

# THE ASSOCIATION OF CHILD LIFE THERAPISTS NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2022



## ACLTA Chairperson Update

### Carlie Alicastro

Last year was a challenging year for many as we navigated through the pandemic and this year has been much the same. The year has flown by so fast and on behalf of the ACLTA Executive Team I would like to acknowledge how well the Child Life Therapy teams across Australia have continued to provide outstanding support to children and their families during their healthcare experiences through a very challenging pandemic time.

Many CLTs rose and are rising to the challenge and are providing service in different ways such as Zoom Group Play sessions, providing education about the pandemic through Starlight TV and providing opportunities for families to engage in clinics through telehealth to mention a few.

Sydney Children's Hospital Network, with support from the Child Life Therapy Department, have innovated and provided a program called 'Home in the Hospital' where children are cared for at Westmead and Randwick hospital while their parents recover from COVID, keeping them safe and protected.

If you have any ways that your department has changed service delivery through this time, we would love to hear about them and share them in our next newsletter. Please send to

[email@childlife.org.au](mailto:email@childlife.org.au).

### CHECK OUT THIS ISSUE'S ARTICLES:

#### Chairperson Update



#### Introducing the ACLTA Executive Committee



#### Professional Profile



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#### ACLTA Conference Feedback



#### ACLTA Networking Groups

CLTs in NSW also participated in the Horizons program, strongly advocating Child Life and its importance within healthcare settings. There are also opportunities for Child Life Therapists to have a seat on the Allied Health Advisory Board in NSW to advocate for Child Life at the ministerial level. This is just a possibility at this stage.

Many hospitals around the state are in the process of trialling, or have purchased and are using, the Smileyscope Virtual Reality device | [Smileyscope AU](#). It is a virtual reality device developed by clinicians, for clinicians, to alleviate the fear of needle experiences as well as other medical experiences. Currently, the Smileyscope is being used without guidelines and the ACLTA are in the process of developing guidelines so that the device is used safely and appropriately. If you are using the Smileyscope, and would like to help develop the guidelines for its use, please contact the ACLTA at [email@childlife.org.au](mailto:email@childlife.org.au)

As Chairperson, it is my hope to develop strategic goals for 2021 – 2023, focusing on education and the development of a qualification for Child Life Therapy across Australia.

We need your support as well. We will be putting a call out soon for anyone who would like to support the ACLTA and join working groups to help achieve our goals.

I look forward to supporting you and leading the ACLTA with a wonderful team, now and into the future.

The ACLTA is made up of many passionate members. Who are they you ask? Check out their profiles on the following page.



**Chairperson: Carlie Alicastro**

I am a Child Life Therapist at the Royal Children’s Hospital, Melbourne. I work in the Medical Imaging Department and am also the host and co-producer of RCHTV; RCH’s in-house TV show that provides live games for the patients and their families to engage with as well as videos that help to prepare, educate and empower children for their healthcare experiences. I am excited to also be the Chairperson of the ACLTA for the next two years.

**Treasurer: Karen Weir**

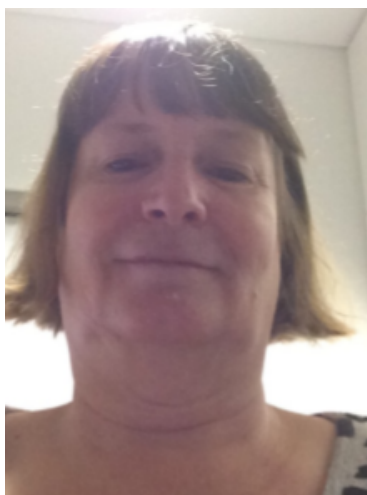
I am the current treasurer for the ACLTA. I have worked as a Child Life Therapist at the Children's Hospital at Westmead for the past 10 years across a variety of caseloads, with a particular focus on supporting children with cardiac conditions. I am looking forward to working with the executive committee to provide further networking and professional development opportunities for our members.



**Secretary: Vanessa Starr**

I have worked as a Child Life Therapist at the Children’s Hospital at Westmead for the past 8 years across a variety of clinical caseloads. I am currently working in the clinical areas of rehabilitation and palliative care. As the Secretary of the Association I support the effective functioning of the management committee and I look forward to assisting in the further development and promotion of the profession.





