



Australian Research Council

Centre of Excellence for Quality Work in a Digital Age

2026-2032

INFORMATION FOR PARTNERS



Australian Government
Australian Research Council

Director's message

We are delighted that the ARC Centre of Excellence for Quality Work in a Digital Age (QWiDA) has been selected as just one of just eight Centres of Excellence funded across Australia, and the only Centre dedicated to understanding technology's role in shaping quality work.

The reality is that digital transformation hasn't lived up to its promise. Despite widespread investment and expectation, the promised productivity gains from digital technologies have not been consistently realised across businesses and government organisations. At the same time, poorly designed and implemented technologies are creating new risks for workers' mental health and wellbeing, and in some cases, broader negative societal impacts.

As a new national research centre dedicated to creating quality work for the future, QWiDA brings together a diverse team of 17 Chief Investigators from seven Australian universities, 12 Partner Investigators and more than 50 Partner Organisations from leading institutions worldwide. Together, our shared mission is to understand how digital technologies, particularly Artificial Intelligence (AI) can be designed and implemented to deliver real and sustainable benefits in work.

With your support as a Partner Organisation, we will be generating evidence-based knowledge across research, policy and practice that shapes how digital technologies support high-quality, inclusive and productive work, benefitting Australian workers, organisations and the broader economy.

Thank you for your continued support of QWiDA's vision. We look forward to continuing this exciting journey together as the work progresses.



Professor Sharon K. Parker

Centre Director

ARC Laureate Fellow

John Curtin Distinguished Professor

Director, Centre for Transformative Work Design, Curtin University

Current state: The problem

We are at a critical juncture.

Organisations are accelerating technology adoption at a time where worker health is under strain, inequality is rising and productivity growth is stagnating. Yet prevailing approaches prioritise speed of adoption over quality of work, compounding these overlapping pressures:

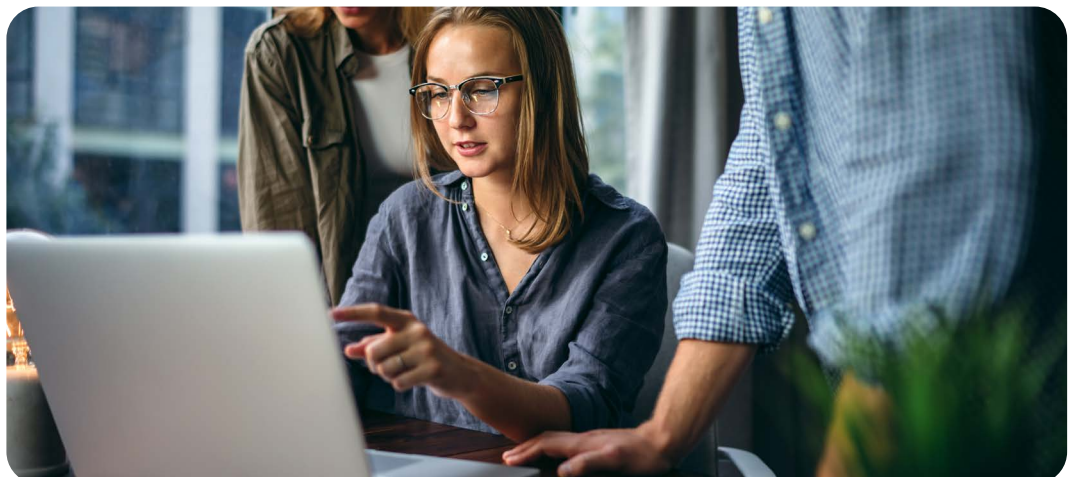
Digital technologies are transforming how work is organised and performed, and reshaping the skills required at a scale and pace unprecedented in human history. While these developments generate optimism about innovation and growth, they also raise deep concerns about their implications for workers and society.

In pursuit of efficiency and competitiveness, organisations are investing heavily in digital technologies and Artificial Intelligence. However, recent experience shows that a significant proportion of this investment has failed to deliver sustained productivity gains or broader social benefit, calling into question the effectiveness of current approaches to technology adoption.

Across sectors including aviation, healthcare and government services, automation that removes human judgement or leaves workers 'out of the loop' has led to serious and, in some cases, catastrophic failures. These outcomes highlight the risks of implementing technology without sufficient attention to how work is designed, governed and performed.

