CHILDREN'S RESEARCH FOUNDATION

Annual Report 2025

Acknowledgement of Country

The Channel 7 Children's Research Foundation acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

Contents

Our Mission

Enriching children's lives through research

For almost 50 years, we've been lighting the way for our children. What began as an annual heartfelt appeal, (the Channel 7 Christmas Telethon Appeals starting in 1976) has grown into a powerful force for change.

Our belief in a brighter future ensures we empower the best and brightest in Australia to turn bold ideas into real-world solutions.

Every grant funds answers to tough questions, enabling bold ideas, innovation and world class research that pushes further, for the benefit of all children.

Our impact is felt throughout the state and beyond, in homes, hospitals, classrooms, from pre-conception through to birth and beyond. We fund scientific, health and social research into issues that matter most to the children of South Australia.

To date, the Channel 7 Children's Research Foundation - an independent not for profit organisation - has already invested over $60 million in today's money into South Australian-led research and program across almost 1,000 projects.

The enduring partnership between its member organisations continues to drive the vision that was created back in 1976; the right of every child to a healthy, happy start to life.

To find out more: crf.org.au

Paul Jury
Chairperson

Greg Ward
Executive Director

Message from the Chair and Executive Director

On behalf of the Board of Directors, it is our pleasure to present the 49th Annual Report for the Channel 7 Children's Research Foundation of South Australia.

As we approach our 50th anniversary, it feels appropriate to reflect on our impact not just over the past year, but also over our half a century in operation.

This Foundation has stood as a beacon of hope and progress for the children of South Australia and beyond. Since our inception, we've proudly invested over $60 million in today's money into nearly 1,000 research projects — each one with the power to spark discovery, driven

by curiosity, and the potential to change or even save lives.

These projects span the full spectrum of child health, education, and welfare. They are the result of rigorous selection, thanks to the tireless work of our Research Committee — a group of dedicated volunteers who give their time and expertise to ensure every dollar we grant leads to tangible, evidence-based outcomes.

We are immensely proud to provide the scaffolding that enables these discoveries. This work is — and always will be — the heartbeat of our Foundation, and we look forward to supporting it for the next 50 years.

Our Board and Research Committee members (found on page 8 and 9) are nominated by our member organisations: Seven Adelaide, Novita, Flinders University, The University of Adelaide, University of South Australia, the Women's and Children's Health Network, and others with recognised skills invited by the CRF Board.

We acknowledge the generosity of these individuals in volunteering their time and invaluable expertise to steer the Board in its governance, and the Research Committee in its exceptional grant selection process. We applaud your input and acknowledge the Foundation could not operate without your generosity and support. We would also like to acknowledge the work of the Treasurer and Finance Committee for their diligent management of the investment portfolio, which ensures our ongoing ability to keep making a difference.

In this report we outline our 22 successful grant recipients for 2025 who shared in a funding pot of $1,781,584: you can read more about the grants and researchers from pages 12 to 21.

We were delighted our joint patrons, Her Excellency the Honourable Francis Adamson AC, Governor of South Australia, and Mr Rod Bunton, were able to join us at our Research Excellence Awards evening in October to present the awards to this year's recipients (see page 23.)

To all those in our community – from board members to researchers alike - we thank you sincerely for your dedication and commitment to giving every child a healthy happy start to life.

> “...with the power to spark discovery, driven by curiosity, and the potential to change or even save lives.

Board and Foundation Representatives

Our Board comprises representatives from our member organisations, who dedicate their time and expertise to preserving and protecting the legacy of the Channel 7 Children's Research Foundation.

Paul Jury
Chair (Channel 7)

Stephen Woolley
Deputy Chair (Channel 7)

Chantelle Hugo
(Channel 7)

Libby Rayner
(Channel 7 - until April 2025)

Mike Smithson
(Channel 7)

Prof Helen Marshall AM
(Women's and Children's Health Network)

Prof Claire Roberts
(Flinders University)

Prof Amanda Page
(The University of Adelaide)

Prof Carol Maher
(University of South Australia)

Prof Kevin Forsyth
co-opted by the Board, Chair CRF Research Committee

Greg de Cure
(Novita)

Greg Ward
Executive Director

Jonathon Grant
Treasurer

CRF Research Committee

CRF's Annual Grants program is a two-step competitive process. Applications are rigorously reviewed by the CRF Research Committee, comprising representatives from member organisations and Board-appointed members.

The Research Committee that reviewed for the 2025 grant applications comprised:

Professor Kevin Forsyth
Chairperson Co-opted by the Board

Mr Paul Jury
Representative of the Board (Board Chair)

Associate Professor Luke Grzeskowiak
Flinders University

Associate Professor Zohra Lassi
The University of Adelaide

Associate Professor Leanne Dibbens
University of South Australia

Associate Professor Alexia Peña
Women's and Children's Health Network

Dr Rhiannon Pilkington
Co-opted by the Board

Independent Referees

CRF relies on the voluntary participation of the international research community in the peer review process of the annual grant applications, so that the highest quality research is funded.

Our Board and Research Committee acknowledge with thanks the reviewers listed below or anonymous who dedicated time and expertise for the 2025 Annual Research Grants Round.

