

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

32st Annual Meeting of the ANZSCDBI at ComBio2013-09-13.

Perth Convention Centre

Perth WA.

Dear friends and colleagues,

This has been an active year for the society and I outline the activities that have and will occur:

Out going and Incoming Executive.

This ComBio in Perth sees the transition from the current executive: Peter Currie, President, Ian Smyth Secretary, Kieran Harvey Treasurer, Edna Hardeman Immediate Past President, to the new executive team: Carol Wicking President. I wish to thank the out going members of the executive who have worked efficiently and in such good spirit for the betterment of the Society. I specifically want to thank Kieran and Ian. Working with the society's finances is a difficult task as income is unpredictable, both in amount and in timing. Kieran has worked tirelessly to place the finances of the society on firm footing, increase transparency and good accounting practices and hand over the accounts in a great position. My many thanks go to Kieran for work above and beyond the call of duty and acting so professionally during his time as treasurer. An enormous thank you also must go to Ian Smyth as the Society's secretary. Ian has taken on a large proportion of the day to day running of the society's activities, masterfully coordinating the society's communications and has ensured all runs smoothly liaising very effectively with the new secretariat. He has been tireless in promoting the society's activities around the country. Collectively, this has been a very effective triumvirate and the increased responsibility of both the Secretary's and Treasurer's role has meant that the society runs much more effectively and has the added benefit of ensuring the President is in a much healthier mental state. This September sees the end of a three-year stint for both Ian and Kieran, compared to the normal two-year term due to staggered hand over that was experimented with the last hand over. A large debt of thanks is owed to them both. I wish the new executive team well in their running of society matters.

State/NZ Chapter Activities.

A real effort has been placed on trying to build the activity of the society locally through the use of the society's state and territory representatives. The society's local reps play an extremely important role in coordinating and delivering the "grass roots" activities of the society. Regional meetings are the real focus and it is pleasing to see the 4 stand-alone meetings in Victoria, NSW Queensland and South Australia going so well. These meetings provide a real chance for post docs and students to strut their stuff and get noticed locally. We are very happy to support these initiatives with the increased funding for the yearly state meetings has allowed the invitation of interstate speakers, which has proved a bit of a draw card for these meetings. The timing and nature of this year's meetings are outlined below. We also welcome our new State Reps to the ANZSCDB team and offer our sincere thanks to the out-going representatives:- VIC Jake Baum (WEHI), VIC Jeff Mann (MCRI) QLD Annemiek Beverdam (Uni of QLD) NSW Will Hughes (Garvan) SA Tash Harvey (CCB, SA Pathology) WA Archa Fox (WAIMR)

The changes to the ANZSCDB State representatives are:

New Reps

QLD Mat Francois (IMB, QLD)
NSW Annemiek Beverdam (UNSW, NSW)
VIC Jan Kaslin (ARMI, VIC)
VIC Louise Cheng (Peter Mac, VIC)
WA Nathan Pavlos (WAIMR, WA)
SA Michael Samuel (Health SA, SA)

Ongoing reps

QLD Kelly Smith (IMB)
NSW Matt Naylor (Uni of Syd)
SA Donna Denton (CCB, SA Pathology)
ACT Kristen Barratt (ANU)
NZ Megan Wilson (Uni of Otago) and Julia Horsfield (Uni of Otago)
WA Evan Ingley (WAIMR)

Society Awards.

It is a great pleasure to announce the winners of the Society's two awards, the President's Medal and the ANZSCDB Young Investigator Award. The President's Medal is the highest honour that the Society bestows on its most highly acclaimed members and this year's highly worthy winner is Prof Alpha Yap. Alpha is Head of the Molecular Cell Biology Division at the IMB, which is arguably the country's most acclaimed Cell Biology hub. Alpha has made seminal contributions to understanding the molecular pathways involved in coordinating cell adhesion, with specific emphasis on Cadherin-mediated adhesion. I warmly congratulate Prof Yap on his award.

The ANZSCDB Young Investigator Award recognizes the up-and-coming leaders in the discipline of Cell and Developmental Biology. The aim of the YIA is to draw attention to the achievements of our best and brightest and provide a bit of a leg up in the tough funding milieu that we all face. This year's winner is Dr Natasha Harvey. Natasha is Head of the Lymphatic Development Laboratory in the Division of Haematology at the Centre for Cancer Biology in Adelaide. She has also been awarded Young Tall Poppy Science Award and National Heart Foundation Career Development Fellowship. Her research is centered on understanding how the growth and development of lymphatic vessels (lymphangiogenesis) is controlled during embryonic development and in disease states. Natasha has been an active member of the society acting as a SA representative of ANZSCDB. We congratulate her on her achievements.