At the same time, burnout and disengagement are widespread, and mental health-related workers' compensation claims are increasing rapidly. At scale, these trends risk exacerbating an already significant mental health crisis.

Without deliberate intervention, digital technologies may also reinforce or widen existing inequalities through biased algorithms, unequal access to training, and exclusion from emerging forms of work. The economic cost of failing to fully utilise the capabilities of women, older workers and people with disabilities is already substantial.



“

Future work is often treated as an exercise in guessing which skills people will need next, which leave workers struggling to keep pace with change. Instead, the focus should be on building integrated, technology-enabled ecosystems that support continuous learning and career development over time.

Professor Eva Kyndt

Chief Investigator and Future-Ready Workforce Stream Lead,
ARC Centre of Excellence for Quality Work in a Digital Age



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Artificial (intelligence) can be good; it takes on the dirty, the dull, and the dangerous... But there are some very real risks. The stakes are as high as they could be. Our very humanity is on the line.

ARC Laureate Fellow Professor Toby Walsh

Faking It: Artificial Intelligence in a Human World

Chief Investigator, ARC Centre of Excellence for Quality Work in a Digital Age



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Algorithms are not just tools anymore... They are enabling us to reimagine our lives and our work.

Professor Marek Kowalkiewicz

The Economy of Algorithms; AI and the Rise of the Digital Minions

Chief Investigator and Design in Action Hub Lead,
ARC Centre of Excellence for Quality Work in a Digital Age



A forward looking solution:

ARC Centre of Excellence for Quality Work in a Digital Age

Despite growing investment in digital transformation, the potential of technology to improve the quality of work has not been fully realised.

The **Australian Research Council (ARC) Centre of Excellence for Quality Work in a Digital Age (QWiDA)** aims to address this challenge by advancing evidence to inform the design of technology and work systems that support healthy, inclusive and productive work.

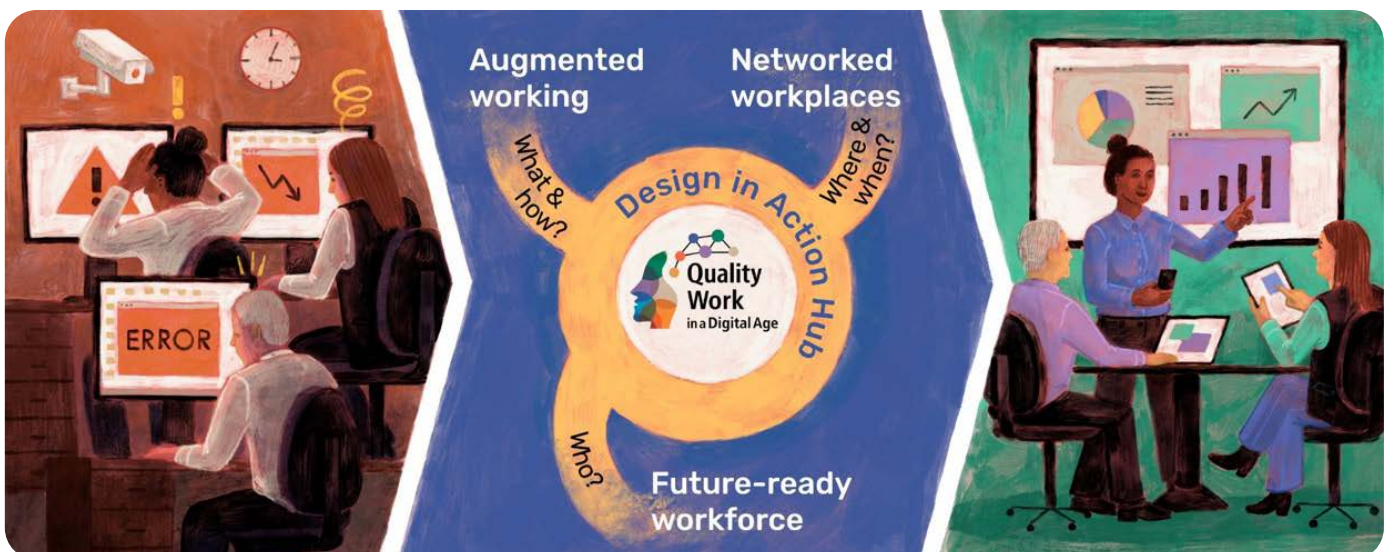
The Centre brings together diverse experts from social and technical disciplines across three interlinked research streams:

- **Stream 1: Augmented Working** focuses on rethinking how to augment technology with human skill ('what and how' we work)
- **Stream 2: Networked Workplaces** focuses on reimagining how to collaborate across time and space ('where and when' we work)
- **Stream 3: Future-Ready Workforce** focuses on reconfiguring how to develop future-ready workers ('who' works)

In addition, a **Design in Action Hub** will focus on applying the new knowledge generated in the research streams via influencing policy, education and practice.