Prof Lisa Amir
E/Prof Jim Anderson
Dr Anya Arthurs
Dr Thushari Atapattu
Dr Soumyadeep Bhaumik
Dr Danielle Bond
Prof Christopher Boyle
Prof Jill Carr
A/Prof Laurence Cheung
A/Prof Catherine Chittleborough
A/Prof Emma Colvin
Dr Brian Coppin
Prof Philip Darbyshire
A/Prof Michela A. Denti
A/Prof Dani-Louise Dixon
Prof Barbara Fallon
Dr Syeda Fatima
A/Prof David Gonzalez
Dr Natalie Goulter
Dr Caitlin Hitchcock
Prof Caroline Homer
Dr Catherine Johnson
Dr Paul Joyce
Dr Winnie Kan
Prof Ilan Katz
Prof Alison Kent
A/Prof Maria Kirby
A/Prof Paul Licciardi
Dr Layla Mahdi
Dr Suzanne Mashtoub
A/Prof Erin Morton
Dr Courtney Munro
Dr Lisa Nicholas
Dr Himanshu Popat
Dr Kate Quane
Dr Katharina Richter
Prof Rachel Roberts
Dr Feargal Ryan
Dr Saumya Samaraweera
A/Prof Cheryl Shoubridge
Dr Alanna Sincovich
Prof Simon Smith
Dr Stefanie Vaccher
Dr Clare van Eyk
A/Prof Rietie Venter
A/Prof Caitlin Wyrwoll

Report by the Chair of the Research Committee

Professor Kevin Forsyth

Appointed by the Board,
CRF Research Committee Chair

Each year, the Channel 7 Children's Research Foundation grants just under $2 million to supporting quality research within South Australia's world-class universities, research institutes, and health services, by way of annual grants, fellowships and enabling grants.

At our annual Excellence in Research Awards in October 2024, the CRF announced the Research Grants awarded for 2025.

The focus of our funding is to improve the health, education and wellbeing of children, and funding in 2025 was directed towards projects including:

- treatment resistance of aggressive paediatric brain tumours,
- trial of a group improv therapy treatment for children and teens who stutter,
- co-creation of an evidence-based board game to tackle adolescent mental and physical health,
- finding Type 1 diabetes (T1D) driver genes: Targets for future therapies,
- investigating the role of the TFDP2 gene in Lymphoblastic Leukaemia development,
- and the study of PFAS chemicals that cause fetal anomalies and a lifetime of poor health.

From the 100 Expressions of Interest submitted for the 2025 funding period, the CRF Research Committee invited 41 researchers to submit full grant applications and ultimately recommended 22 projects to be supported in 2025 for a total allocation of $1,781,584.

Congratulations to each of our 2025 grant recipients and I wish them success in their work. Please see pages 12 to 21 for details on the projects.

> "...to improve the health, education and wellbeing of children.

With the demands and difficulties of grant writing, a significant success rate of 50% for full grant applications is encouraging researchers to submit high quality applications.

I'm honoured to hold the position of Research Committee Chair, and on behalf of the Research Committee, I thank the Board for their continued support.

I extend my sincere thanks to the Research Committee for their commitment to our mission, to the independent reviewers from the international research community (see page 9), and to all our South Australian researchers who dedicate their careers to improving the lives of children.

We look forward to future reports on the advances their research will make possible.

2025 Research Grants

The funding outcomes for the CRF 2025 grants were announced on October 31, 2024, at the Annual Achievement in Children's Research Awards attended by Her Excellency, The Honourable Frances Adamson AC, Governor of South Australia, and Mr Rod Bunten, joint Patrons of the Channel 7 Children's Research Foundation.

The 22 research projects funded from January 2025 received a total of $1,781,584, covering community-based studies, clinical studies and basic science projects in various disciplines relating to the health, welfare and education of children.

Read more on the funded projects on the Research page on our website: **crf.org.au**

A microphysiological model recapitulating the innate and acquired treatment resistance of aggressive paediatric brain tumours

Overview:
This project aims to assess if in vitro culture of tumour cells obtained from paediatric patients within perfusion devices enabling co-culture with non-tumour neuroglial cells can mimic the innate and acquired ability of aggressive tumours to resist chemoradiation therapy and therefore support the development of better treatment.

Grant:
$100,000

Chief Investigator:
Professor Benjamin Thierry

Category:
Basic Science

Discipline:
Cell and Molecular Biology

Administering institution:
University of South Australia

Developing an immunotherapy for inflammatory bowel disease in children

Overview:
Children with Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) suffer for their entire lives. The disease is painful and causes permanent gut damage and yet current medications are ineffective. By unravelling the molecular circuitry of cells of the immune system, we have identified mechanisms which may prevent T cell damage and autoimmune disease.

Grant:
$100,000

Chief Investigator:
Dr Cheryl Brown

Category:
Basic Science

Discipline:
Immunology

Administering institution:
SAHMRI

Emotional armour in the digital age: building adolescents' emotion regulation skills for managing exposure to negative social media content

Overview:
Social media experiences—such as exposure to potentially distressing content—can negatively impact adolescents' mental health. But it is difficult to completely eliminate the risk of such experiences. Thus, we will develop and evaluate an interactive online emotion regulation intervention that equips adolescents to cope with exposure to negative content.

Grant:
$99,467

Chief Investigator:
Professor Melanie Takarangi

Category:
Basic Science

Discipline:
Psychosocial

Administering institution:
University of South Australia

Finding type 1 diabetes (T1D) driver genes: targets for future therapies

Overview:
Bridging the gap between Type 1 diabetes susceptibility and disease prevention requires identifying genes that cause disease. By applying single-cell RNA/ATAC-sequencing to the world's first T1D longitudinal birth pregnancy cohort we will identify the molecular cause of T1D, leading to new targeted therapies that benefit millions of children affected worldwide.

