



2020

CURRICULUM VITAE  
BELINDA DEGARIS



## Details

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- Name:** Belinda DeGaris
- Business:** Adelaide Hand Therapy
- Contact:** Dextra Surgical  
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- Adelaide Plastic Surgery  
L4, 18 North Tce, Adelaide  
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- Qualifications:** Bachelor of Applied Science (Occupational Therapy)  
*University of South Australia*
- Registration:** Occupational Therapist – AHPRA (2014 – current)

Belinda has worked in various areas of Occupational Therapy, enjoying the variation and depth of the rehabilitation profession. Belinda has volunteered as an OT assistant in South Africa in paediatrics and Bangladesh in spinal cord injury. Finding her passion for hand therapy early on, she was able to incorporate hand therapy in her other Occupational Therapy roles.

She moved to Launceston, Tasmania in 2017 to pursue a role in setting up a private hand therapy clinic. Liaising closely with Orthopaedic Surgeons, General Practitioners and other Allied Health Professionals. Belinda moved back to Adelaide in January 2019 to work at Adelaide Hand Therapy and Flinders Medical Centre – Hand Therapy Department.

Belinda is an associate of the Australia Hand Therapy Association (AHTA), and through completing courses run by the AHTA and other hand practitioners, she is able to practice up-to-date techniques, staying at the fore-front of hand therapy. She particularly enjoys the diversity and challenges which hand and upper limb injuries can present and is well vetted in the assessment and rehabilitation of unique pain and conservatively managed injuries, including nerve injuries, tendonitis, joint pain / arthritis and chronic injuries. She also enjoys treating acute injuries such as trauma, fractures, and tendon injuries. Belinda strives to work with patients to achieve their goals and make the most of their rehabilitation.

## Career History

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### **Adelaide Hand Therapy**

**2019 – current**

Occupational Therapist

Working along-side Kathy Minchin out of two plastic surgery suites. Patients are commonly referred from Plastic Surgeons, Orthopaedic Surgeons, General Practitioners and the general public. Skills in the treatment and management of injuries covered by Return to Work SA insurance.

Key responsibilities include:

- Assessment and clinical reasoning of undiagnosed injuries
- Treatment and rehabilitation of hand and upper limb injuries, primarily work-place injuries / trauma and acute hand injuries
- Multi-disciplinary communication stakeholders
- Liaising with insurance companies, case managers, employers and return to work coordinators in the safe rehabilitation and return to work of injured employees
- Using up-to-date evidence-based practice
- Business management

### **Flinders Medical Centre – Hand Therapy**

**2019 – current**

Occupational Therapist

Working as a part of the Hand Therapy team fulfilling a part-time role at the hospital to treat outpatients through the Plastic and Orthopaedic Clinics.

Key responsibilities include:

- Assessment and treatment of hand and upper limb injuries
- Multi-disciplinary communication with patients, families, specialist doctors and other hospital staff
- Liaising with Plastic Surgeons, Orthopaedic Surgeons, RMO medical students and Registrars
- Using up-to-date evidence-based practice
- Participating in weekly professional development and teaching run by the hospital
- Referral to private therapist and other specialists
- Supervising and assisting with educating OT students and rotational OTs coming into the Hand Therapy team

**Health Nest, Launceston**

**2017 – 2019**

Occupational Therapist

Working along-side Amy Geach to assist set up and run a new specialist Hand Therapy practice. Working closely with Orthopaedic Surgeons, General Practitioners and other Allied Health Professionals. Skills in the treatment and management of injuries covered by workers insurance.

Key responsibilities include:

- Business start-up, marketing and ongoing management
- Assessment and clinical reasoning of undiagnosed injuries
- Treatment and rehabilitation of hand and upper limb injuries, primarily chronic pain, nerve injuries and tendonitis
- Multi-disciplinary communication with stakeholders
- Liaising with insurance companies, case managers, employers and return to work coordinators in the safe rehabilitation and return to work of injured employees
- Using up-to-date evidence-based practice
- Supervising Occupational Therapy placements
- Locum work and supervision of new staff in 2019

**Riverina Hand Therapy, Wagga Wagga**

**2017 – 2018**

Occupational Therapist

Key responsibilities include:

- Locum OT working at our sister practice (to Health Nest) to cover staff on leave
- Assessment and treatment of hand and upper limb injuries
- Liaising with General Practitioners, Plastic Surgeons and Wagga Wagga Base Hospital

**The Society of Saint Hilarion, Adelaide**

**2014 - 2017**

Occupational Therapist

Key responsibilities include:

- Senior OT, supervising the Allied Health team
- ACFI (aged care) assessments
- Cognitive and mobility assessments
- Service to multiple St Hilarion sites and other aged care facilities
- Running specialised groups: sensory cooking classes, cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), gym classes, falls prevention programs.