Our mission

We aim to transform how digital technologies are designed and applied to support inclusive, high-quality work for the future, delivering economic strength for Australia while improving workforce well-being and productivity.



Stream 1: Augmented Working

Re-thinking the 'what' and 'how' of human-machine interaction

Against the backdrop of escalating unpredictability due to self-learning technologies, Stream 1 investigates what people do (the 'what') and how they work with technologies (the 'how'), with the aim of understanding how to achieve safe and productive human-machine partnerships.

This research focuses on:

- Optimising the use of technology to augment human cognition and creativity.
- Guiding managers, clinicians, organisations, designers, policy makers, and others in shaping human-machine interactions to maximise productivity and job satisfaction, while mitigating risks and ethical concerns.



RESEARCH FOCUS		RESEARCH OUTCOMES
	Augmenting Human Cognition	Developing work designs to enhance human-machine interactions and safety in complex systems that stretch human cognition.
	Augmenting Human Creativity	Exploring how automation and AI can enhance human creativity, driving innovation and competitive advantage across industries.
	Management and Organisational Context	Understanding how leadership, work design, and culture affect AI implementation to ensure effective and scalable worker-machine collaboration.
	Design Principles	Motivating and upskilling technology designers and other relevant workers to design optimally effective work technologies.
	Developing Standards for Control and Accountability	Resolving challenges around who is accountable as technological agents assume increased control.

Stream 2: Networked Workplaces

Re-imagining 'where' and 'when' people work

While technology has enabled workers to perform dangerous work tasks from a safe distance, these advances also present new challenges. Stream 2 explores the impact of workplaces expanding across time ('when' people work) and space ('where' people work).

This research focuses on:

- Enabling people in virtual and remote networks to work effectively.
- Analysing the human impact of "always on" work cultures, gig work inequities, privacy and surveillance risks stemming from technology misuse.



RESEARCH FOCUS		RESEARCH OUTCOMES
	Collaboration Across Dispersed Networks	Building an advanced test environment for studying remote operations, improving coordination across networks and time zones.
	Neuroscience and Cognition in Collective Networks	Using EEG to inform how intelligent agents communicate and make decisions on behalf of humans in remote settings.
	Tele-Embodiment and AI-Mediated Interactions	Exploring how robots and avatars can facilitate collaboration, enhancing productivity in distributed workforces.
	Hybrid Collaboration Across Professional & Team Boundaries	Addressing challenges in hybrid work models by developing practical solutions for knowledge transfer and team cohesion.
	Improved Design of Platform Work	Developing strategies to reduce work intensification and increase worker autonomy, making gig and platform work more sustainable.

Stream 3: Future-Ready Workforce

Re-configuring the 'who' of work

In a rapidly evolving digital economy, human capabilities are required to adapt alongside evolving technologies. Stream 3 focuses on supporting Australian workers through these capability transitions – shaping the 'who' of future work.

This research focuses on:

- Identifying and developing key capabilities essential for human workers' success.
- Widening access to skill development without excluding people from underrepresented and vulnerable groups.



RESEARCH FOCUS		RESEARCH OUTCOMES
	Future-ready Workforces and Sustainable Careers	Identifying how workforce skills shift with technology, helping businesses and employees stay ahead of industry disruptions.
	Optimising Outcomes of Skills Transitions	Supporting economic growth by reducing employer investment risks and ensuring a digitally capable workforce.
	Meeting Skills Shortages by Connecting Education and Work	Creating stronger connections between learning institutions and businesses to equip workers with future-ready skills.
	Knowledge Transfer Vulnerabilities in Workforce Informal Networks	Closing knowledge gaps within organisations by improving informal learning systems, benefiting all employees—especially vulnerable workers.
	Leadership for Future-ready Workforces	Equipping leaders with the tools to effectively navigate digital transformation, remote work and AI adoption with confidence.