Scientific Meetings

ComBio2012 Annual Meeting. The 2012 COMBIO had one of the strongest line-ups of international speakers that we have ever had at our annual meeting, and was very well attended meeting. ComBio2012 in Adelaide had a total of 862 registrants - 106 of whom were ANZSCDB members. We wish to extend our thanks to A/Prof Stuart Pitson, Centre for Cancer Biology, SA Pathology for his role as chair and ANZSCDB members A/Prof

Paul Thomas, University of Adelaide and Professor Sharad Kumar, Centre for Cancer Biology, SA Pathology for the roles on the committee and all the session chairs and stream coordinators for their efforts in putting together an exciting meeting. To recap the Societies awards at the meeting were:

Prof Marilyn Renfree. President's Medal.

Dr Aleksandra Filipovska. The ANZSCDB Young Investigator Award

Dr. Lachlan Jolly Neurogenetics Research Program, S.A. Pathology.

The Toshiya Yamada Early Career Award Symposia Presentation.

Daniel Colquhoun, Australian Regenerative Medicine Institute, Monash University.

The Keith Dixon Poster Prize in Developmental Biology.

Tia DiTommaso, Department of Biochemistry, Monash University. The David Walsh Student Prize Symposia Presentation.

Eiman Saleh. Centre for Cancer Biology/University of Adelaide. ANZSCDB Cell Biology Student Poster Prize.

Combio Annual Meeting 2013.

After a slow start organizationally, this year's ComBio has come together well. At this time ComBio2013 has 649 registrations - 88 of whom are ANZSCDB members. An issue that has been raised is that the relevant cell and development symposia are not even scattered through the program and many attendees have found it hard to find a relevant symposia in the first two days. Hopefully the new format ComBio will take care of these glitches in programming. We thank George Yeoh, Evan Ingle and Miranda Grounds for their hard work on this year's meeting as well as all the Symposia Chairs for their efforts. This year saw a much better up take for student travel awards for ComBio, 7 in total. However, we still believe that many eligible students are not applying for these awards and it is not clear why.

Changes to COMBIO organisation in 2014.

ComBio2014 has had to be moved from Sydney, as the convention center will close for refurbishment possibly until 2017. All executive of the societies involved in ComBio endorsed the proposal put forward by Frances Shannon (President ASBMB) that ComBio2014 would be held in Canberra with a joint organizing committee across the two cities. Thus ComBio 2014 will be held at the National Convention Centre, Canberra. 28 September - 2 October 2014.

ComBio itself is moving to a more of a model of a national Committee. As part of that process the ANZSCDB has been asked to nominate two members to the program committee who would be responsible for the cell and developmental biology streams. This would serve to create a direct link between your society and the program committee. Ideally, at least one of those members would be from the city that is hosting the ComBio. Richard Harvey has agreed to be the Developmental Biology stream coordinator and Kat Gaus was being approached to take on the Cell Biology role. The Convenor is Edna Hardeman and the Program Chair and Deputy are Jacqui Matthews and Thomas Preiss. It will be interesting to see how this model develops and how seamlessly it integrates with the executives of the participating societies.

Regional Meetings.

NSW Regional Meeting.

This meeting will be organized later in the year, dates are now being finalised.

Victorian Regional meeting.

The 6th Annual Victorian Regional ANZSCDB meeting will be held on Friday 11th October 2013, at The Walter and Eliza Hall Institute. The guest speakers are Dr. Bruno Reversade A*STAR Institute for Molecular Biology, Singapore Prof. Kat Gaus Centre for Vascular Research, UNSW Centre for Vascular Research, UNSW.

Queensland Regional Meeting.

The Queensland Annual Regional ANZSCDB meeting is taking place on the 10th October at the Institute of Molecular Biosciences, UQ. 99 delegates have so far registered. Phil Ingham (Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine, Singapore), Liz Miller (Columbia University) & Michelle Hill (Diamatina Institute, UQ) are the invited speakers.

South Australian Regional Meeting.

The South Australian Regional ANZSCDB Meeting will be held the day before the Barossa Signalling Meeting, Tuesday November 19th. The invited speakers are Peter Gunning and Helena Richardson.