- Liaising and meeting with residents and family members. Implementing patient-centred care.
- Researching and implementing specialised equipment for falls prevention, pressure care and mobility.

### **Hampstead Rehabilitation Centre**

**2015**

Occupational Therapist

Key responsibilities include:

- Cognitive, ALD and functional assessments
- Running regular upper limb rehabilitation groups
- Conference meetings with patients, their families and stakeholders at Hampstead
- Referrals to community services.
- Seating assessments for pressure care

### **Wilderness School**

**2009 - 2015**

Senior Rowing Coach & Intermediates Rowing Coordinator

Key responsibilities include:

- Supervising high-school students participating in extra-curricular sport
- Writing training programs
- Crew selection
- Coordinating staff and rowers for regattas
- Liaising with the school, rowing staff and students' parents

## Membership & Committees

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Australian Hand Therapy Association (AHTA)

2015 – current

Occupational Therapy Australia

2017 – current

AHTA Social Media Coordinator

2017 – 2018

CPR and Senior First Aid training

Issued: 2017

AHTA National Conference Committee

2015 – 2017

## Education & Training

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### 2020

#### **AHTA course: Closed Trauma, Melbourne**

Two and a half day course aimed at developing clinical diagnosis and conservative treatment for trauma conditions.

### 2019

#### **SA Hand Surgeon Society (SAHSS) conference, Adelaide**

‘The Wrist’, Invited speaker: Prof Joseph Dias

#### **National AHTA conference, Brisbane**

‘To Extremity and Beyond’, Key-note speaker: Dr Elisabet Hagert

#### **AHTA course: Upper Limb Orthotic Fabrication Mobilisation, Perth**

Two-day course around the design and fabrication of mobilising orthoses/splints.

#### **AHTA SA Interest Group Meetings**

Bi-monthly meetings with South Australian Hand Therapists with a different topic or presenter each meeting.

### 2018

#### **National AHTA conference, Melbourne**

‘Reaching for the Future – Innovation and Technology in Hand Therapy’, Key-note speaker: Lynne Feehan

**Sydney Hand Hospital course: Tendon Management, Sydney**

Two-day course run by Sydney Hand Foundation, presenting on new to-date practice in the rehabilitation in both flexor and extensor tendon injuries.

**Action Rehab course: Assessment & Treatment of the Elbow, Melbourne**

Two-day course covering anatomy and biomechanics of elbow conditions; with evidence-based practice of rehabilitation and splinting.

2017

**National AHTA conference, Adelaide**

'Nerves – Connecting Pathways', Key-note speaker: Christine Novak

**Sydney Hand Hospital course: Wound Management, Sydney**

Two-day course run by the Sydney Hand Foundation including doctors and nursing staff presenting about wound care and products.

**Melbourne Hand course: Assessment and Treatment of the Wrist, Adelaide**

Two-day course teaching accurate assessment and clinical diagnosis of the wrist pain. Implementing clinical reasoning with evidenced-based practice for treatment.

**AHTA SA Interest Group Meetings**

Bi-monthly meetings with South Australian Hand Therapists with a different topic or presenter each meeting.

2016

**National AHTA conference, Sydney**

'Tendons – Moving to Mastery', Key-note speaker: Fiona Peck

**AHTA SA Interest Group Meetings**

Bi-monthly meetings with South Australian Hand Therapists with a different topic or presenter each meeting.

2015

**SA Hand Surgeon Society (SAHSS) conference, Adelaide**

'The Wrist', Invited speaker: Dr Marc Garcia-Elias

**National AHTA conference, Perth**

'Bordering Horizons – New Trends in Upper Limb Therapy', Key-note speaker: Tracy Fairplay

**AHTA course: Upper Limb Orthotic Fabrication Immobilisation, Adelaide**

Two-day course focused on the design and fabrication of immobilisation splinting in hand therapy.

**AHTA course: Fundamentals of Hand Therapy, Melbourne**

Two and a half day course covering the principles in hand therapy and clinical reasoning behind treatment of upper limb injuries.

**AHTA SA Interest Group Meetings**

Bi-monthly meetings with South Australian Hand Therapists with a different topic or presenter each meeting.

2014

**Centre for Rehabilitation of the Paralysed (CRP), Bangladesh**

Two month placement at CRP – a hospital that offers inter-disciplinary services and specialises in the treatment and rehabilitation of people with spinal cord injuries.

2010

**Astra Skool for Physically Disabled Children, South Africa**

Six months volunteering as a boarding house assistant at a special needs school. Offering regular schooling for children with and without physical disabilities, and a specialised stream for children with special learning needs. Assisting with school classes (both streams), assisting with extra-curricular sports including wheelchair basketball and disabled horse riding; and weekend work in the boarding house.

**Spastic Centres of South Australia (SCOSA), Adelaide**

Volunteer for day-care programs, including exercise group and aqua therapy.