Design in Action Hub

Generating relevant and ready-for-use research

Achieving our vision for quality work requires generating rigorous, yet usable knowledge that industry and government organisations can apply in practice. The Design in Action Hub plays a pivotal role in ensuring that QWIDA's research is **relevant**, **ready for use**, has **reach** and is embedded into capabilities for **long-term resilience** (4Rs).

The Hub focuses on conducting the following activities:



Challenge and reverse pitch workshops

Collaborating with industry to tackle urgent and practical workplace challenges.



Action research & trialling ideas

Drawing new insights to create healthy, fully inclusive, and productive work.



Case studies, tools and guidance development

Practical, evidence-based resources designed for industry and government to enhance work quality, drive innovation, and support informed decision-making.



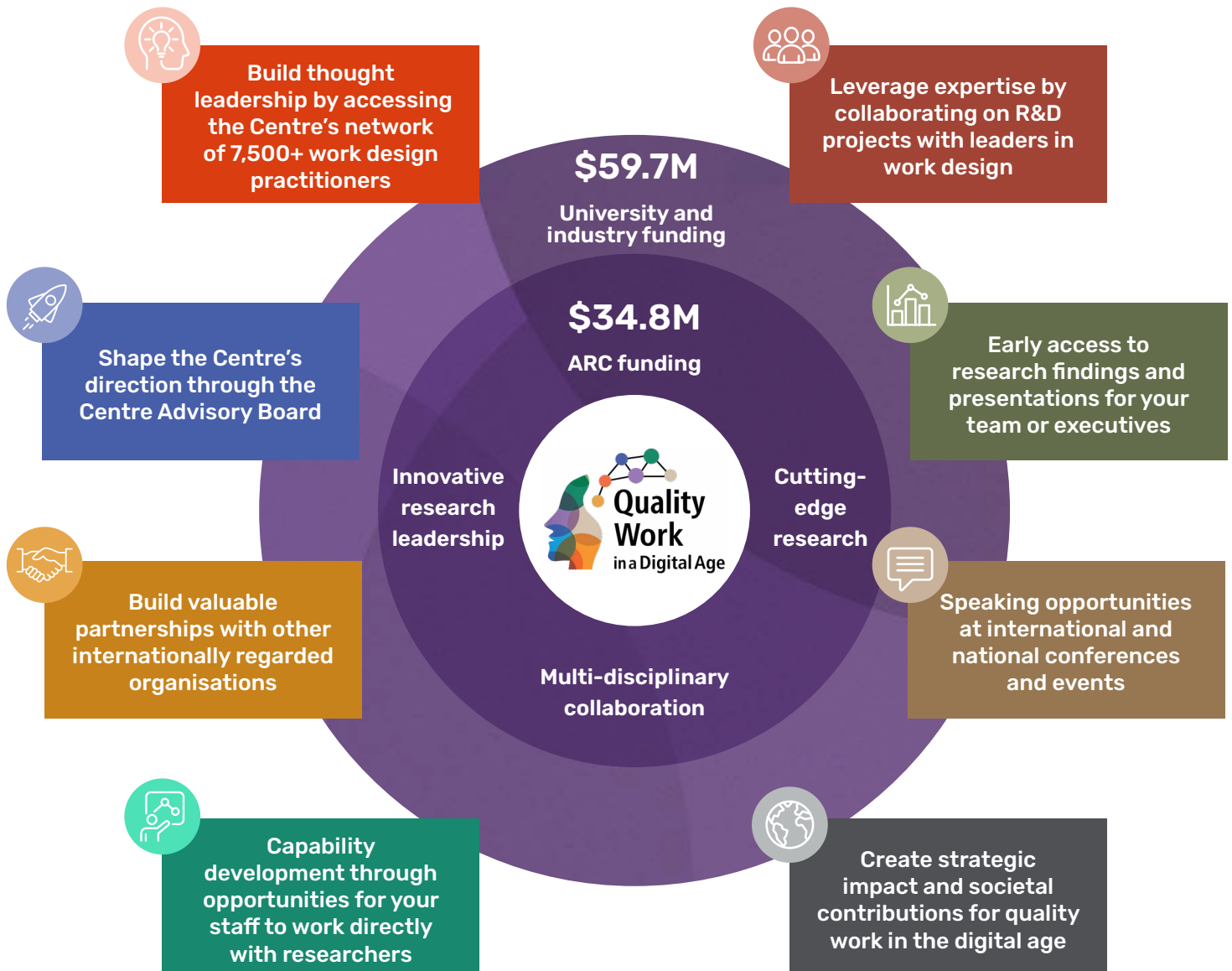
Relevant and ready to use sociotechnical knowledge for widescale application