Grant:
$58,460

Chief Investigator:
Dr Ying Wong (EARLY CAREER RESEARCHER)

Category:
Basic Science

Discipline:
Paediatrics

Administering institution:
The University of Adelaide

Gallium-silver nanoparticle formulations as a novel therapeutic strategy for treating chronic suppurative otitis media in paediatric patients

Overview:
This project focuses on developing gallium-silver (Ga-Ag) nanoparticle-based treatment for chronic suppurative otitis media (CSOM), a prevalent issue among young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Leveraging the antimicrobial properties of gallium-silver nanoparticles, the study aims to eradicate antibiotic-resistant infections and biofilms, improving outcomes for CSOM sufferers.

Grant:
$100,000

Chief Investigator:
Dr Vi Khanh Truong

Category:
Basic Science

Discipline:
Infectious Disease

Administering institution:
Flinders University

Immune determinants of preterm birth susceptibility

Overview:
Approximately 9% of Australian infants are born preterm, causing elevated risk of several health and developmental conditions in childhood. This project will investigate in an existing cohort and biobank whether elevated preterm birth risk is associated with an immune imbalance in T cells detectable in peripheral blood in early gestation.

Grant:
$99,934

Chief Investigator:
Professor Sarah Robertson

Category:
Basic Science

Discipline:
Obs and Gynae

Administering institution:
The University of Adelaide

Investigating the role of the TFDP2 gene in T-cell acute lymphoblastic leukaemia development

Overview:
Relapsed T-cell Acute lymphoblastic leukaemia (T-ALL) is a leading cause of death in children. Innovative therapies for resistant T-ALL are lacking. The transcription co-factor protein, TFDP2, is increased in children with T-ALL. We will investigate its role in T-ALL development using findings to identify new treatment targets for disease eradication.

Grant:
$100,000

Chief Investigator:
Dr Laura Eadie

Category:
Basic Science

Discipline:
Cell and Molecular Biology

Administering institution:
The University of Adelaide

Minimising treatment-induced disease in children with neuroblastoma

Overview:
Neuroblastoma is a leading cause of cancer-related death in children under the age of 5. Current therapies for high-risk neuroblastoma tumours are highly damaging and often lead to profound ongoing side effects. We aim to improve disease management and provide new targets for targeted therapies that have minimal side effects.

Grant:
$99,955

Chief Investigator:
Professor Greg Goodall

Category:
Basic Science

Discipline:
Cell and Molecular Biology

Administering institution:
University of South Australia

Plasma-enhanced bioactive wound dressings for treating paediatric epidermolysis bullosa

Overview:
We recently reported a novel technique to fabricate antibacterial and anti-inflammatory bioactive thin-films. These films are derived from microalgae and are rich in the bioactive compound C-phycocyanin. In this project, we will translate this technology to create bioactive dressings to treat blistered skin of children suffering from Epidermolysis Bullosa.

Grant:
$39,815

Chief Investigator:
Dr Andrew Hayles (EARLY CAREER RESEARCHER)

Category:
Basic Science

Discipline:
Wound Healing

Administering institution:
The University of Adelaide

Turning off the danger signal: reducing ventilator induced lung injury in preterm infants

Overview:
Preterm babies often require ventilation and/or supplemental oxygen to survive. Although this is initially lifesaving, it can damage their lungs resulting in poor lung function and health throughout childhood. This project will use a cutting-edge lung imaging platform to test a novel treatment to protect the lungs of preterm babies.

Grant:
$99,973

Chief Investigator:
Dr Jack Darby

Category:
Basic Science

Discipline:
Respiratory diseases

Administering institution:
University of South Australia

Understanding and escaping PFAS: the 'forever chemical' that causes fetal anomalies and a lifetime of poor health

Overview:
PFAS chemicals, prevalent in household products and detectable in Adelaide water, are known to cause developmental defects in children. This project will determine 1) how PFAS exposure during pregnancy, even at low levels, causes health problems in offspring; and 2) whether these can be prevented using new PFAS de-toxification methods.

Grant:
$99,965

Chief Investigator:
Dr Yasmyn Winstanley

Category:
Basic Science

Discipline:
Maternal and Child Health

Administering institution:
SAHMRI

Unravelling the association of cell-free fetal DNA in maternal blood towards unlocking the potential of noninvasive prenatal genetic testing of trio-exome sequencing

Overview:
Fetal DNA present in maternal blood provides important noninvasive genetic insights. However, current tests are limited. Improved understanding of this fetal DNA is needed to enable more accurate and comprehensive prenatal genetic testing. To this end, we will rigorously characterise fetal DNA and implement cutting-edge sequencing-based testing methods.

Grant:
$99,700

Chief Investigator:
Dr Marnie Winter

Category:
Basic Science

Discipline:
Cell and Molecular Biology

Administering institution:
University of South Australia

COMMUNITY BASED STUDIES

Co-creation of an evidence-based board game to tackle adolescent mental and physical health

Overview:
This transdisciplinary project aims to co-create with adolescents an evidence-based board game to improve mental health literacy, reduce stigma, promote help-seeking behaviour, and foster healthy lifestyle choices, aligned with the Australian Curriculum. A pilot randomised controlled trial will evaluate the game's acceptability, feasibility, and preliminary efficacy in a school setting.