### Membership Co-ordinator: Kerry Crannis

I work as a sole practitioner Child Life Therapist on the Child and Adolescent ward at Royal North Shore Hospital located in St Leonards, Sydney and am the current Membership Co-ordinator. I have been a Play/ Child Life Therapist for 19 years. I commenced my role at RNSH in January 2018 and prior to this worked at Sydney Children's Hospital Randwick in 2002.

## State Representatives

### New South Wales: Kylie Estreich

My name is Kylie and I have been a Child Life Therapist at Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick, for the past almost 14 years! I cover our Oncology service including Radiotherapy, and am the Deputy Manager of our department. My background is in Early Childhood Education and I hold a Bachelor's Degree in Education (Early Childhood) from the University of Wollongong.



### Victoria: Tammy Young

I have worked at Monash Children's Hospital for the past 7 years. Prior to this I worked in early childhood services for over 20 years across a range of early childhood education and intervention within kindergarten, community health settings and TAFE. I am passionate about family centre practice and including the child's voice within the hospital setting.

## Tasmania: Pip Nolder

I have worked at the Royal Hobart Hospital for the past 8 years, and in early childhood education and care for the past 23 years. I see my role as finding the child behind the diagnosis and helping to come back out. I am passionate about advocating for better experiences of medical care for young people within the hospital environment.



## Professional Profile

**Eleanor - Paediatric Play Leader at Mount Druitt Hospital, Children's ward**

My name is Eleanor, I am a Paediatric Play Leader at Mount Druitt Hospital Children's ward. I have been in the role for 4.5 years providing services to the ward, outpatients and occasionally the emergency department.

While I am not a Child Life Therapist, my role is very similar and I hope to progress the role to Child Life Therapist in the future. I have worked on several projects including the Children's Healing Garden, creation of a dedicated survey for paediatric services, an eReferral specifically for Child Life services.



COVID has disrupted play within the ward and clinic environments, infection control became a key issue.

While we have only had a couple of positive cases on the ward, COVID has forced me to think outside the box for patient engagement. Small disposable packs for patients in isolation to use, full PPE became the norm for clinic appointments and the criteria for patients allowed in the garden narrowed with the playroom closed, making it even more challenging for patients and carers isolated in their room for days on end.

In Child protection week, I was approached by IVPRS to deliver an online play experience to families in the community via a video call. Engaging in this activity has inspired me to create a similar opportunity for ward patients where they are able to engage virtually and socialise safely, I hope to implement this soon.

COVID has been challenging but it has opened up a world of possibilities for delivering services to the paediatric community. Recently I have also been assisting at the Blacktown Vaccination Hub in the low-sensory clinic, providing support to individuals attending the dedicated session. I have enjoyed being able to use my skills to help a less familiar context and am liking the challenge.

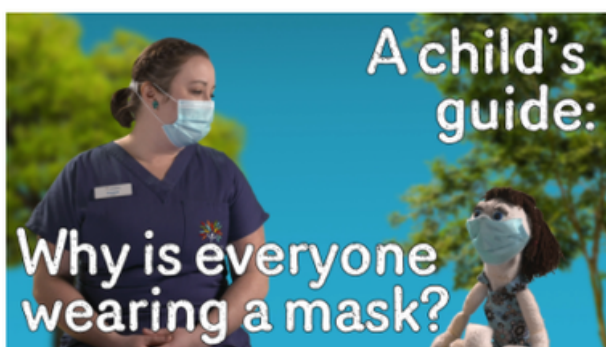


# Resource Spotlight

## RCH TV – COVID19 Resources

The Royal Children’s Hospital, Melbourne, has its very own in-house TV show called RCHTV. RCHTV makes videos to help children better understand their healthcare experience. During COVID-19, RCH-TV made a range of videos to help children understand the different aspects of the pandemic.