Western Australian Meeting Activity.

While not possessing the critical mass to generate their own meeting ANZSCDB sponsored a \$300 student poster prize in the field of cell and developmental biology at the Combined Biological Sciences Meeting held in Perth at the Uniclub of UWA on the Friday August 30th 2013 This meeting is an important event for bringing together Perth Life Scientists and giving ECRs and students a chance to present their work. This year's award went to Mr Samuel Taylor School of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, The University of Western Australia for his poster "Explosive Co-operation between FLT3-ITD and Cbl RING Finger Mutations in Murine Acute Myeloid Leukaemia."

Other meetings supported:

The Hunter Meeting.

The Hunter meeting continues to be a quality meeting for cell biology enthusiasts, allowing members to meet in a more focused "Gordon meeting" style format. This year's meeting was held March 19 - March 22, 2013 The Sebel-Kirkton Park, Pokolbin, NSW. The half-day imaging workshop prior to the start of the main meeting continues to be a major draw card and was chaired across three session themes by Rohan Teasdale (High- and Super resolution microscopy), Will Hughes (Emerging techniques) and Jenny Stow (Quantitative imaging). As usual there was a high quality field of invited international presenters. This year's ANZSCDB plenary lecturer, sponsored by the ANZSCDB and introduced on behalf of the society by President-elect Carol Wicking, was Didier Stainier of the Max Planck Institute for Heart and Lung Research, Germany who presented his latest findings on development in zebrafish. The Hunter meeting continues to an

important meeting for ANZSCDB members. Congrats to Co-convenors Sally Dunwoodie (Victor Chang Institute, NSW) and Jennifer Stow, (IMB, University of Queensland). The next meeting will be held March 25-28th and Sarah Russell will be the convener.

2nd Meeting of the Australian Network of Cardiac and Vascular Development.

This meeting is taking place on the 31st October -1st November at Broadbeach Surf Life Saving Club on the Gold Coast, Queensland. It is pitched at cardiac and vascular developmental biologist as well as those in vascular and cardiac regeneration and some clinicians will also be in attendance. Last year the inaugural meeting had about 50-60 attendees and it is hoped a similar number will attend this year.

The ANZSCDB Committee

An excellent initiative of the previous President was the formalization of the ANZSCDB committee. A boarder committee is required by the ANZSCDB constitution and the previous executive decided to invite prominent members to form 'The Committee' to provide advice, direction and participate in decision-making. The current Committee consists of Chris Mitchell (VIC), Sharad Kumar (SA), Phil Crosier (NZ), Miranda Grounds (WA), Richard Harvey (NSW), Peter Koopman (QLD) and Alpha Yap (QLD) (Past President) who have agreed to serve in these positions and provide oversight for the Society. Each member will serve a 2 year term, which can be renewed. The current term of the existing Committee now requires re-nomination. An issue is that all the members came on simultaneously and consequently how turnover occurs on the committee needs to be examined in order to maintain "corporate memory". The formal role that the committee plays is providing advice and judging applicants for the society's two major awards, The Presidents Medal and the Young Investigator Award. I wish to thank members of the committee for their advice and help during the year.

Corporate Sponsors.

One of the issues that executive dealt with over the last year is to place our relationship with our corporate sponsors on firmer footing. We have also cemented our sponsorship arrangements with Sigma for the President's Medal and Zeiss Inc for the ANZSCDB Young Investigator Award, who have indicated a wish for an ongoing sponsorship arrangement. We are most grateful to both these companies for their continued support of our elite scientists. A regular yearly invoicing scheme has been put in place for each of the sponsorship arrangements. Also communication with the sponsors about the recipient of the award that they sponsor and involvement in the advertising in the newsletter has all increased. As detailed below, the newsletter has been a useful tool in keeping sponsors on side and it is important that the professional feel of the newsletter is maintained. We have been able to in the last 12 months engage a third co-operate sponsor of the society, Leica Biosystems. Leica has agreed to sponsor the awarding of the ANZSCDB Leica PhD Student International Travel Award. This award is made to a student in his or her last two years of their PhD for travel to an international meeting.