Grant:
$98,197

Chief Investigator:
Dr Jacinta Brinsley (EARLY CAREER RESEARCHER)

Category:
Community Based Studies

Discipline:
Mental Health

Administering institution:
University of South Australia

Enhancing early reading skills in 4-6-year-old children: measuring effectiveness and exploring learning patterns from an 8-week systematic, synthetic, high-dosage, technology-supported phonics program

Overview:
A substantial proportion of Australia's children are struggling readers, placing them at significant risk of persisting disadvantage; therefore, a focus on early reading achievement and specifically, mastery of letter-sound relationships, is essential. This study explores the effectiveness of technology-supported phonics instruction and developmental patterns in children's acquisition of letter-sound knowledge.

Grant:
$39,990

Chief Investigator:
Dr Emma Grace (EARLY CAREER RESEARCHER)

Category:
Community Based Studies

Discipline:
Education

Administering institution:
Flinders University

Evaluating adolescent mental health and wellbeing in the context of digital device policies (e.g., phone bans) in secondary schools

Overview:
Digital devices are increasingly integrated into children's education. This project will investigate how smartphones and other devices in schools can impact on students' academic achievement, bullying, and mental health. Using surveys and co-design focus groups, this project will deliver a psychoeducation framework to promote healthy digital media use in schools.

Grant:
$91,600

Chief Investigator:
Associate Professor Daniel King

Category:
Community Based Studies

Discipline:
Psychosocial

Administering institution:
Flinders University

Launching early childhood numeracy: fostering mathematical self-efficacy of preschool children and their parents for lifelong learning

Overview:
Parents and caregivers significantly influence their young children's educational opportunities. Our initiative supports parental involvement in children's numeracy through play. Collaborating with Libraries SA, we'll integrate numeracy activities into existing Storytime programs attended by families. This partnership aims to establish a sustainable program to support young children's informal numeracy opportunities.

Grant:
$40,000

Chief Investigator:
Dr Chelsea Cutting (EARLY CAREER RESEARCHER)

Category:
Community Based Studies

Discipline:
Education

Administering institution:
The University of Adelaide

Re-examining the scope of statutory child protection to improve responses to children

Overview:
The scope of statutory child protection has expanded significantly over time, without a re-examination of when and under what circumstances statutory powers should be used to protect children. This project will help inform a fundamental re-design of South Australia's child protection system, contributing to improved outcomes for South Australian children.

Grant:
$100,000

Chief Investigator:
Professor Leah Bromfield

Category:
Community Based Studies

Discipline:
Allied Health

Administering institution:
The University of Adelaide

Life-threatening anaphylaxis incidents in South Australian primary and secondary schools: boosting prevention and management practices through standardised reporting

Overview:
Anaphylaxis is a potentially life-threatening allergic reaction and often occurs in schools. National Guidelines recommend standardised reporting in schools to identify risks and improve prevention practices, but this has not been implemented. Our project evaluates anaphylaxis reporting in schools to facilitate guideline implementation and reduce future risk of anaphylaxis.

Grant:
$39,857

Chief Investigator:
Dr Amanda Machell (EARLY CAREER RESEARCHER)

Category:
Community Based Studies

Discipline:
Education

Administering institution:
Flinders University

A phase I trial of a group improv including acceptance and commitment therapy treatment for children and teens who stutter

Overview:
This project seeks a solution to the lack of affordable, holistic treatment for children and teens who stutter, who are at great risk of inequitable outcomes throughout their lives. An approach that combines group work, improv and acceptance and commitment therapy has great potential to improve their quality of life.

Grant:
$99,953

Chief Investigator:
Dr Michelle Swift

Category:
Clinical Studies

Discipline:
Allied Health

Administering institution:
University of South Australia

Addressing unmet emotional wellbeing care needs among children and adolescents with Type 2 diabetes: a mixed-methods longitudinal evaluation of diabetes-specific distress and emotional wellbeing

Overview:
This longitudinal study will evaluate diabetes-related distress and emotional well-being in children and adolescents with Type 2 diabetes using questionnaires completed at baseline, 12 and 24 weeks. We will also explore adolescents' experiences of living with T2D, and their healthcare needs in-depth using focus groups including children/adolescents and parents/caregivers.

Grant:
$90,679

Chief Investigator:
Associate Professor Alexia Peña

Category:
Clinical Studies

Discipline:
Paediatrics

Administering institution:
University of South Australia

Examining variation in the presentation, investigation, and management of dysmenorrhoea (period pain) among adolescent girls presenting to Australian General Practice

Overview:
Dysmenorrhoea (period pain) affects up to 90% of adolescent girls and can often be debilitating, severely impacting an individual's health and wellbeing. This project utilises a large Australian general practice dataset to evaluate the clinical presentation and management of adolescent dysmenorrhoea and seeks to enhance primary care treatment strategies.

Grant: $39,879

Chief Investigator:
Dr Kailash Thapaliya now Ms Tahlee Stevenson (JUNE 2025) (EARLY CAREER RESEARCHER)

Category:
Clinical Studies

Discipline:
Obs & Gynae

Administering institution:
University of South Australia

Integrated treatment of post-traumatic stress and sleep disturbance in adolescents: a proof of efficacy study

Overview:
Sleep plays an important role in the onset and course of post-traumatic stress disorder but is currently overlooked in treatment models. We will examine the efficacy of an integrated treatment for sleep and PTSD symptomology in adolescents aged 13-18 years.