Shaping work practices and policies to foster a resilient workforce



Partnership benefits

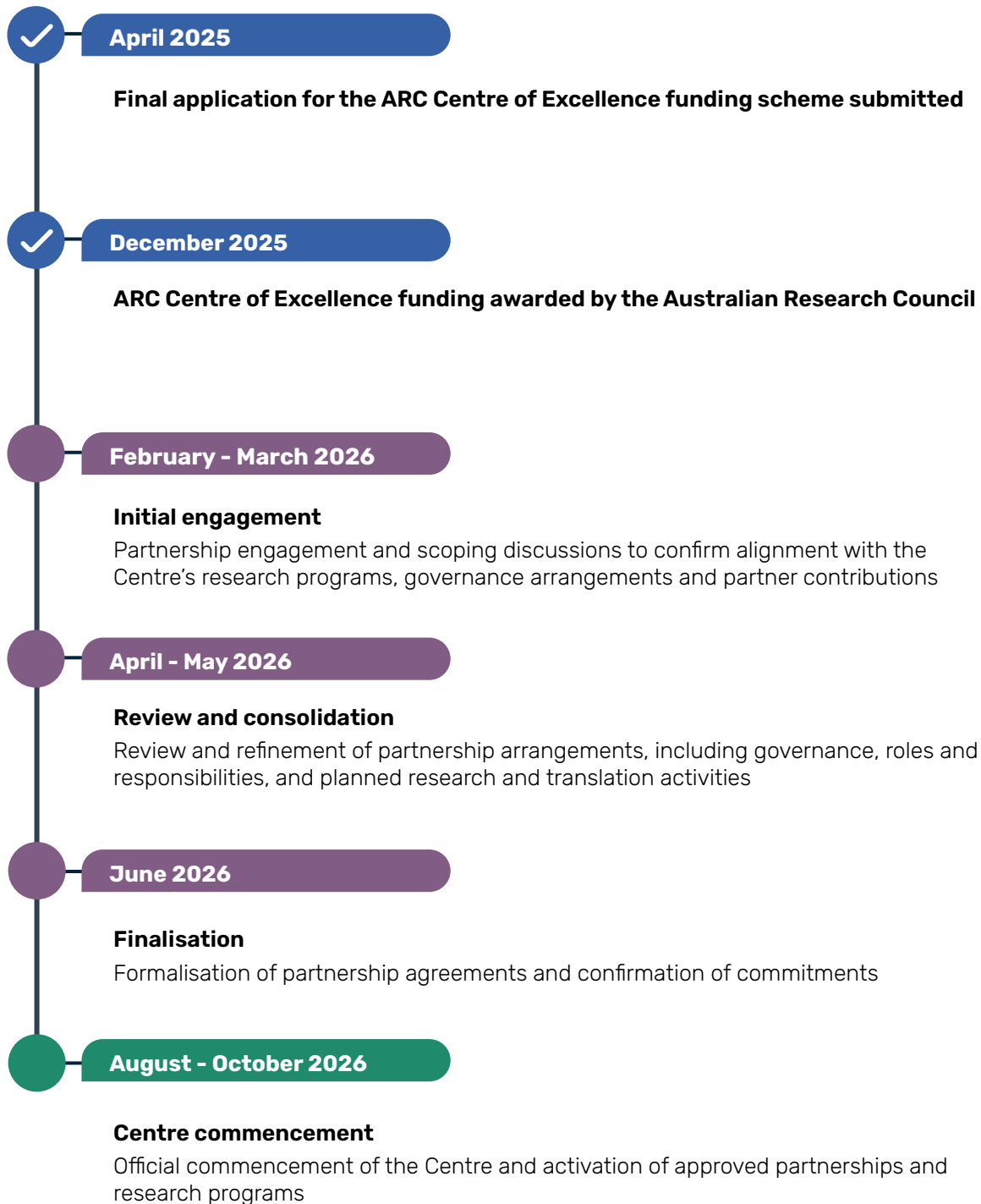
Partner contributions are highly valued by the Centre of Excellence for Quality Work in a Digital Age. Partners will receive the following benefits:



