

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT  
TO THE 16TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ANZSCDBI  
HELD IN MELBOURNE IN SEPTEMBER 1997**

The Society has had a busy year with the momentum established by the previous Executive making it easy for new developments to be put in place. I thank Peter French, Mark Gorrell and Russell Ludowyke for their considerable support in establishing the new Executive in Perth and, particularly thank the new Treasurer, Catriona Lloyd, and the new Secretary, Deirdre Coombe for their tremendous work. Deirdre has considerably expanded the scope of the newsletter and made it into a very dynamic publication. The present meeting is the first one held under the new name of the Society and I congratulate the Organisers of this meeting. The energy and enthusiasm of all of these people and the many other active members of the Society has made this a very productive year.

The Society is in an increasingly strong position. There has been a considerable increase in membership, much of from new members with a strong molecular biology focus and this bodes very well for the future. This has focused attention on the relationship of this Society with the wider Cell and Molecular Biology interests of the Asia Pacific region and the desire to develop strong collaborative links in these areas. This has been the subject of several items in recent newsletters and is an area that will continue to attract attention and hopefully lead to some very constructive initiatives in the near future. I feel that it is an area of particular interest for the role of our society.

The establishment of the WWW page for the ANZSCDBI has been a very important development. This is based in Perth and linked to several other sites, most noticeable being the splendid WWW page run by Brian Key for the 1997 conference, which is an outstanding example of the power of this medium. The expansion of the WWW site, combined with the email networks, allows highly efficient dissemination of information and communication between members of the Society. The availability of these electronic media opens up many completely new possibilities for the Society.

In part this has resulted in some re-organisation of the State and New Zealand local committees. It has been suggested that there should be a maximum of two formal representatives for each branch: these people should be very active on behalf of the Society and be strongly supported by an active local committee which should serve as a training ground for future representatives through interactions with past and present local ANZSCDBI members. It is felt that some support should be given to the New Zealand branch, to recruit new members, facilitate some dynamic activities and develop a critical mass of members there.

4

Another important area that is developing successfully is joint meetings with like-minded Societies: this underlies the organisation of the 1996 meeting, is well advanced for the 1997 meeting in Adelaide, and is under discussion for the 1998 meeting in Queensland. Because of the relatively small size of the scientific community in Australia and the overlap of many areas of research this approach seems essential, but requires long-term planning and good communication and collaboration between the various societies.

There has been active participation with other societies and their news is regularly emailed out to the ANZSCDBI local committees. Links with FASTS have been consolidated: Eldon Ball was very impressed after attending the FASTS meeting in Canberra in November, 1996 and will be similarly representing the ANZSCDBI at the FASTS 1997 meeting. We are grateful for him in his continuing role as Public Officer for the ANZSCDBI. Other representatives have attended meetings of ASMR, and Mark Gorrell was present at one in Sydney on September 26th.

Looking to the future, the need is to build upon this energy and these recent developments. In order to attract more students and young members to the Society, various initiatives are under consideration - these include: a list of benefits of belonging to ANZSCDBI which is being compiled; strong support for the idea of mentoring students at National Conferences; discussion of new forms of travel awards (perhaps on a \$/km basis); and a collegiate student-exchange-system. Because of the superb images often captured in studies of cell and developmental biology - facilitated by sophisticated new technologies - the promotion of this visual aspect of our research activities, by exhibitions and attractive prizes, is also being pursued. As we enter the powerful electronic era it is appropriate that the history of the ANZSCDBI is now being compiled. This is being undertaken by Ivan Bertoncello in close collaboration with the State and New Zealand branches, and all members are asked to provide copies of historical photographs, anecdotes, programmes and memorabilia that might be of interest, before they are lost with time. This task should be completed by early 1998, it will consolidate the past and present activities of ANZSCDBI and provide a strong foundation to build upon for the future.

Miranda Grounds  
President

