

Welcome from the Director Professor Leanne Sakzewski

Welcome to the first edition of the Centre of Research Excellence: Australasian Cerebral Palsy Health Network (CRE Aus-CP-Health-Net) newsletter. We are delighted to launch this newsletter and to welcome everyone who is part of our growing community, including researchers, clinicians, people with cerebral palsy, families, advocates, students, and partner organisations.



The CRE Aus-CP-Health-Net was established with a shared vision: to optimise health and wellbeing for children with cerebral palsy. Achieving this vision requires more than excellent research. It requires meaningful partnerships between those who generate evidence, those who deliver care, and those with lived experience who help guide our priorities and ensure our work remains relevant and impactful.

Over the next five years, the CRE will support collaborative programs of research that address key priorities in cerebral palsy health, including early detection and intervention, neurorehabilitation and physical activity, mental health and sleep, precision medicine, and the translation of evidence into practice. Our goal is to ensure that new knowledge leads to tangible improvements for children and families.

A defining strength of our network is the diversity of expertise and experience it brings together. Researchers contribute innovation and scientific discovery. Clinicians help ensure research addresses practical challenges in healthcare delivery. Consumers and families bring invaluable lived experience that helps shape better questions, better research, and ultimately better outcomes.

This newsletter will keep our community informed about research progress, opportunities for involvement, training initiatives, publications, events, and achievements from across the network. We hope it strengthens connections, encourages collaboration, and provides a platform for sharing knowledge and experiences.

Professor Leanne Sakzewski
Director, CRE Aus-CP-Health-Net

Getting to know the Aus-CP-Health-Net-CRE



Australasian
Cerebral Palsy
Health Network

What is the Aus-CP-Health-Net CRE?

The Centre of Research Excellence: Australasian Cerebral Palsy Health Network (CRE Aus-CP-

Health-Net) is a five-year, NHMRC-funded collaboration bringing together leading expertise from across Australia and New Zealand to improve the health and wellbeing of young people with cerebral palsy.

Supported through more than \$3 million in funding, the Centre provides a platform for coordinated research, collaboration, and knowledge translation across the region.

Key research priorities include early detection and intervention, neurorehabilitation and physical activity, mental health, sleep and wellbeing, precision medicine and biomarkers, and translation into practice.

What makes the CRE unique is its commitment to partnership. Researchers, clinicians, consumers, families, students, health services, and community organisations all play an active role in shaping the Centre's activities.

This collaborative model helps ensure that research is scientifically rigorous, clinically relevant, and aligned with the priorities of people living with cerebral palsy. As the network grows, CRE Aus-CP-Health-Net aims to create better evidence, better care, and better outcomes for young with cerebral palsy.

What is our vision?

Our vision is to optimise health and wellbeing for young people with cerebral palsy by generating and translating evidence that improves care, participation, independence, and quality of life.

Why was the CRE established?

Despite significant advances in cerebral palsy research, many young people and families still face challenges accessing evidence-based care. The CRE was established to accelerate research, strengthen collaboration, and ensure that research discoveries are translated into real-world clinical practice.

How can I get involved?

There are many ways to participate:

- ✓ Join our researcher, clinician, or consumer networks
- ✓ Participate in research studies
- ✓ Attend educational events and webinars
- ✓ Share lived experience and consumer perspectives
- ✓ Help us translate research into practice and policy

What can I expect from this newsletter?

Through this newsletter we'll share:

- ✓ Research highlights and discoveries
- ✓ New publications and resources
- ✓ Education and training opportunities
- ✓ Upcoming events
- ✓ Consumer and clinician perspectives
- ✓ Ways to get involved in CRE activities

What's our ultimate goal?

To transform cerebral palsy care through research, innovation, and collaboration, ensuring every young person with cerebral palsy has the opportunity to achieve the best possible health and wellbeing outcomes.

Why a Centre of Research Excellence Matters

Improving health outcomes for young people with cerebral palsy is a complex challenge that requires expertise from many different areas. This is why Centres of Research Excellence (CREs) are so important. A CRE is one of the National Health and Medical Research Council's most prestigious funding schemes, designed to bring together leaders from different disciplines and organisations to address significant health challenges through collaboration, innovation, and impact.