Total commitment of **\$94.6M**

Cash and in-kind contributions over the Centre's lifespan of seven years (2026-2032)

Establishment timeline



Our partners



8

Node
Institutions

17

Chief
Investigators

12

Associate
Investigators

12

Partner
Investigators

49

Partner
Organisations

NODE INSTITUTIONS



PARTNER UNIVERSITIES



PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

LIVING LABS



Department of Local Government,
Industry Regulation and Safety



Government of Western Australia
WA Country Health Service



Government of Western Australia
East Metropolitan Health Service



Government of Western Australia
Department of Training
and Workforce Development



Department of
Jobs, Tourism, Science
and Innovation



Government of Western Australia
Child and Adolescent Health Service



ENABLERS



Government of Western Australia
Department of the Premier and Cabinet
Office of Digital Government



Institute for the
Future of Work



Government of South Australia
SafeWork SA



DISSEMINATORS



LYFE LANGUAGES
A Project Y initiative



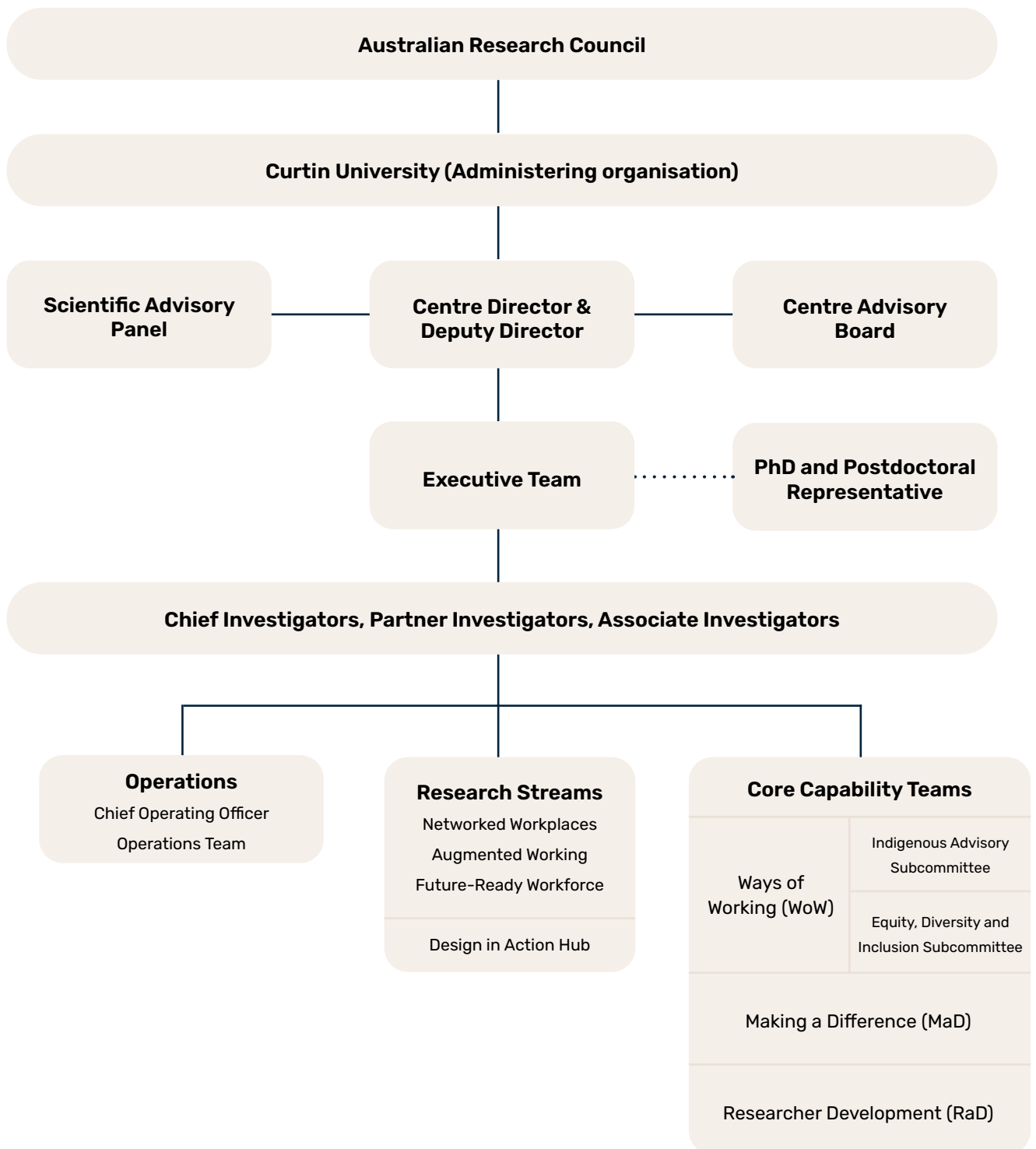
Institute for the
Future of Work



Australian Government
Comcare



Governance



Executive Team

The Executive Team acts as the primary decision-making body, reports to Curtin University and the Australian Research Council. The Executive Team is supported by two key advisory groups: the Centre Advisory Board and the Scientific Advisory Panel.

Centre Advisory Board

The Centre Advisory Board is comprised of senior representatives from important external stakeholder groups and from key Partner Organisations. The Board provides high-level advice to the Executive Team to help ensure that the Centre's research and associated activities are successful and have maximum impact.

Scientific Advisory Panel

The Scientific Advisory Panel is a group of highly eminent scholars who provide feedback on the Centre's scientific direction.

Core Capability Teams

