



## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

**35th Annual Meeting of the ANZSCDB at Combio, September 30 2015**

**Melbourne Convention Centre**

**Melbourne Victoria**

Dear Friend and Colleagues

This is my final report as President of ANZSCDB before I hand over to our President-Elect Sally Dunwoodie. I am pleased to present the activities and initiatives that the society has been involved in over the past year.

### **Outgoing executive**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the outgoing executive, Secretary Jo Bowles (IMB, UQ), Treasurer Rohan Teasdale (IMB, UQ) and Past-President Pete Currie (ARMI, Monash University) for their efforts over the past two years. Working with this dedicated group of people, along with President-Elect Sally Dunwoodie (Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute, Sydney), has made my job as President much easier and enjoyable. I wish Sally and her new executive all the best for their coming term in office.

### **Retiring Committee members**

Alpha Yap (University of Queensland) and Sharad Kumar (University of SA) are retiring from the ANZSCDB advisory committee. Both have served on this committee since its inception, and we thank them for their valuable contribution over the years. As current Past-President Peter Currie (ARMI, Monash University) will join the committee and a new member from SA will be elected at the AGM.

### **State/NZ Chapter activities and representatives**

Our state and NZ representatives play an extremely important role in the society, being the frontline for our recruitment and local engagement efforts. A major responsibility of the state reps is the organisation of the state meetings. Annual Cell and Developmental Biology Days are held in Victoria, Queensland, SA and NSW, while WA and NZ attach their efforts to established meetings. These meetings have become a major focus for ANZSCDB and I would like to thank our state reps for the huge effort they, along with their local organising committees, put into the organisation of these events.

#### *2015 State State Cell and Developmental Biology Meetings*

The NSW meeting was held on March 16, and was hugely successful. Plenary speakers were Nadia Rosenthal (ARMI, EMBL Australia) and Professor Olivier Pourquié (Harvard University, USA). Upcoming meetings will be held in Brisbane on October 2 (plenary speaker, John Wallingford, University of Texas at Austin); Melbourne also on October 2 (plenary speaker, Guangshuo Ou, UCSF, Tshingua University, China); and Adelaide on November 17 (plenary speaker, Richard Marais, Cancer Research UK's Manchester Institute).

This year ANZSCDB sponsored a student prize at the Combined Biological Sciences Meeting (WA).

I would like to thank our retiring state reps for all their hard work: Mat Francois (Qld), Annemiek Beverdam (NSW), Michael Samuel (SA), Julia Horsefield and Elizabeth Duncan (NZ), Nathan Pavlos (WA), Kristen Barratt (ACT) and Louise Cheng (Vic). New state reps will be elected at the upcoming AGM.

### **External Meeting Support**

In addition to providing support for our state meetings we also sponsored two major events on the Cell and Developmental Biology calendar. Firstly, we continued our long time support of the Hunter Cell Biology Meeting that was held on March 16-20 at a new venue, the Plaza Hunter Valley Resort. The 2015 ANZSCDB sponsored lecture was delivered by Olivier Pourquié (Harvard University, USA). The new venue, the inclusion of the first Hunter Systems Biology Meeting and the stellar line-up of speakers all contributed to the success of this meeting. Congratulations to the convenor Rohan Teasdale (University of Queensland) and the co-convenor Patrick Humbert (Peter Mac Callum Institute, Melbourne).

This year also saw the return of the Australian Developmental Biology Workshop. The 7<sup>th</sup> workshop was held from 12-15 November 2014 at Tangalooma Resort on Moreton Island in Brisbane. Invited speakers were Robb Krumlauf (Stowers Institute for Medical Research, Kansas City, Missouri, USA), Sally Dunwoodie (Victor Chang Cardiac Research Centre, Sydney, Australia), Mary Mullins (Perelman School of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania, USA), Phil Crosier (University of Auckland, New Zealand) and Thomas Lecuit (Development Biology Institute of Marseille Luminy, Marseille, France). This workshop is a fantastic opportunity for those newer members of the Australian Developmental Biology community to rub shoulders with colleagues in a highly interactive environment and we were very pleased to provide support.

ANZSCDB has previously provided support for a number of other meetings on an *ad hoc* basis. Following discussions at last year's Council Meeting this was discontinued this year due to the increasing number of requests for meetings (making it difficult to prioritise those worthy of support). We will be reviewing our sponsorship priorities over the coming months to ascertain the way we can best serve the needs of our members.

### **COMBIO**

Combio is the annual meeting of the society and continues to be the major focus of our scientific efforts.