Grant:
$44,160

Chief Investigator:
Associate Professor Jessica Paterson

Category:
Clinical Studies

Discipline:
Allied Health

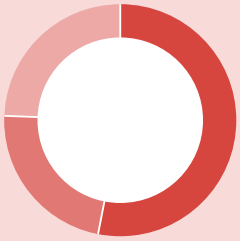
Administering institution:
Novita

2025 Grants Round - Application Statistics

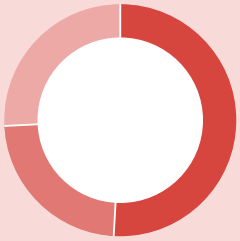
Applying for funding in the CRF annual grants opportunity is a two-stage process:

1. Expression of Interest (EOI)
2. Full Grant Application (GA) - invited applicants only

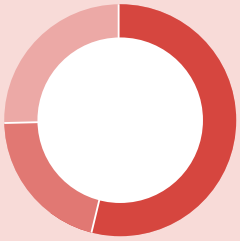
From 100 Expressions of Interest received, 41 applicants were invited to submit a Full Grant Application for the 2025 Annual Grant round.



EOI	% of Total
Basic Science	55%
Community Based Study	21%
Clinical Study	24%
Early Career Researcher	31%

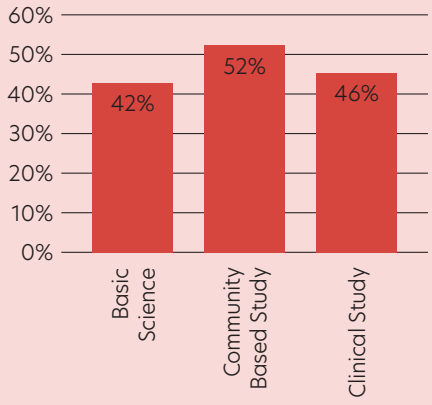


Shortlisted FGA	% of Total FGA
Basic Science	51%
Community Based Study	24%
Clinical Study	24%
Early Career Researcher	39%

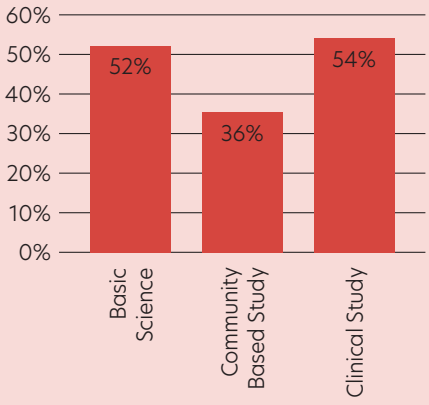


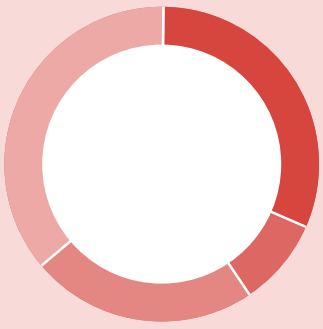
Funded	% of Total
Basic Science	55%
Community Based Study	18%
Clinical Study	27%
Early Career Researcher	36%

EOI Success Rate



GA Success Rate





Administering Organisation

	GRANTS	% OF TOTAL
Flinders University	7	32%
SAHMRI	2	9%
The University of Adelaide	5	23%
University of South Australia	8	36%
Total	22	100%

2024 Awards for Achievement in Children's Research

The Channel 7 Children's Research Foundation celebrated some remarkable South Australians who dedicate their careers to improving the lives of children through research at their annual Excellence in Research Awards at the end of October 2024.

The recipients of the awards – all CRF-funded researchers who have made a significant impact in areas of children's research – were presented with their medals by Her Excellency, the Honourable Frances Adamson AC, Governor of South Australia and Mr Rod Bunten, joint Patrons of the Channel 7 Children's Research Foundation.

"The importance of research cannot be overstated. While the results may be some years away, all breakthroughs have beginnings."

Her Excellency the Honourable Frances Adamson AC, Governor of South Australia.

The CRF Research Merit Award
for the highest scoring annual grant application submitted by an Early Career Researcher as scored by the Research Committee was awarded to Dr Ying Wong for her grant application

"Finding Type 1 diabetes (T1D) driver genes: Targets for future therapies."

The Frankham-Earl Award
for the highest scoring annual grant application as scored by the Research Committee was awarded to Dr Laura Eadie for her grant application "Investigating the role of the TFDP2 gene in T-cell Acute Lymphoblastic Leukaemia development."

The CRF Excellence in Research Award
for significant contributions and impact by a CRF-funded investigator in advancing children's health, welfare, or education which is selected from nominations invited from the Board and research organisations was awarded to Professor Rebecca Golley.

Professor Golley was recognised for her public health nutrition research, particularly in the areas of childhood obesity prevention and promoting healthy eating habits. Her work has led to the development of interventions, tools for monitoring, and partnerships with government and industry to translate research into real-world change. Professor Golley has also contributed to state and national initiatives, including advocating for healthy school lunch programs in South Australia.

Our 2024 winners L-R Professor Rebecca Golley, Dr Laura Eadie, Her Excellency the Honourable Frances Adamson AC, Dr Yong Wong, Mr Rod Bunton

CRF Fellowships Update

In addition to our annual grants, the Channel 7 Children's Research Foundation also funds two fellowships, which run for three years with the option to extend to five years. This sustained support allows mid-career researchers to pursue ground-breaking advances in some vital areas without having to worry about where the following year's funding is coming from. To demonstrate the exceptional success of this funding, here is an update from both our fellows on their progress as they enter the final year of their fellowships.