The Core Capability Teams are key internal teams, beyond research, that help QWiDA to achieve its core objectives. These individual teams focus on activities across the whole Centre and include:

- **Ways of Working (WoW):** This team focuses on optimising how the Centre works, covering topics such as diversity and inclusion, culture, work design of Centre staff, and how QWiDA – itself a living lab – can use digital technologies in a healthy, inclusive, and productive way.
- **Researcher Development (ReD):** This team is focused on building the capability of staff and students across all nodes within QWiDA, such as via advanced research training, future leader development, and visitor programs.
- **Making a Difference (MaD):** This team is focused on external engagement and impact activities, working closely with the Design in Action Hub, as well as the Stakeholder Engagement Manager and the Communications and Marketing Manager, to disseminate findings to the external work community.

Chief Investigators

Our team comprises of dynamic individuals at the forefront of their fields, united by a shared commitment to advancing knowledge and addressing pressing challenges.



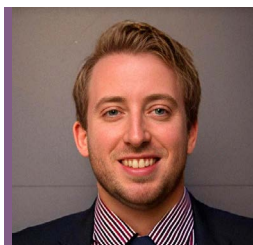
DIRECTOR
ARC Laureate Fellow
Professor
Sharon Parker
 Curtin University
Organisational Behaviour



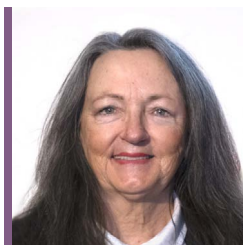
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
Professor Andrew Neal
 The University of Queensland
Human Factors



STREAM 1 LEAD
Professor Tim Miller
 The University of Queensland
Artificial Intelligence



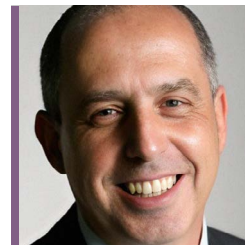
ARC Future Fellow
Dr Tim Ballard
 The University of Queensland
Computational Psychology



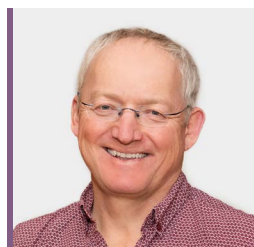
ARC Laureate Fellow
Professor
Maureen Dollard
 Adelaide University
Occupational Health Psychology



Professor Jeannie Paterson
 The University of Melbourne
Law



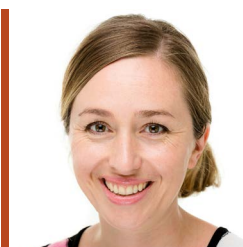
Professor Frank Vetere
 The University of Melbourne
Computational and Information Systems