#### ***Combio2014***

Combio2014 was held in Canberra from September 28 to October 2, and was extremely successful. Thanks to the conference chair, Edna Hardeman, the Programme Chair, Jacque Mathews, the rest of the committee and of course Sally Jay and her team for superb organisation. The cell and developmental biology streams were organised by ANZSCDB representatives Kat Gaus (UNSW) and Richard Harvey (Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute, Sydney) respectively and we thank them for their efforts in making Combio a great showcase for cell and developmental biology both nationally and internationally. Plenary speakers included Nobel Laureate John Gurdon, Jennifer Lippincott-Schwartz, Marino Zerial, Aki Kusumi, Kateri Moore and Tom Rando.

At the 2014 meeting ANZSCDB ran a session entitled “Making cell and developmental biology attractive in the current funding climate”. This session was designed to give members the opportunity to discuss strategies we can use to capitalise on funding opportunities in the current trying times for research funding. The panel consisted of Melissa Little (UQ), Sharad Kumar (Centre for Cancer Biology, SA), Peter Gunning (UNSW) and Richard Harvey (VCCRI, NSW) who all did a great job of keeping the discussion on track and sharing their insights from various perspectives. Thanks to our panel members and everyone who came along and participated in the discussion.

Another regular feature of Combio is the ANZSCDB Dinner, which offers our members the chance to socialise and network in an informal environment. This is also an opportunity to get to know our international speakers and to thank them for their contributions to the meeting. The Combio2014 dinner returned to the site of the very first dinner instigated by Alpha Yap and Helena Richardson at the Chairman and Yip restaurant. We were pleased to have 43 members (37 full members, 6 students) attend the dinner, along with 12 international guests of the society. Thanks to Ruth Arkell, Kristen Barratt, Annemiek Beverdam and Jo Bowles for their help in choosing a restaurant and organising this event, and to our Treasurer Rohan Teasdale for handling the finances.

Finally, Combio also saw the award of poster and oral presentation prizes to our student and post-doc members. These awards are vital in supporting and encouraging our more junior members as they embark on their research careers. Congratulations to 2014 winners:

*ANZSCDB Cell Biology Poster Prize:* Peyman Obeidy, The University of New South Wales. Snapshots of early actin-tropomyosin assembly intermediates

*ANZSCDB Keith Dixon Prize for a Developmental Biology Poster:* Diana Vidovic, The University of Queensland. Analysis of the development of hydrocephalus in mice lacking the transcription factor NF1X.

*David Walsh prize for the best student talk:* Greg Redpath, University of Sydney. Calpain: an overdrive switch for dysferlin membrane repair.

*Toshiya Yamada prize for the best postdoctoral talk:* Kim Lieu, Monash University. The P53-induced factor EI24 inhibits nuclear import through an importin- $\beta$  binding-like domain; and Sarah Creed, Monash University. Beta2-adrenergic signalling regulates invadopodia formation and invasion of breast cancer.

### ***Combio 2015***

Combio 2015 will be held in Melbourne from 27 September to 1 October. At the time of writing 96 ANZSCDB members are registered (including 6 exhibitor registrants) out of a total of 801 registrants (83 exhibitors). The conference chair is Marie Bogoyevitch (University of Melbourne), programme co-chair (ANZSCDB) is David Jans (Monash University) and ANZSCDB representatives on the local organising committee are Edwina McGlenn (ARMI, Monash) and Paul Gleeson (University of Melbourne). We thank them for their effort on organising what promises to be a great meeting. Thanks also to Jo Bowles and our Victorian State reps Louise Cheng and Jan Kaslin for organising the ANZSCDB dinner at the Wayside Inn in South Melbourne on Tuesday September 29, which at the time of writing has 44 members signed up.

**Combio2016**

Organisation for Combio 2016 is well underway and will be held at the Brisbane Convention Centre from 3-7 October. ANZSCDB has plenty of representation on the local organising committee, with conference chair Joe Rothnagel, Jo Bowles, Dominic Ng, Michael Piper and Rohan Teasedale (all from The University of Queensland). We look forward to an exciting meeting in 2016.

**Combio 2017** will be held at the Adelaide Convention Centre 25-29 September 2017.

**Society Awards**

It is a pleasure to announce the winners of the two major ANZSCDB awards, the President's Medal and the Emerging Leader Award (formerly the Young Investigator Award). I am extremely grateful to members of the ANZSCDB committee, who were given the extremely difficult task of ranking an incredibly strong and worthy field of nominees for both awards. As always, having the advice of this group of highly successful senior members was invaluable.

**The President's Medal (sponsored by Sigma-Aldrich)** is the highest honour bestowed by ANZSCDB and recognises outstanding contributions to cell and developmental biology in Australia and NZ. We are extremely grateful to have the continued sponsorship of Sigma-Aldrich who have sponsored this award since 2003.