Newsletter

Fiona Wylie however took over the role of newsletter editor for the Winter Newsletter last year and has continued to the job extremely ably. I want to thank Fiona for all her efforts in getting the newsletter together. Fiona also writes much of the content of the newsletter and therefore is a very important individual in the newsletter effort. A number

innovations in format have given the newsletter a more professional look and several new features have been introduced, including an opinion column where members can discuss society related issues and a publication show case where a number of high profile member publications are showcased each issue. I think this has worked very well and individual members have put a lot of effort in producing excellent and highly informative opinion pieces. It remains a very important vehicle for attracting and cementing sponsorship.

Travel Support.

I am also very pleased to announce that the inaugural ANZSCDB Leica PhD Student International Travel Award has been awarded to Cesar Canales Martinez from the School of Medical Sciences, University of New South Wales to attend the American Society of Human Genetics meeting. Well done to Cesar and many thanks again to Leica for the support of our young scientists. As mentioned above this new award, to the value of \$2500 is sponsored entirely by Leica and provides travel support to a PhD student in their last two years to an international meeting. These awards are competitive and thus provide additional weight to the winners CV.

Secretariat and ANZSCDB Web site.

After an analysis of the society's needs and the different possibilities available to us for running of the society's secretariat we transitioned smoothly to a new secretariat early this year. ASN Events will now be running the society's secretariat and in parallel we have also revamped the society's web site and updated it. It will as always need constant updating but we believe this is a big step forward and places the society's secretariat on a firmer long term footing as well as providing a cost effective solution to the societies secretariat needs. A big thank you goes to Maree Overall and her team at ASN for coordinating the transition so effectively. I also wish to acknowledge the efforts of Magic Touch, and Ros Barrett- Lennard and Keith Stanley for all their dedication over the years running the Society's secretariat.

Challenges Ahead.

Finances and Sustainability.

Juggling the society's meager finances remains an ongoing challenge. Reviewing and forecasting the society's expenses and contributions is becoming increasingly problematic. The revenue from Combio is often not released for some considerable time after the meetings are over, a process that is largely out of our control and extremely frustrating for the treasurer. For example we have yet to receive any indication of the fiscal bottom line for Cairns, which occurred two years ago. Also as mentioned above, Combio finances are not always a reliable mechanism of income. Many of the recent Combios have produced small or little income at all, and for example Perth Combio is currently predicted to just break even, so we cannot expect any revenue from this current meeting. Furthermore income from membership is largely static, or in moderate decline. This is perhaps the single most difficult challenge for the society as it moves forward.

As a result of these challenges the last 5 years have seen the society operate consistently in a deficit mode, and this has led to a considerable erosion of the society's fiscal

position, specifically the term deposit. Over the last two years the outgoing executive has taken a fiscally conservative view believing that where ever possible our expenses should at least balance with our income and that the term deposit savings should be, at least, not eroded and in times of largess be added to.

In order to solve some of these issues, and maintain our current portfolio of funded activities, we have pursued several strategies this year. We increased our membership fee bringing it into line with a number of our sister societies. We cut back on some areas of expenditure, including the secretariat, changing to a new provider ASN Events, as outlined above. This has reduced our administrative costs considerably. We also have more rigorously sought to secure payment from the society's sponsors, which had been somewhat haphazard in the past. This has provided for the first budget surplus for 6 years in the society, and has turned an 8K deficit into a 13K surplus all in the face of a dramatically reduced Combio income.

Current Membership Fees.

| Membership Type | Fee |
|---|------------|
| Australian Member (p/a) | AU\$100.00 |
| Australian Member (3 years package) | AU\$250.00 |
| Australian Student/Retired Member* (p/a) | AU\$35.00 |
| Australian Student/Retired Member* (3 year package) | AU\$80.00 |
| Corporate Member (p/a) | AU\$400.00 |

Membership of the Society

Although the outgoing executive is optimistic about the future of the society and its ongoing budget position, which we think can be sustained in the face of unpredictable Combio income, the big issue that remains a priority for the incoming executive is to increase the membership of the Society. Despite several attempts over a number of years to increase the membership it remains to hover stubbornly at the 300 mark. It currently sits at 283 down from 303 from the previously year. 195 are regular members and the remainder students. Several strategies have been put in place to try and increase membership. Making awards contingent on membership and increasing the numbers of such awards, systematically chasing down lapsed members which the new secretariat is now doing, and more broadly making the benefits of membership known. It is clear the local state reps will have to take the brunt of increasing membership and it local action that will likely result in increased membership. It is hoped that the increased emphasis on the local ANZSCDB meetings will provide a mechanism for increasing membership. However it remains a challenge to maintain the member base and let alone grow it.