ARC Laureate Fellow
Professor Toby Walsh
 UNSW Sydney
Artificial Intelligence



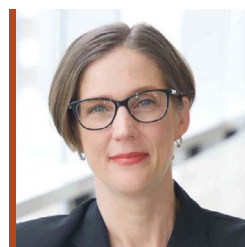
STREAM 2 LEAD
Professor Mark Griffin
 Curtin University
Management



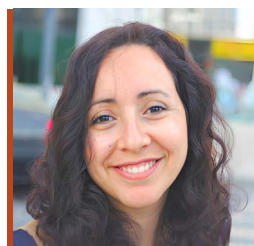
DESIGN IN ACTION HUB
Professor Karina Jorritsma
 Curtin University
Organisational Psychology



Professor Mark Billingham
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Associate Professor Catherine Collins
 UNSW Sydney
Organisational Behaviour



Associate Professor Wafa Johal
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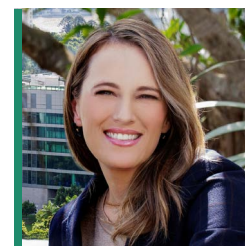
STREAM 3 LEAD
Professor Eva Kyndt
 Deakin University
Educational Psychology



DESIGN IN ACTION HUB
Professor
Marek Kowalkiewicz
 Queensland University of Technology
Information Systems



Professor Dean Lusher
 Swinburne University of Technology
Innovation



Associate Professor Char-lee McLennan
 Queensland University of Technology
Social Systems

Partner Investigators

Australia



Professor Gareth Baynam
Rare Care Centre, Perth
Children's Hospital



Dr Cecile Paris
CSIRO Data61



Professor Peter Radoll
Radoll & Associates



Dr Sean Rintel
Microsoft

International



Professor Kevin Crowston
Syracuse University



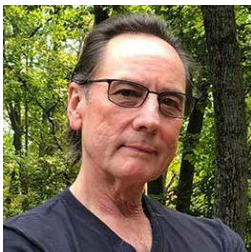
Professor Tony Dundon
University of Limerick



Professor Gudela Grote
ETH Zürich



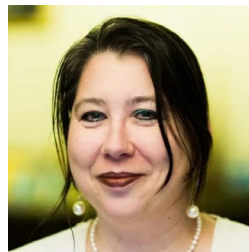
Dr Jessie Koen
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Organisation for Applied
Scientific Research)



Professor Steve Kozlowski
University of South Florida



Dr Maria Luce Lupetti
Polytechnic University of Turin



**Professor Beatrice van der
Heijden**
Radboud University



Dr Lauren Waardenburg
Essec Business School

Associate Investigators

Australia



Professor Jonathan Bullen
Curtin University



Associate Professor Thuong Hoang
Deakin University



Dr Claire Mason
CSIRO's Data 61



Professor Markus Stumptner
Adelaide University



Peter Townson
Queensland University of Technology



Dr Alex Veen
University of Sydney



Dr Emanuelle Walkowiak
RMIT University

International



Professor Margaret Chitiga-Mabugu
University of Pretoria



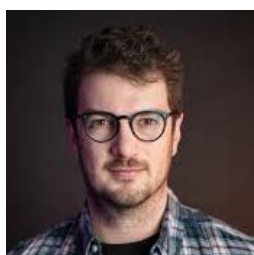
Dr Max Friedrich
German Aerospace Center



Professor Jia (Jasmine) Hu
Tsinghua University



Professor Kenton O'Hara
University of Bristol



Dr Luca Vendraminelli
Stanford University

External Advisors

Current confirmed members



CHAIR, SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY PANEL

Professor John Cordery

Former Vice-Chancellor of Curtin University and
Chair of The University of Western Australia's Academic Board



CHAIR, CENTRE ADVISORY BOARD

Professor Tracey Horton AO

Chair, IDP
Non Executive Director and Chair, GPT Group
Chair, Australian Industry Skills Committee
Deputy Chair, Australian Institute of Company Director



MEMBER, SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY PANEL

Professor Maaïke Endendijk

Scientific Director,
Smart Skills @ Scale Project
University of Twente, Netherlands



MEMBER, SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY PANEL

Dr Sue Keay

Director, UNSW AI Institute



MEMBER, SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY PANEL

Professor Jochen Menges

Director, Center for Leadership in the
Future of Work
University of Zurich



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