Dr Zlatko Kopecki

Epidermolysis bullosa (EB) is a rare genetic skin disorder caused by mutations in proteins that bind skin layers.

Children with EB, often called Butterfly Children, have extremely fragile skin. Over 1,200 Australians are affected with this devastating condition. Although gene therapy treatments have been approved overseas, they are currently unavailable in Australia, and no cure exists. Sepsis is a major cause of neonatal death, and 80% of EB children use bleach baths and antibiotics to prevent infection.

As the CRF Fellow in Childhood Wound Infections, Dr Kopecki, has tried to improve the management of infection in children with EB, by better understanding the bacterial microbiome of blister wounds in children with EB in Australia. "By collecting and analysing the bacterial swab samples from clinically infected blisters of children with EB, attending clinics nationally over the last four years, we have been able to identify a key groups of pathogens considered high risk for children with EB and directly inform clinical care" says Dr Kopecki. Additionally, the team have been instrumental in driving the development of DEBRA International Clinical Practice Guidelines for management of infection in EB and testing of novel and safe approaches for management of infection in EB using latest preclinical models. These novel treatments, developed by Dr Kopecki's research team, include an antiseptic spray and a safe and protective silver dressing that only delivers silver in response to changes in wound temperature and pH. "With this information, we are getting closer to design of clinical trial in individuals with EB, in the near future, which is really exciting", says Dr Kopecki. Understanding the microbiome and developing targeted therapies may improve antimicrobial stewardship and help combat drug-resistant infections in children living with EB, significantly impacting their quality of life.

Associate Professor Luke Grzeskowiak

In Australia, 1 in 11 children are born premature (before 37 weeks gestation) each year. These children are at increased risk of cognitive and motor impairment, behavioural disorders and chronic health conditions.

The provision of mothers' own breastmilk remains one of the few high-impact interventions known to improve short-and long-term outcomes of prematurity. Despite this, breastfeeding rates among these tiny, vulnerable babies are significantly lower than full-term infants and haven't improved in the past 20 years.

Low breast milk supply affects more than 40% of mothers of preterm infants and is the most common reason for early breastfeeding cessation.

Associate Professor Grzeskowiak's research has found that more than 70% of mothers take medicines to help initiate, maintain, or increase breast milk production, but there is very little evidence as to whether they are effective or safe to use in this setting.

As the CRF Fellow in Medicines Use and Safety based at Flinders University, Luke Grzeskowiak and his team are working in partnership with families, consumer groups, healthcare providers, and industry, as well as the South Australian led Centre of Research Excellence (CRE) in Human Milk Nutrition for Preterm Infants, to improve lactation support strategies in neonatal units and give preterm infants the best start in life.

His team has just completed two large multi-site clinical trials evaluating different medicines for improving breast milk production. Associate Professor Greskowiak has received international recognition for his research and is currently working on the development of international clinical practice guidelines to improve the identification and treatment of lactation disorders.

The CRF Fellowship funding has been integral to helping Associate Professor Greskowiak expand his team and secure other major grant funding to grow his research.

Thinking outside the lunchbox:

the education and societal value of school-provided meals in Australian schools

Professor Rebecca Golley,
Professor of Nutrition and Dietetics

College of Nursing and Health Sciences

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Professor Golley is the 2024 CRF Excellence in Children's Research Award winner in recognition of her impressive contribution to children's research. Her current project will reimagine school lunches to improve health and wellbeing for all children.

Professor Rebecca Golley is a nationally recognised public health nutrition researcher who leads a program of applied research to inform, develop, test and disseminate public health initiatives to improve children's diet quality, prevent obesity and support children's growth, learning and development. With a strong track record in behavioural nutrition, nutritional epidemiology, dietary assessment, community programs and evaluation research, Professor Golley's body of research has helped transform approaches to the prevention and management of childhood obesity through nutrition promotion innovation, and highlighting the importance of caregiver and caregiving relationships on children's diet quality. She has also improved the ability to routinely monitor and measure obesity-related health behaviours.

Professor Golley as worked on a number of CRF funded grant projects over her career - including one with Chief Investigator Nicola Spurrier back in 2005 exploring the relationship between the home environment and the dietary and activity patterns of preschool children. The publication arising from this research is still relevant today and has been cited by other researchers nearly 500 times.

Professor Golley was awarded a Channel 7 Children's Research Foundation Enabling Grant in 2024 which supported her successful application for a significant ARC Linkage Grant (LP 240200796).

The project, titled "Thinking outside the lunchbox: the education and societal value of school-provided meals in Australian schools" tackles a major gap in Australia's education, health and social care landscape — the lack of a national school meal program. Despite schools being where children spend most of their waking hours, the current "lunchbox" model results in poor diet quality, with well over half of all food consumed at school being unhealthy. Professor Golley's research proposes to reimagine school food systems by testing a universal school lunch model, where every student is offered meals tailored to their school's context and family circumstance.

Evidence shows that school meal programs improve attendance, concentration, learning outcomes, social connection, and wellbeing. The project also anticipates reducing food insecurity, easing family financial stress, and promoting equity in child health and education outcomes.

