Paediatrics, University of Melbourne. She has supervised different levels of postgraduate students and published as an author and co-author on pneumococcal disease and other topics in peer reviewed journals. Her passion and involvement in research spans over a 20+ year period and projects have included adults and children, some vulnerable groups and ranged from clinical trials to observational studies.

Ken Knight

Ken Knight is Head of Research Impact & Consumer Involvement at the Murdoch Children's Research Institute, where he leads an award-winning program to build capacity, capability and an enabling culture for research translation, co-production and impact. He is an active researcher across the Melbourne Children's Campus, including as Chief Investigator on a number of research projects within the Gender Research and Mental Health Programs. Ken is an Honorary Senior Fellow in the Department of Paediatrics at The University of Melbourne, where he also teaches approaches to impact and engagement within the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences. He is Chair of the Association of Australian Medical Research Institutes' Impact Committee - where he co-developed the first Research Impact Framework for the Australian health and medical research institute sector. He also Chairs the Melbourne Children's LGBTIQA+ Collective, driving inclusive policy and practice across the MCRI and the Royal Children's Hospital through community-led co-production. Ken is passionate about partnering with diverse stakeholders to amplify the impact of research, and ensuring that the voices of community are central in shaping policy and health outcomes.

Dr Christopher Gyngell

Christopher Gyngell is a Team Leader in Biomedical Ethics at the Murdoch Children's Research Institute and a Senior Lecturer at the University of Melbourne in the Department of Paediatrics. He was previously a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellow at the University of Oxford and was awarded his PhD in Philosophy from the Australian National University in 2015. He has a background in genetics and corporate ethics. Chris' research explores the ethical implications of novel technologies, including gene editing, AI, genomics, and stem cell therapies. He has over 50 peer-reviewed publications in a diverse range of ethics, philosophy, science, and medical journals. Chris is committed to public engagement, frequently contributing to public discussions and policy debates on the ethical aspects of biomedical advancements. He is a director of the Melbourne Health, Law, and Ethics Network.

Kate Richichi

Kate is a pharmacist managing the Clinical Trials Pharmacy service at RCH. She has over 13 years' experience managing clinical trial services at Flinders Medical Centre, Repatriation General Hospital and Women's and Children's Hospital in Adelaide, as well as various clinical and dispensary roles at WCH.

Kate Paton

Kate Paton is the Qualitative Research Lead at the Murdoch Children's Research Institute. Kate facilitates support for clinicians and research teams undertaking qualitative, codesign and mixed methods projects across the Melbourne Children's campus. Built on 12 years of experience integrating quantitative and qualitative research projects in health services, she now specialises in advising on qualitative research projects and strengthening researcher capability to rigorously and ethically integrate the views of those with lived experience into research design and methodology in health and medical research. This includes developing specialised professional development and training courses. Kate also supports a vibrant Qualitative Research Community of Practice with 290 researchers Australia wide. Kate has authored and coauthored 15 publications in health services, genetics, and developmental medicine and is an examiner for qualitative projects within the Masters of Genetic Counselling course at the University of Melbourne.