



## Dear Friends of MARCS AgeLab

Thank you for your contributions to our research projects in 2023. It has been an amazing year filled with discoveries, achievements, and community engagement.

In collaboration with Deakin University, our research team designed and developed an easy-to-use home assistant technology that sends customisable reminders and prompts tailored to the needs of the person. This project has been selected as a semi-finalist for the international Longitude Prize on Dementia, receiving a grant worth over \$145,000.

We are also thrilled to share that one of our researchers has been recognised as the Field Leader of Language and Linguistics for the second consecutive year by *The Australian's* 2024 Research Magazine. This accolade not only honours the excellence of our academic but elevates Western Sydney University as a leading institution.

Our Brain Health team has also been actively engaging with the community. We've connected with many of you at malls, libraries, and festivals. We are committed to sharing ideas and knowledge beyond the confines of our research facilities.

Your support, expressed in various forms, has played a significant role in our shared journey. You've been involved in research studies ranging from virtual reality to memory prompting, helping our researchers and our students. We look forward to the continued collaboration and shared successes in 2024. Together, we are making strides in understanding how thinking changes with age, and positively impacting lives.

Wishing you and family a happy holiday season!

## Research Highlights

### Semi-finalist in the Longitude Prize on Dementia: The MemoryAld Project

A project led by [Associate Professor Celia Harris](#) in partnership with collaborators at Deakin University. Our consultations with people living with dementia and their caregivers inspired the concept of an intuitive, easy-to-use home assistant technology. This technology aims to send reminders and prompts on devices that look familiar to people living with dementia. The MemoryAld project is designed to enhance support for people living with dementia in completing their daily tasks, engaging in meaningful activities, and maintaining social relationships – enabling independently living at home for longer. Read more [here](#).

#### Call for participants: MemoryAld

The team is currently trialling the MemoryAld device. We are interested to hear from anyone in the Sydney region who has experience living with dementia. If you have ever had a friend or family member with dementia, please email Dr Ruby Lipson-Smith to register your interest to participate in the study.

Email: [r.lipson-smith@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:r.lipson-smith@westernsydney.edu.au)



The MemoryAld team at the Living Lab at A2I2, Deakin University, a space for testing devices to be used in the home. From left: Dr Ruby Lipson-Smith (WSU), Dr Leonard Hoon (Deakin), Dr Gough Lui (WSU), Prof Simon Parker (Deakin), Dr Ruth Brookman (WSU), Prof Paul Breen (WSU), and A/Prof Celia Harris (WSU).

## Field Leader in Language & Linguistics

[Associate Professor Mark Antoniou](#), has been named the field leader of Language and Linguistics for the second consecutive year by *The Australian's* [2024 Research Magazine](#). Western Sydney University is listed as the leading institution in Language and Linguistics.

Find out more about A/Prof Antoniou's research journey, aspirations, and thoughts about the field of Language and Linguistics [here](#).



**WESTERN SYDNEY**  
UNIVERSITY  


**“THE FUTURE OF  
THE LANGUAGE  
SCIENCES IS  
BRIGHT.”**

**Associate Professor Mark Antoniou**  
The MARCS Institute for Brain, Behaviour, and Development  
Field Leader, Language and Linguistics

## Presentations at AAG (Australian Association of Gerontology) Conference

Age Lab researchers presented on topics of ageing at the 56<sup>th</sup> AAG (Australian Association of Gerontology) National Conference in November 2023. AAG is Australia's national peak body linking policy, practice, and research across gerontology.

- [Dr Joyce Siette](#)
  - Co-designing a digital brain health intervention for Chinese older adults: A user-centred approach

- Healthcare professionals' perspectives on the use of virtual reality as a diagnostic tool for dementia
- Art exhibition: Through the Looking Glass: Creating New Visions of Ageing
- [A/Prof Celia Harris](#)
  - It's not who you lose, it's who you are: Identity and symptoms of prolonged grief
- [Dr Ruth Brookman](#)
  - Evaluation of a multimodal program integrating exercise, social interaction, and reminiscence in residential aged care
  - Longitudinal exploration of dementia caregivers' experiences: Insights from service users' perspectives
- [Dr Ruby Lipson-Smith](#)
  - Defining what is important: Co-designing our research questions with family-and-friend carers of people living with dementia
- PhD student [Olivia Maurice](#)
  - Lived experience of dementia caregiving and support-seeking amongst culturally and linguistically diverse populations
  - Art exhibition: Distortions of Decline: An Artistic Exploration of the Cognitive Impacts of Alzheimer's Disease
- PhD student [Laura Dodds](#)
  - Gathering rural perspectives on a multi-domain dementia awareness and risk reduction intervention
  - Art exhibition: Through the Looking Glass: Creating New Visions of Ageing
- Dr Siette, Laura Dodds, and Olivia Maurice also presented two art exhibitions at this conference, attracting more than 500 visits.
- Our PhD students, Laura Dodds and Olivia Maurice, also received the AAG NSW Division Conference Travel Scholarships to attend this conference.



## Brain Health Hub: Community Outreach and Engagement

The Brain Health Hub team led by [Dr. Joyce Siette](#) has been actively engaging with the community and sharing tips on healthy ageing throughout the year. You might have seen the eye-catching 'Re-imagine Brain Health' installation showcasing the artful side of neurology and attempted one of the fun brain teasers.

### Call for participants: Together Forward

Dr Siette is seeking insights from individuals living with dementia (diagnosed in the last 2 years) and their carers to co-create post-diagnosis support resources. Participants will engage in a 30-minute interview (face-to-face or online) to discuss how we can better create everyday materials to support wellbeing.

Register your interest to participate in the Together Forward study:  
<https://brainhealthhub.com.au/projects/together-forward/>



## Upcoming Events

In the spirit of fostering community ties, Age Lab will continue to partner with local community groups to organise meaningful activities that will reinforce our commitment to collaboration and knowledge sharing. The list of events in 2024 includes:

- **Networking session at MARCS Institute**  
*An exclusive gathering for insightful conversations and meaningful connections.*
- **Library talks/seminars in partnership with City of Parramatta**  
*Join us as we explore the latest findings in aged care research.*
- **NSW Seniors Festival (11 to 24 March 2024)**  
*Let's come together to celebrate wisdom and life stories!*

More details will be shared via email and [The MARCS Institute Facebook](#) page. Follow us on Facebook for event updates and news.

## Participate in Studies

If you'd like to support the team by participating in our studies, you may register your interest [here](#).

For general enquiries, email [TheAgeLab@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:TheAgeLab@westernsydney.edu.au)

If you have family or friends with children aged 3 months to 5 years old who'd be interested to participate in research studies with young children, you may share the [BabyLab registration](#) page with them.