By integrating nutrition, social connection, and academic development, the model could inform a national policy shift toward school-provided meals in Australia.

"A universal school-provided lunch model could help to ensure all children have access to food at school, reduce stigma of children not having lunch or having different types of foods to their peers, and help to ensure children are provided with healthy lunch options," Professor Golley says.

"The meal would be prepared on site and served to children in their classroom, school hall or school yard, compared with the current school food model in Australia where generally parents provide lunch to their child/ren, either as a lunchbox packed from home or purchased from a school canteen."

"While there will need to be an initial investment to set up the necessary infrastructure and getting the right policies and guidelines in place, what is emerging from some work around Australia is that this public health strategy can deliver in terms of learning, student engagement and wellbeing.

"By children being provided with healthy meals at school we think it will help children to concentrate in the classroom and support their learning."

Children on antipsychotics missing vital GP checks

Dr Julie Klau, Researcher, and Professor Jon Jureidini, Research Leader,

Critical and Ethical Mental Health research group, Robinson Research Institute, University of Adelaide.

Australian research, funded by the Channel 7 Children's Research Foundation, has raised concern over a worrying gap in GP health checks for children prescribed antipsychotics, revealing that most young patients aren't being adequately monitored for serious side effects such as obesity, diabetes, or hormonal disruptions.

The study analysed medical data from 2011-2017 using a large general practice database, MedicineInsight. The researchers looked at how often children and adolescents were checked for weight gain, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and high blood glucose levels, that can develop into type 2 diabetes. These cardiometabolic side effects are commonly associated with prescription antipsychotics and often develop more rapidly in young people than adults.

Researchers discovered that only 10.4 per cent of patients had their weight monitored at least three times within 12 months of starting on antipsychotics, well below the seven to nine occasions recommended in guidelines. Measurement of total cholesterol and blood sugar levels was even lower, with only 0.6 per cent and 0.9 per cent of patients being monitored at recommended levels.

Antipsychotics can also elevate levels of the hormone prolactin that can increase the risk of developing low bone density and osteoporosis, and interfere with the production of sex hormones. Only a handful of patients had any checks done for prolactin levels.

"These monitoring levels are unacceptably low and are putting the health of children and adolescents at risk," said University of Adelaide researcher and lead author Dr Julie Klau, of the Robinson Research Institute's

Critical and Ethical Mental Health research group. "Hormonal disruptions during puberty are especially concerning. The antipsychotic risperidone is approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration for use in children and adolescents with severe behavioural problems associated with autism, conduct disorder, or schizophrenia. It is known to increase prolactin levels in over 30 per cent of patients and is the most frequently prescribed antipsychotic to children under 15 years in Australian general practice."

The researchers also looked at the number of times monitoring occurred in antipsychotic users compared to non-users within a 12-month follow-up period. Patients who were prescribed antipsychotics received, on average, only an extra half visit during which any metabolic measure was checked.

"We just don't know how well children and adolescents are being monitored within the medical system as a whole," said University of Adelaide Professor Jon Jureidini, Research Leader of the Critical and Ethical Mental Health research group. "Some monitoring may be done by specialists, but this study could not look at that. What is clear is that GPs are not doing these health checks often enough."

According to the authors, there is an urgent need to investigate the extent of safety monitoring that is occurring within the Australian health system when children and adolescents are prescribed antipsychotics, and reasons why so little monitoring is occurring in Australian general practices.

"There also needs to be a coordinated systemwide approach that makes it easier for doctors to ensure that timely monitoring occurs," said Professor Jureidini.

The study has been published in the Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry.

Statement of Financial Position

AS AT 30 JUNE 2025

	2025 $	2024 $
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	2,416,672	2,399,434
Trade and Other Receivables	990,759	1,027,474
Other Assets	80,724	79,954
Total Current Assets	**3,488,155**	**3,506,862**
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Investments:		
Capital/Convertible Notes	5,317,754	6,412,333
Investments in Listed Companies	47,553,513	43,584,173
Bonds & Notes	1,358,986	
Total Non-Current Assets	**54,230,253**	**49,996,506**
TOTAL ASSETS	**57,718,408**	**53,503,368**
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Trade and Other Payables	415,938	273,985
Total Current Liabilities	**415,938**	**273,985**
TOTAL LIABILITIES	**415,938**	**273,985**
NET ASSETS	**57,302,470**	**53,229,383**
ACCUMULATED FUNDS		
Fair Value Reserve	19,995,964	16,358,989
Accumulated Surplus	37,306,506	36,870,394
TOTAL ACCUMULATED FUNDS	**57,302,470**	**53,229,383**

Statement of Profit or Loss & Other Comprehensive Income

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

	2025 $	2024 $
INCOME		
Other Income	255	10
Refund of Research Grant (previous years)	4,345	60,581
TOTAL INCOME	**4,600**	**60,591**
EXPENDITURE		
Administration Fees	447,622	180,603
Advertising	125,042	98,711
Audit Fees	11,364	10,400
Legal Fees	2,704	2,654
Meeting Expenses	23,673	30,151
Postage, Stationery and Telephone	2,400	2,400
Research Grants	1,843,361	1,859,683
Research Support	41,950	35,609
Sundry Expenses	18,761	24,751
Website	593	-
Bad Debt expenses	-	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	**2,517,470**	**2,244,962**
Deficit before Financial Income	(2,512,870)	(2,184,372)
Financial Income:		
Dividends Received	2,250,043	2,144,846
Interest on Investments	39,012	4,953
(Loss)/ Gain on Sale of Investments	8,240	(20,593)
Franking Credit Refund	647,208	656,619
Revaluation of Investments	**4,479**	**475,078**
Net Financial Income	**2,948,982**	**3,260,905**
SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR	**436,112**	**1,076,533**
Net change in fair value of financial assets	3,636,975	2,101,314
Total other comprehensive income for the year	3,636,975	2,101,314
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR	**4,073,087**	**3,177,847**

