Welcome to PowerLab Newsletter

A MESSAGE FROM THE CO-DIRECTORS

In 2017, PowerLab grew through the appointment of a new statistician, two new PhDs and three interns, all three of whom will study for Honours with us in 2018. Welcome to PowerLab Elyse, Aimee and Krystian!

This year we authored 27 peer-reviewed publications, gave many international talks including at the World Congress on Public Health and the EcoCity World Summit, and we earned approximately $3 million in research income (all administered by the University of Wollongong). This included two National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) mid-career fellowships. We also had another Honours student finish their thesis and three excellent PhD student presentations at the annual faculty HDR conference. Congratulations to Grace, Stephanie, Faysal and Tashi.

This report celebrates many of these achievements, as well other highlights, such as Prof Terry Hartig’s extended stay, our visiting fellows from China CDC, and the many PowerTalks given by several leading scientists from around the world who visited us.

We hope you enjoy reading about our achievements. If you are interested in studying Honours or postgraduate-level studies with us, interested in visiting or working in PowerLab, please email us on powerlab-enquiries@uow.edu.au.
Research Focus Areas

CHILD HEALTH, DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT

An exciting new program of research includes work on perinatal health by PhD student Ms Selin Akaraci (left) and green space quality by Honours student Ms Aimee Marchesi (right).

ENHANCE TYPE 2 DIABETES PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT

Many of our PhD students are doing quantitative research to identify what environments support healthy ageing. (Left to right: Ms Stephanie Clingan, Mr Tashi Dendup, Mr Faysal Shuvo).

ENVIRONMENTS FOR HEALTHY EQUITABLE AGEING

Our long-term collaborator, Prof Glen Maberly (above right), Director of Western Sydney Diabetes, is working with us to apply our research findings to drive positive change for communities in Western Sydney. (Left to right: UOW Vice Chancellor Paul Wellings, Co-Directors Xiaoqi Feng and Thomas Astell-Burt, Professor Glen Maberly).

MORTALITY & CHRONIC DISEASE SURVEILLANCE IN CHINA

Our collaboration with China CDC rose to a new level in 2017, with our first China CDC-PowerLab Visiting Fellows. (Left to right: Ms Yunning Liu, A/Prof Thomas Astell-Burt, Prof Maigeng Zhou, A/Prof Xiaoqi Feng, Mr Mao Fan).

Our People 2017

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR XIAOQI FENG
- Founding Co-Director
- Associate Professor of Epidemiology
- Head of Postgraduate Studies, School of Health and Society.
- NHMRC Career Development Fellow (2018-2022)

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR THOMAS ASTELL-BURT
- Founding Co-Director
- Associate Professor of Public and Population Health
- Head of Research, School of Health and Society.
- NHMRC Research Leader Fellow (2017-2021)

TAMARA RASO
Project Officer

DR MICHAEL NAVAKATIKYAN
Statistician

DR MEHBUB ANWAR
Statistician

PROF. TERRY HARTIG
UOW Visiting Int. Scholar Awardee

MS JESSICA CERNI
PhD Candidate

MR FAYSAL SHUVO
PhD Candidate

MS STEPHANIE CLINGAN
PhD Candidate

MR TASHI DENUP
PhD Candidate

MS SELIN AKARCI
PhD Candidate

MS GRACE NORTON
Honours Student

MR MAO FAN
Visiting Fellow

MS YUNNING LIU
Visiting Fellow

MR KRYSTIAN STERGIOU
Intern

MS AIMEE MARCHESI
Intern

MS ELYSE KAMBIOS
Intern

MR KRYSTIAN STERGIOU
Intern
2017 Highlights

14 March
PowerTalk
Long-term collaborator Professor Billie Giles-Corti from the University of Melbourne presented research on liveability and health promotion.

5 June
Research collaborator Professor Susan Thompson of UNSW City Futures Research Centre visited PowerLab to give a PowerTalk on healthy cities research and policy from a planner's perspective.

17 July - 15 August
PowerTalk
Visiting International Scholar Awarded Professor Terry Hartig of Uppsala University visited us to continue our long-term research collaboration on green space and health. Terry, Xiaoqi and Thomas also all presented at the World EcoCity Summit.

7 August
Co-Director Thomas Astell-Burt was awarded $719,840 for an NHMRC Boosting Dementia Research Leader Fellowship.

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Dr Danelle Lobdell, a colleague at the US Environmental Protection Agency, visited PowerLab to present her research on environmental health and big data across the US.

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Dr Iana Markevych from the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich presented to the PowerLab group her research focus areas of the effects of green space on birthweight and allergies during her visit.

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Selected Publications


Feng X, Z Feng, Astell-Burt T. Perceived public transport infrastructure modifies the association between public transport use and mental health: Multilevel analyses from the United Kingdom. *PloS One*. 12 (8), e0180081.


Looking ahead to 2018

- Prof Terry Hartig will return to PowerLab as part of his Visiting International Scholar Award to continue a long-term research collaboration in green space and health
- Professor Gavin Turrell will visit us to give a PowerTalk on neighbourhood effects and healthy ageing
- A new ‘Power-UP’ seminar series will be launched to build capacity in NHMRC and ARC grant writing in the Faculty of Social Sciences
- Multilevel social statistics courses run in partnership between PowerLab and the National Institute of Applied Statistical Research Australia (NIASRA)
- Our current PhD students will present their research findings at that the ‘3-Minute Thesis’ competition
- We will be welcoming the 2018 cohort of PowerLab-China CDC Visiting Fellows
- Associate Professors Thomas Astell-Burt and Xiaofei Feng will travel to Peking Union Medical College (China’s top medical school) to continue a long-term research collaboration
- We will be recruiting several new PhD students on scholarships for research on environments for promoting child health and supporting wellbeing in the elderly