

## STUDENT GRANT RECIPIENT

### SALLY LARSEN



- What you are (or have been) researching  
My research focuses on the development of reading comprehension and mathematics from early childhood through to middle secondary school. I focus on the insights that can be gained by analysing standardized assessment data using longitudinal structural equation models. This approach affords investigations of developmental patterns across populations of students, and comparisons of progress for different subgroups. For example, one study examined whether a Matthew Effect was evident in NAPLAN reading and numeracy tests from Year 3 to Year 9. If so, this would indicate that students who start with higher achievement in Year 3 make more progress over time than their peers who start with poorer achievement. Contrary to expectations the results of the study showed the opposite of the Matthew Effect in both reading and numeracy in a full cohort of students completing NAPLAN in NSW.
- How you used the grant  
I used the NSWIER grant to complete training in educational measurement and statistical modelling. This training allowed me to have a better knowledge of the development of standardised assessments, including NAPLAN and PISA tests, and enabled me to develop skills in the statistical analysis required for longitudinal studies.
- How the grant benefited you  
The training that I undertook has allowed me to complete other research projects examining the properties of educational measurements, and other survey scales. I have a much better understanding of best practices for developing educational and psychological measurement scales, and appropriate interpretations of data generated by such assessments. My understanding of longitudinal statistical modelling has benefitted my PhD research and other projects commenced after I completed my PhD. I am very grateful to the NSW IER for providing this grant and allowing me to develop my knowledge during my PhD.