Statement of Changes in Equity

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

	Fair Value Reserve	Accumulated Surplus	Total Equity
	$	$	$
Balance at 1 July 2023	14,257,675	35,793,861	50,051,536
Total comprehensive income	2,101,314	1,076,533	3,177,847
Balance at 30 June 2024	**16,358,989**	**36,870,394**	**53,229,383**
Balance at 1 July 2024	16,358,989	36,870,394	53,229,383
Total comprehensive income	3,636,975	436,112	4,073,087
Balance at 30 June 2025	**19,995,964**	**37,306,506**	**57,302,470**

Statement of Cash Flows

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

	2025 $	2024 $
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Cash receipts in the course of operations	40,545	123,853
Cash payments in the course of operations	(2,375,517)	(2,266,562)
Net cash used in operating activities	**(2,334,972)**	**(2,142,709)**
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES		
Dividends and franking credits received	2,897,252	2,801,466
Interest received	39,012	4,953
Payments for investments	(4,559,168)	(4,753,172)
Proceeds from sale of investments	3,975,114	5,086,064
Net cash provided by investing activities	**2,352,210**	**3,139,311**
Net (decrease)/increase in cash held	17,238	996,602
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year	**2,399,434**	**1,402,832**
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year	**2,416,672**	**2,399,434**

Financial Summary

Statement of Significant Accounting Policies

The Channel 7 Children's Research Foundation of South Australia Incorporated (the Association) is an Association incorporated and domiciled in Australia. The address of the Association's registered office is 341 Port Road, Hindmarsh, South Australia. The principal activity of the Association is to promote and advance the research into the cause, prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of conditions that affect the general health, education, and welfare of children. The Association is a not-for-profit entity for the purpose of preparing financial statements.

A full description of the accounting policies adopted by the Association is provided in the Association's full consolidated financial report.

This financial report was authorised for issue by the Directors on 14 October 2025.

Basis of Preparation

The financial reports of the Association have been prepared on the accrual basis of accounting. Except where noted, the accounting policies have been consistently applied.

The financial reports have been prepared on a historical cost basis except for investments classified as financial investments which are measured at fair value.

The Association's functional and presentational currency is Australian Dollars.

Statement by the Board

The summary consolidated financial statements and other specific disclosures are a summary of and have been derived from Channel 7 Children's Research Foundation's full consolidated financial report for the financial year. Other information included in the summary consolidated financial report is consistent with the Association's full consolidated financial report.

The Channel 7 Children's Research Foundation recorded a Net Financial Income of $2.94M which is completely from Dividend received and franking credit refund. The summary consolidated financial report does not, and cannot be expected to, provide as full an understanding of the financial performance and position, financing and investing activities of the Association, as the full consolidated financial report.

A copy of the Channel 7 Children's Research Foundation's Annual Financial Report, including the Independent Audit Report, is available to all members, and will be sent to members without charge upon request.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Board of Directors

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REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT AUDITOR ON THE SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

TO THE MEMBERS OF CHANNEL 7 CHILDREN'S RESEARCH FOUNDATION OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA INCORPORATED

Opinion

The summary financial statements, which comprise the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2025, the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity, and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and financial summary, are derived from the audited financial report of Channel 7 Children's Research Foundation of South Australia Incorporated for the year ended 30 June 2025.

In our opinion, the accompanying summary financial statements are consistent, in all material respects, with the audited financial report, on the basis described in the financial summary.

Summary Financial Statements

The summary financial statements do not contain all the disclosures required by the special purpose reporting framework described in Note 1 to the audited financial. Reading the summary financial statements and the auditor's report thereon, therefore, is not a substitute for reading the audited financial report and the auditor's report thereon.

The Audited Financial Report and Our Report Thereon

We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on the audited financial report in our report dated 31 October 2025.

Other matter - Basis of accounting

The audited financial report from which these summary financial statements have been derived has been prepared for the purpose of fulfilling the Association's financial reporting responsibilities under the *ACNC Act 2012* and the *Associations Incorporation Act 1985 (SA)*, in accordance with the recognition, measurement and classification aspects of all applicable Australian Accounting Standards (AASBs) adopted by the Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB), but including only the disclosure requirements of the following AASBs and any considered necessary to meet the needs of members:

- AASB 101 *Presentation of Financial Statements*
- AASB 107 *Statement of Cashflows*
- AASB 108 *Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors*
- AASB 1048 *Interpretation and Application of Standards*
- AASB 1054 *Australian Additional Disclosures.*

Directors' Responsibility for the Summary Financial Statements

The Directors are responsible for the preparation of the summary financial statements on the basis described in the financial summary.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on whether the summary financial statements are consistent, in all material respects, with the audited financial report based on our procedures, which were conducted in accordance with Auditing Standard ASA 810 *Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Statements*.

BDO Audit Pty Ltd

Andrew Tickle
Director

Adelaide, 31 October 2025

CHILDREN'S RESEARCH FOUNDATION

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