



## **2018 ANZSCDB President's Report**

38th Annual Meeting of the ANZSCDB at ComBio  
Novotel Darling Harbour, September 23, 2018  
Sydney, NSW

Dear colleagues

This is my first official report as President of ANZSCDB and I am pleased to present a summary of activities of the society during the past year.

### **The Executive**

The Society Executive from September 2015 to September 2017 were: Sally Dunwoodie (President), Annemiek Beverdam (Secretary), Michael Piper (Treasurer), Carol Wicking (Past President) and Sharad Kumar (President Elect). Thank you all for your ongoing contributions to the ANZSCDB. Special thanks to Sally Dunwoodie, Annemiek Beverdam and Michael Piper, who have performed a large share of the work required to run the ANZSCDB, prior to the new executives taking-up their office in September 2017.

The Society Executive from September 2017 to September 2019 are: Sharad Kumar (President), Michael Samuel (Secretary), Leonie Quinn (Treasurer), Sally Dunwoodie (Past President) and Jenny Stow (President Elect). My thanks go to all for their hard work and enthusiasm. I would like to extend my gratitude to Michael Samuel and Leonie Quinn for keeping matters of society running smoothly and their timely reminders of my obligations and duties as the President.

### **The Committee**

The Committee holds our corporate memory and brings experience and wisdom to the ANZSCDB. This year we say farewell and thank you to Peter Koopman (QLD) and Miranda Grounds (WA), who have both made enormous contributions to the society over many years, with their invaluable advice and participation in various ANZSCDB activities. The remaining Committee members are: Edna Hardeman (NSW), David James (NSW), Joan Heath (VIC), Peter Currie (VIC), Carol Wicking (QLD) and Natasha Harvey (SA). As the past President highlighted in her final Report, the ANZSCDB will be best served by a Committee with a balance in gender, geographical representation of members from different locations, and research

strengths (cellular biology and/or developmental biology). Three new members who fit these criteria will join the Committee this year.

### **State and New Zealand Chapter Activities and Representatives**

State and NZ representatives play a vital grassroots role in the Society; promoting the ANZSCDB and its activities to their local cell and developmental biology communities. Their major responsibility is to organise a local scientific meeting, which brings together students, early career researchers as well as more established scientists. Thanks to the efforts of the State and NZ representatives, these meetings have proven an immensely popular forum for stimulating scientific presentations and networking. Our state representatives have worked hard to attract significant local funding, in addition to that provided by the ANZSCDB. I am very grateful for all their efforts and enthusiasm, which has made these local meetings a cornerstone of our Society.

#### ***The meetings for 2018 include the following (past and future):***

31<sup>st</sup> August 2018: 28th Annual Combined Biological Sciences Meeting. The University Club, University of Western Australia. The WA branch of the ANZSCDB will hold their annual meeting here in conjunction with several other WA societies.

27<sup>th</sup> September 2018: Annual ANZSCDB NSW Cell & Development Biology Meeting. Webster Lecture Theatre, Veterinary Science Conference Centre, University of Sydney.

28<sup>th</sup> September 2018: Annual ANZSCDB Brisbane Cell & Developmental Biology Meeting. Translational Research Institute, Brisbane.

13<sup>th</sup> November 2018: 8<sup>th</sup> ANZSCDB Adelaide Meeting. The UniSA CRI Building, Corner North Terrace and Morphett Street Bridge, Adelaide.

22<sup>nd</sup> November 2018: Inaugural ANZSCDB ACT Cell and Developmental Biology Meeting. The John Curtin School of Medical Research, Australian National University, Canberra

30<sup>th</sup> November 2018: 11<sup>th</sup> ANZSCDB Melbourne Cell & Developmental Biology Meeting. Clayton Campus, Monash University.

#### ***The State Representatives for September 2017 to September 2018 are:***

QLD: Samantha Stehbens, Larisa Haupt (retiring)

NSW: Sophie Pigeon, Hongjun Shi (retiring)

ACT: Erin Vaughan

VIC: Roger Pocock, Alex Combes (retiring)

WA: Yu Suk Choi, Oliver Rackham (retiring)

SA: Yoon Lim, Sarah Boyle (retiring)

Tasmania: Owen Marshall

NZ: Caroline Beck (retiring)

Special thanks go to our retiring State Representatives for all their dedicated work for the Society.

