

# Combined Abstracts of 2012 Australian Psychology Conferences

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## Preface

It is with great pleasure that I present the *Combined Abstracts of 2012 Psychology Conferences*. This volume contains the abstracts from three psychology conferences held across Australia in 2012:

The 47th Annual Conference of the Australian Psychological Society.

The 39th Australasian Experimental Psychology Conference.

The 18th Annual Conference of the APS College of Clinical Neuropsychologists.

This volume highlights the quality of research and scholarship in psychology as a scientific discipline and a profession.

Organising a successful conference is a challenging task that could not have been achieved without the hard work and generous contribution of time by the Conference Chairs, the Scientific and Organising Committees, and the many reviewers of submissions to the Conferences, who all deserve our thanks.

I would also like to acknowledge the contributions of colleagues who made this volume of combined abstracts possible. In particular, I would like to thank the Abstract Editors and Reviewers for each of the Conferences. Among the staff at the National Office (Ms Jenni Elford, Ms Karen Grigg, Ms Lucy Krelle and Ms Nicole Chaperon), I want to acknowledge especially the extensive work by Ms Fleur Ritchie.



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*Executive Manager, Science and Education*

### NOTE:

The Australian Psychological Society Ltd does not hold copies of any papers presented at conferences.

Anyone wanting papers should communicate directly with the author.

## **Contents**

[The 47th Annual Conference of the Australian Psychological Society](#)

[The 18th Annual Conference of the APS College of Clinical Neuropsychologists](#)

[The 39th Australasian Experimental Psychology Conference](#)

# 39<sup>th</sup> Australasian Experimental Psychology Conference

[Welcome from the Conference Chairs](#)

[Conference Scientific Committee](#)

[Abstract Editors](#)

[Abstracts](#)

[Author Index](#)



## Welcome from the Conference Chairs

### **Welcome to the abstracts of EPC2012!**

The 39th Australasian Experimental Psychology Conference was organised by the School of Psychology at the University of New South Wales. This year was the biggest EPC ever and with 134 talks and 129 posters, we enjoyed an exciting and stimulating event!

The presentations were of excellent quality and encompassed a diverse range of topics spanning all areas of experimental psychology. The scheduling arrangements were somewhat different, with shorter talk presentations and an increased number of poster presentations. Whether this becomes a more permanent adaptation to an ever-expanding field of Psychological Science in Australia remains to be decided.

Also, this year we introduced a plenary lecture to formally acknowledge the contribution made to this meeting by Professor Ross Day, one of its founding members.

We hope these abstracts give you insight into this year's great and enjoyable conference!

**Joel Pearson and Branka Spehar.**

## EPC2012 Program Committee

Professor Barbara Gillam  
Dr Chris Donkin  
Dr Sieu Khuu  
Assoc. Professor Ben Newell  
Professor Peter Lovibond  
Dr Joel Pearson (Conference Chair)  
Dr Branka Spehar

## Abstract Editors

Dr Joel Pearson (Conference Chair)  
Dr Branka Spehar

### **The self-administered interview: How does it affect psychological responses to the event?**

Paterson, H., Gittins, C. & Sharpe, L.  
University of Sydney

The Self-Administered Interview (SAI; Gabbert et al., 2009) is a paper-and-pencil booklet designed to be given to witnesses at crime scenes. Although preliminary research suggests the SAI enhances memory for the event, the tool's effect on psychological functioning has not been examined. Some theories of PTSD suggest that writing about the crime would reduce anxiety (e.g. Ehlers & Clark, 2000), while others suggest it would increase anxiety (e.g. Horowitz, 1986). Thus, the aim of the study was to examine the effect of the SAI on psychological responses. Participants viewed a video of a car accident, described either as a real event (higher-stress condition), or a training event (lower-stress condition) depending on the condition to which they were randomly allocated. Second, participants completed either the SAI or a filler booklet. As predicted, participants in the SAI condition remembered the video contents better, as evidenced both by their greater recall of correct details and their greater rejection of misinformation one week after seeing the video. However, completing the SAI resulted in higher anxiety immediately afterwards, and more severe PTSD symptoms one week later, compared to the control condition. Practical and theoretical implications of these findings will be discussed.

### **The Rubber Hand Illusion in Autistic Spectrum Disorder**

Paton, B., Enticott, P. & Hohwy, J.  
Monash University

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is characterised by many differences in unimodal and multimodal sensory with complex biases of local over global processing. Many of these same elements are part of the rubber hand illusion (RHI). The RHI was studied in high-functioning individuals with ASD and a typically developing control group. Both groups experienced the RHI. Proprioceptive and sensorimotor differences were most prominent. The ASD group showed reduced sensitivity to visuotactile-proprioceptive discrepancy but overall more accurate proprioception. During trials in which participants reached for an object the ASD group differed from controls in their pattern of acceleration. This pattern of results are discussed in terms of weak top-down integration and a concomitant precision-accuracy trade-off. Based on these results the RHI appears to be a useful tool for investigating multisensory processing in ASD.

### **Does Musical Training enhance Spatial Ability**

Peachey, D. & Au, A.  
James Cook University

Over the last twenty years various studies have been conducted on the Mozart Effect, whereas does listening to Mozart enhance various other abilities including spatial memory. On the basis that musical shares some cortical representation with spatial processing, a study was conducted to investigate if musical training other than what is taught in a typical school curriculum has an effect on spatial memory ability. This was measured in two groups of undergraduate students, thirteen of whom had musical training and twenty seven controls who undertook a musical abilities test and a spatial working memory test. The results showed that there were no significant difference overall in musical abilities, however the musically trained group had a trend to perform better on melodic organisation. A relationship between spatial working memory and certain musical abilities was established. The sensitivity of the tests used and the use of undergraduates may explain the lack of significant findings.

### **Facial coding at isoluminance: Face recognition relies disproportionately on shape from shading**

Pearce, S.  
University of Queensland

Human face recognition is disproportionately impacted by image rotation, becoming very difficult when an image is viewed upside down. The reasons for this remain a topic of heated debate. One factor might be that variations in three-dimensional (3d) structure are very important for facial coding. Inverting a facial image would therefore result in critical 3d shape from shading cues being viewed from an unfamiliar angle. Here we test this proposition via another manipulation, which eliminates 3d shape from shading cues altogether. We contrast peoples' ability to categorize cars and faces when images vary in luminance and when images only contain differences in colour (isoluminance, which eliminates all shape from shading cues). We find that isoluminance impairs performance disproportionately on a facial classification task relative to car classifications. This was true even though the two tasks were behaviourally matched for difficulty when images contained luminance differences. Nor could this effect be due to facial coding being selectively impacted by image blur at isoluminance, as performance dropped off equally for cars and faces as blur was