The 2015 ANZSCDB President's Medallist is Professor Melissa Little from the Murdoch Children's Research Institute in Melbourne. Melissa is a leading figure in developmental and stem cell biology in Australia and internationally. She has been known for many years for her seminal contributions to the study of the development of the urogenital system, efforts that culminated recently in the successful differentiation of a pluripotent stem cell into a mini kidney *in vitro*. These are landmark studies with implications for future kidney regeneration efforts. In addition to her considerable scientific achievements, Melissa is well known for her leadership and advocacy roles in the scientific community, including a stint as Chief Scientific Officer of the Australian Stem Cell Centre and current role as Vice-President of the Australian Society for Stem Cell Research. She also served on the Australian government Wills and McKeon strategic reviews into Health and Medical Research, and is a member of the NHMRC Research Committee. There is no doubt Melissa is an extremely deserving recipient of the 2015 President's Medal – congratulations Melissa.

**The ANZSCDB Emerging Leader Award**

For some years now there has been debate about the appropriateness of the title "Young Investigator Award" for the ANZSCDB award that recognises our up-and-coming leaders in cell and developmental biology. It was felt that the title Emerging Leader Award more accurately reflects the purpose of this award and so we have re-named the award. I am extremely pleased to announce that this year's winner is Associate Professor Brett Collins from the Institute for Molecular Bioscience at the University of Queensland.

Brett works at the interface of cell and structural biology and has made major contributions to our understanding of the structure-function relationships governing membrane trafficking machineries, resulting in publications in leading scientific journals at all stages of his career to date. Brett's work is a unique combination of structural and cell biology, and through key collaborations Brett is making inroads into understanding the structural consequences of mutations affecting proteins involved in trafficking in neurological diseases such as

Alzheimer's and Parkinson's. Brett is clearly a rising star in the Australian cell biology community and is extremely worthy of this award.

### ***Leica International Student Travel Award(s)***

Leica have again this year provided support to assist our student members with travel to attend an international meeting. The number of applications for this award continues to grow (22 this year, up from 14 in 2014, with all applicants deserving our support). To help spread the support we continued with the tradition we started last year and made two independent awards. This year's recipients are Shannon Nicolson from the University of Adelaide and Joan Rohl from Queensland University of Technology. Shannon will attend the Gordon Research Seminar and the GRC on Autophagy in Stress, Development and Disease in California in March 2016, and Joan will attend and speak at the 7th Joint Meeting of the European Tissue Repair Society & the Wound Healing Society in Copenhagen in October, 2015.

The increasing numbers applying for this award suggest there is a real need for this type of support amongst our younger members and I suggest ANZSCDB consider ways of expanding these types of awards to reach more students and also post-docs.

### **Corporate Supporters**

We are extremely grateful to all of our corporate supporters. As already mentioned Sigma-Aldrich and Leica Microsystems are our major sponsors and generously support the President's Medal and International Student Travel Award(s) respectively. Our other corporate supporters are Promega, BioTools and Australian Bioresources and we are extremely grateful for their continued support. We would also like to thank Carl Zeiss who have very generously supported the Young Investigator Award (now the Emerging Leader Award) since its inception in 2008. Unfortunately Zeiss were unable to continue with this support this year. We will be actively looking for another sponsor for our Emerging Leader Award for next year (please send any suggestions to President-Elect Sally Dunwoodie). Our corporate supporters are entitled to free advertising in the society newsletters. A number of other companies and institutes support the state meetings and we are also grateful to them.

### **Membership**

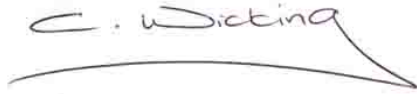
With a lot of effort by our state reps and executive we have been able to lift the membership to 372 as of September 22, 2015 (compared to 337 in September 21 2014, 283 in September 2013 – this includes all categories of members). We continue to explore ways we can attract members and make the society attractive by establishing new initiatives. Much of this falls to the state reps as they are responsible for running local events that are paramount in engaging members of our community and enforcing the value in belonging to ANZSCDB.

### **Newsletter and Social Networking**

We currently have two newsletters per year and, along with our regular email broadcasts, these continue to be a major vehicle for disseminating information about the society. Our Newsletter Editor Fiona Wylie not only co-ordinates and assembles each newsletter but also writes much of the content. She is an extremely valuable member of our team and we thank her for the huge effort she puts in for each newsletter. Also thanks to a former NZ rep Megan Wilson who established our facebook and twitter accounts and continues to maintain these.

Again I would like to acknowledge the huge efforts of the outgoing executive, especially Jo and Rohan. I also thank all members for your support over the past two years and wish Sally and her executive all the best for the coming term.

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C. Wicking". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a long, sweeping horizontal line that extends to the right.

Carol Wicking, PhD  
Outgoing President ANZSCDB  
September 2015