New State Representatives will be elected at the upcoming AGM.

## **National Meetings**

ComBio is the annual meeting of the ANZSCDB and continues to be the major focus of our scientific efforts. ComBio2017 was held in Adelaide, with Michael Michael as the conference chair and Natasha Harvey and Matthew Gilliam as program chairs. A detailed report of ComBio2017, prepared by Natasha Harvey, was published in the December 2017 Newsletter of ANZSCDB.

### ***ANZSCDB ComBio2017 Presentation Award Winners***

Andrew Stempel, Flinders University – ANZSCDB Prize for best cell biology student poster: “Role of CXCL13 in human retinal endothelial cell biology: implications for pathogenesis of diabetic retinopathy”

Aleisha Symon, Hudson Institute of Medical Research – Keith Dixon Prize for best developmental biology student poster: “Elucidating the role of SOX9 target genes in embryonic testis development”

Catherine Cochrane, Hudson Institute of Medical Research - David Walsh Prize for best student symposium: “p53 and Rb regulate ciliogenesis and hedgehog pathway sensitisation in development and cancer”

Kynan Lawlor, Murdoch Children’s Research Institute – Toshiya Yamada Prize for best postdoctoral symposium: “Fast moving nephron progenitors escape commitment and re-enter the niche”

### ***ANZSCDB ComBio2017 Travel Bursary Awardees***

Elena Savva (MSc student, Hime laboratory, University of Melbourne)

Chieh (Jade) Yu (PhD student, Haupt laboratory, QUT)

Aleisha Symon (PhD student, Harley laboratory, Hudson Institute of Medical Research)

Claire Homan (PhD student, Jolly laboratory, University of Adelaide)

Catherine Cochrane (PhD student, Cain laboratory, Hudson Institute of Medical Research)

Miriam Fuentes (Jans/Bogoyevitch – UniMelb)

Srilakshmi Srinivasan (Clements Lab – QUT)

Chieh Yu (Haupt Lab – QUT).

**ComBio 2018** is being held at the Sydney International Convention Centre between the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> September. The Conference Chair is Liz Harry (UTS), the Program Chair is Annemiek Beverdam (UNSW) and the Deputy Program Chair is Brent Kaiser (USyd).

### **ANZSCDB National Meeting in 2019**

As there will be no ComBio in 2019, ANZSCDB will have a stand-alone National Meeting next year. The possible sites for these meetings are ANU Canberra or UniSA Adelaide.

## **2018 ANZSCDB Society Awards**

### ***The President's Medal:***

The President's Medal is the highest honour the ANZSCDB bestows in recognition of outstanding contributions to the disciplines of Cell and/or Developmental Biology by scientists in Australia and New Zealand. It is not a condition that the awardee is a member of the Society, but preference will be given to those who have made major contributions to the disciplines represented by ANZSCDB. The 2018 President's medallist is Professor Sally Dunwoodie from Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute, Sydney.

Sally Dunwoodie, the immediate past president of ANZSCDB, is an internationally acknowledged research leader in developmental biology and birth defects. She is a senior group leader at Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute and a Professor in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of NSW. Sally received her Bachelor of Science (Hons) from the University of Sydney and subsequently completed her PhD on the genetic control of muscle development at the Children's Medical Research Institute, University of Sydney. Following postdoctoral training at the National Institute for Medical Research in London, Sally was appointed a faculty member at the Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute. Sally leads the Chain Reaction Program in Congenital Heart Disease, the largest Australian genome sequencing initiative in congenital heart disease, and is also a world leader in identifying causes of vertebral defects, having discovered six of the seven genes known to cause such defects. Sally's impressive body of work has been recognised by several prestigious fellowships, citations and awards. Most recently, Sally and her team's ground-breaking discoveries on the potential of vitamin B3 to treat a molecular deficiency causing miscarriages and complex birth defects were recognised by the 2018 Eureka Prize for Scientific Research.