For researchers, a CRE provides opportunities to work with leading experts, access broader networks, and undertake ambitious studies that would be difficult to achieve independently.

For clinicians, a CRE strengthens the connection between research and practice. Clinicians help identify important questions arising from everyday care and gain access to the latest evidence and innovations that can improve outcomes for patients.

For community and families, a CRE provides a genuine opportunity to influence the direction of research and ensure that studies focus on issues that matter most in everyday life.

Importantly, a CRE is not only about generating knowledge. It is about ensuring that evidence is translated into better clinical care, improved services, informed policy, and ultimately healthier lives.

Research Bites

Short and easy-to-understand summaries of our recent academic papers highlighting new evidence and insights into issues in cerebral palsy.

[Helping Kids with Cerebral Palsy - What We Learned from the HABIT-ILE Study](#)

[PARTICIPATE-CP Parent/Carer Summary](#)

Scientific Publications

[A Multisite Randomized Controlled Trial of Hand Arm Bimanual Intensive Training Including Lower Extremity for Children with Bilateral Cerebral Palsy](#)

[Enhancing Physically Active Leisure Participation for Children with Cerebral Palsy: A Randomized Controlled Trial | Pediatrics | American Academy of Pediatrics](#)

Education Opportunities

The CRE is pleased to offer two funded PhD opportunities in Cerebral Palsy Research at the University of Queensland. These projects provide an exciting opportunity to contribute to innovative research while undertaking doctoral studies with financial support.

Click to find out more:

[Co-designing mental health and wellbeing outcomes for adolescents with cerebral palsy - Study - The University of Queensland](#)

[AVERT-CP Very Early Rehabilitation for young children with cerebral palsy](#)

Meet our CRE Team Member

Adele Fahey is a PhD researcher in the CRE. She brings professional expertise as a practising Developmental Educator and lived experience insight as the bereaved mother of a beautiful little boy with complex neurodisability. Adele holds a Master of Autism Studies and has more than 15 years' experience teaching across mainstream and specialist education settings. She has also contributed to local, state and national disability and health service improvement projects through consulting, co-design and consumer advocacy. Her research explores how Australian families make developmental therapy decisions for children with complex neurodisability across childhood within the NDIS, with a focus on the best interests of the child and family. Through the CRE, Adele hopes to contribute to research that sees the whole child, understands the whole family, and listens closely



to their hopes, challenges, priorities and everyday realities. Double click here to add content

Community Advisory Group

The AusCPHealthNet CRE is pleased to share news of the inaugural meeting of its **Community Advisory Group (CAG)**, held online on 26 August 2026.

The CAG brings together twelve people with lived experience of cerebral palsy — including young people with CP, parents, and caregivers — alongside the CRE research team. Members represent a rich diversity of backgrounds, spanning emergency management, allied health, education, welfare, aviation, and aged care, united by a shared commitment to ensuring research reflects what matters to the CP community. Our members bring strong representation of lived experience across childhood, youth, and adult CP; professional diversity across allied health, emergency management, aviation, welfare, science, education, and research; and a shared motivation to improve systems and strengthen family navigation.

At their first meeting, the group ratified their Terms of Reference and engaged in a wide-ranging discussion of community priorities — including emergency evacuation planning for people with disability, assistive technology access, social inclusion and mental health, and the importance of universal design. The energy and depth of conversation ensured that community voices are central to the CRE's work. Members also heard about an exciting new initiative — the Long Table Study — a structured listening methodology that will bring families, clinicians, policymakers, and service providers together to hear unfiltered lived experience of CP.

The CAG will meet next on 3 December 2026. If you'd like to know more about community involvement in AusCPHealthNet, please contact Fiona Russo f.russo@uq.edu.au

Stay connected, stay informed.

Share this newsletter with your colleagues and help grow the AusCPHealthNet community.

Scan the QR code or join the network using the link: [Join Aus-CP-Health-Net CRE Network – Fill in form](#)

Want to learn more?

Visit our webpage at <https://www.uq.edu.au/cp-health-net>

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