You can find these videos at RCH TV : [A child's guide to hospital](#)



### Why is everyone wearing a mask?

[Jazz chats to Kareena about why everyone is wearing a mask](#)



### Personal Protective Equipment

[Jazz chats to Kareena about Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\)](#)



### What is COVID-19?

[Jazz chats to Dr Mike about COVID-19](#)



### COVID-19 test

[Learn about COVID-19 testing](#)

## ACLTA 2021 Conference

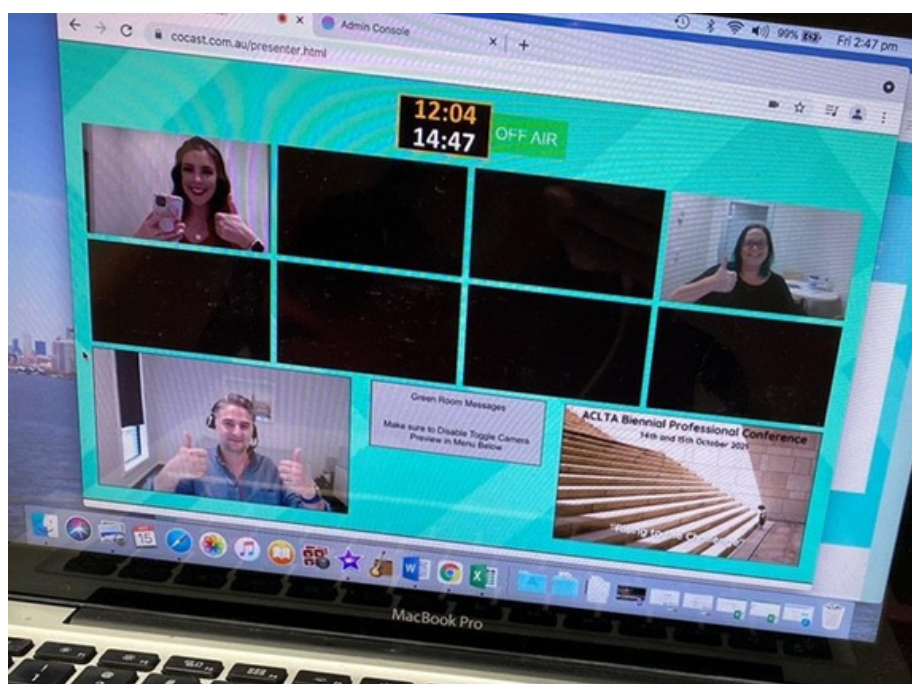
Last year the ACLTA held our first virtual conference and we were excited to have speakers and attendees joining us from around the world. The theme of the conference was “Rising to the Challenge.” Many of the speakers and themes explored the challenges and opportunities presented when working within the Covid 19 environment as well as initiatives encouraging patient, family and staff wellbeing when faced with challenging behaviours, mental health and the COVID19 environment. Thank you to all who presented!

With a group of Child Life Therapists on the planning committee we put our trust in the experts and the team from CoProduce worked tirelessly behind the scenes to make sure we could deliver a professional and interactive conference experience.

Thank you to all those who have provided feedback on the event both through our email and the survey sent around. We hope all those who were able to attend live or watch the recordings at a later date were left feeling energised and filled with knowledge and new ideas. If you haven't had the chance yet to provide feedback we would still love to hear from you. Please send an email through to [email@childlife.org.au](mailto:email@childlife.org.au) as this will assist greatly in planning future conferences and professional development opportunities.

We look forward to exploring the opportunities to offer the conference both face to face and virtually in the future.

ACLTA 2021 Conference Planning Committee





## ACLTA Networking Groups

Following overwhelming interest in the networking groups held on the second day of the conference, the ACLTA Executive have decided to make these a regular occurrence for our members. There is such value in connecting with therapists from various sites across the country and discussing topics of interest and shared clinical experiences.

The Executive have been exploring the possibility of facilitating these ongoing connections and in 2022 there will be the opportunity for full members to access and engage in ongoing networking opportunities.

We thank everyone who has sent through areas of interest as this will assist greatly in developing a schedule for these groups. Please continue to check your emails as we hope to be able to send further information out early this year.

Once again we value and appreciate any feedback and ideas so if you have topics or thoughts on the delivery of these networking groups please send these through to [email@childlife.org.au](mailto:email@childlife.org.au)