Besides her outstanding scientific contributions, which have had a profound impact on neonatal health, Sally has been an outstanding contributor to the ANZSCDB, most recently serving as Society President (2015-2017)

### ***The Emerging Leader Award:***

The emerging leader award was established to encourage and support investigators at the stage of building independent careers in our disciplines in Australia and New Zealand. The award is to be an imprimatur of scientific accomplishment. The principal criteria are the quality of the candidate's research and evidence of ability to sustain an independent career. The 2018 awardee for the ANZSCDB Emerging Leader Award is Associate Professor Michael Piper of University of Queensland.

Mike has made outstanding contributions to the general field of developmental biology, publishing 64 manuscripts, many of which described highly original findings. He graduated from The University of Tasmania and received his PhD in Developmental Biology from The University of Queensland in 2003. His PhD research, performed at the Institute for Molecular Bioscience with Melissa Little, centered on understanding the cellular and molecular mechanisms underlying

embryonic kidney development. His first postdoctoral appointment was with Christine Holt at The University of Cambridge, UK, investigating mechanisms for axonal growth cones navigation in the frog (*Xenopus laevis*) brain. In his second postdoctoral position, with Linda Richards at the Queensland Brain Institute (University of Queensland), Mike uncovered molecular mechanisms of neural progenitor cell specification in the developing cerebral cortex. In late 2010, Mike took up a joint position with the Queensland Brain Institute and The School of Biomedical Sciences at UQ to continue his research into the mechanisms underlying neural stem cell differentiation; supported by an ARC Future Fellow (2013-2017). In addition to his significant research achievements, Mike has been a fantastic contributor to ANZSCDB having been the Queensland state representative, frequent local meeting organizer, member of the ComBio organizing committee (2016), ComBio stream co-coordinator (2016, 2018), frequent ComBio invited speaker and chair and, most notably, Society treasurer (2015-2017).

### **Indian Society of Developmental Biologists (InSDB) Biennial Meeting**

Following casual discussions with the committee members of the InSDB two years ago towards developing closer relationships between our societies, which are similar in size and share overlapping interests, Josephine Bowles (University of Queensland) and I were invited to the 2017 Meeting of InSDB in Pune. The Pune meeting was outstanding; providing the opportunity to present our work and interact with InSDB members and office holders. As a result, the InSDB organising committee has invited several of our ANZSCDB members to speak at the 2018 meeting (11-15th December, IIT Kanpur, India). At this meeting Natasha Harvey, Ben Hogan, Leonie Quinn, Ian Smyth, Edwina McGlenn, Jo Bowles and Michael Piper will be presenting their work and showcasing the outstanding depth and diversity of the developmental biology research conducted by our members. The InSDB web site states “In order to maximize the exposure of the young scientist members of this society, it has been decided that from now on the InSDB meeting will be jointly organized with the Developmental Biology Society of another country. This year it is the Australia and New Zealand Society for Cell and Developmental Biology (ANZSCDB).” I believe such joint meetings provide us an opportunity to engage with our region, which hopefully will result in new research networks and future collaborations.

### **Corporate Supporters and Members**

ANZSCDB Corporate Members in 2018 are:

Promega (David Grasso), Australian BioResources (Joanne Dodd), NewSpec (Graeme Jones), Monash Genome Modification Platform (Leanne Hawkey) and ATA Scientific (Theano Stafidas)

We have 276 Members as at September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2018 distributed as follows: QLD 39; NSW 61; ACT 15; VIC 98; TAS 2; SA 32; WA 13; NZ 10; Overseas 7; Corporate 5. There has been a reduction in membership, particularly in QLD. The executives encourage all our current members to work at the local level (Laboratory, Department, School and University) to encourage current members to renew and recruit the next generation of cell and developmental biologists.

## **Newsletter and Social Networking**

We currently have 3-4 e-newsletters per year, produced by the Secretary.

ANZSCDB has a presence on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) that are maintained by Megan Wilson (NZ) and Leonie Quinn (ACT) respectively. We are always happy to share news of relevance to our society on these platforms.

Kind regards

Sharad Kumar AM FAA FAHMS  
President ANZSCDB  
September 2018