

## **SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT**

### **ESTABLISHMENT OF A DEDICATED RESEARCH CENTRE FOR AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS IN VICTORIA**

It is with much excitement that I can announce that a donation of \$500,000 has been pledged to establish the first **Autism Spectrum Disorder Research Centre** in Australia to investigate the cause(s) and management of Autism Spectrum Disorders.

After considerable consultation with myself, and more recently Dr Cheryl Dissanayake, the Convenor of the Autism Victoria Professional Panel Research Reference Group, a private individual with links to Autism Victoria has offered these funds specifically to establish an **Autism Spectrum Disorder Research Centre** at La Trobe University, which has an established research group with national and international collaborative associations in Autism Spectrum Disorder research.

The following objectives for the centre were developed in collaboration with the donor:

- a. Facilitate large and/or ongoing research projects,
- b. Facilitate collaboration with other research centres both nationally and internationally,
- c. Foster and support a **National Research Network** investigating the cause and management of Autism Spectrum Disorder,
- d. Conduct campaigns to improve the public profile of Autism Research, thereby attracting additional research funds via grants and donations,
- e. Provide opportunities for student based research and mentoring programs, and
- f. Foster knowledge transfer to practitioners within the field.



A working group comprising myself, Cheryl Dissanayake and Professor Margot Prior (Patron, Autism Victoria) and David Findlay (Dean of Science, La Trobe University) is currently preparing a model for the proposed centre, which includes negotiations with La Trobe University.

As these plans progress, updates will be posted on the Autism Victoria website - go to 'Research' - and in our regular publications.

*Amanda Golding*

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Executive Officer - Autism Victoria

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