

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

27th Annual Meeting of the ANZSCDB at ComBio2008

23th September, 2008

Canberra Convention Centre

Dear friends and colleagues,

It has been an honour and privilege to serve this Society over the past two years. The highlights in this past year are several-fold.

The Young Investigator Award. I believe that the inauguration of the ANZSCDB Young Investigator Award has been our Society's major achievement this year. As first conceived by Graham Lieschke and Richard Harvey, this award is intended to recognize the scientific achievements of younger members of our Society. It was designed both to acknowledge achievement and to promote young scientists who will figure prominently in the future of our disciplines, and hence the future of this Society.

Accordingly, the prize includes the Award (to be presented at ComBio) as well as scientific presentations: a Symposium talk at ComBio and two institutional research seminars. We hoped that sponsoring these presentations under the banner of the Young Investigator Award would provide a useful way for the Society to enhance the profile of its young scientists.

We called for nominations in October 2008 and the selection committee convened to deliberate in December. That committee consisted of four senior members of the Society chaired by myself. As expected, the quality of the nominees was excellent and the choice difficult. The selection committee was guided in its choice by both the quality of the accomplished research and evidence of established independence. I was delighted to announce that the inaugural Young Investigator Award went to Dr. Sally Dunwoodie from the Victor Chang Research Institute. Sally will receive her award at ComBio 08 and present her work in Symposium 16 (Patterning and Morphogenesis). Additionally, Sally presented her research under the auspices of the Young Investigator Award at the Peter MacCallum Cancer Center and will do so again later in the year at the Queensland Brain Institute.

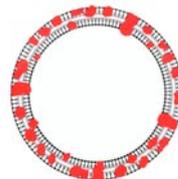
I am doubly pleased that Carl Zeiss Australia has agreed to sponsor the award for three years. This generous support is testimony to Zeiss Australia's commitment to our Society's research and its future.

Membership of the Society. It is gratifying to note that as of June 30th, 2008 we had 386 members in the Society (compared with 281 members at the of 2006-2007 financial year). Of these, 255 were scientists and 131 were students.

Several factors are likely to have contributed to this growth in the Society. Firstly, an effective web site, with the capacity for on-line membership, has made it easier to join and renew, for members to check their membership status, and for the Society to keep a track of its membership. For this I thank Ros Barrett-Leonard and Magic Touch Inc. for their punctilious service, and Fiona Simpson for her assiduous oversight during her term as Society Treasurer.

Secondly, members have been actively promoting the Society through local and national meetings. This is an important avenue that we should continue to

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promote. Finally, a major factor is the leadership shown by more senior members in promoting the Society. In particular, I'd suggest that a key way for us to recruit students is for their lab heads to encourage them to join. This provides their introduction to the ANZSCDB; it is then our responsibility to ensure that they find it rewarding to remain in the Society.

Scientific Meetings. ComBio remains our Annual Scientific Meeting. On the Society's behalf, I'd like to extend our warmest thanks to Ruth Arkell and Rob Saint for their efforts in representing the ANZSCDB on the ComBio 2008 Organizing Committee. This is a very demanding and time-consuming task and they have assembled an exciting program for the meeting. One innovation for this year is the Society dinner to be held at the Chairman and Yip restaurant in Canberra. Edna Hardeman suggested this venture and the enthusiasm for the event was tremendously encouraging. I hope it will become a regular feature of our meetings in the future.

As announced at last year's AGM, we have initiated a 3-year commitment to the Hunter Cellular Biology Meeting. For this we sponsor an international speaker who participates in the HCBM and also travels to present research seminars in other cities. ANZSCDB's sponsorship is prominently acknowledged on the HCBM web site, in the program, and during the course of the meeting. The inaugural ANZSCDB speaker was Yixian Zhang from the Carnegie Institute (Baltimore) and Howard Hughes Medical Institute. Yixian spoke about her work on regulation of the mitotic apparatus at the HCBM and also presented seminars at the Centre for Molecular Genetics of Development (ANU) and the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre. Our HCBM international speaker for 2009 will be Lila Solnica-Krezel, an expert on morphogenesis and gastrulation who will also visit Monash University and The University of Queensland.

Our Society will also participate in the 4th Australia Health and Medical Research Congress to be held in Brisbane in November (16-21). We are organizing symposia with international keynote speakers that include Elaine Fuchs (Rockefeller University and HHMI), James Nelson (Stanford) and Wanjin Hong (IMCB, Singapore). I want to thank Nathan Subramaniam for all his efforts in putting our contribution together.

We are also keen to support a range of smaller local and national meetings. This is generally provided on an ad hoc basis. Currently we have provided funds to assist the NSW Cell and Developmental Biology meeting, the ANZSCDB-MEG-VSDB meeting in Melbourne and forthcoming support for the 2009 Barossa Signaling Meeting and 2009 Indian Ocean Rim Colloquium.

Outreach. We maintain our affiliations with the Federation of Australian Scientific and Technological Societies (FASTS) and the Australian Society for Medical Research (ASMR). As a consequence of our affiliation with FASTS, Natasha Harvey and Patrick Humbert represented the Society at Science meets Parliament this year, an invaluable opportunity for our scientists to interact with federal parliamentarians.

Additionally we have been invited to join as a corresponding member of the National Committee of Biomedical Sciences of the Australian Academy of Science. The broad aim of this committee is to foster the biomedical sciences in Australia. Other corresponding Societies include ASCEPT, ASBMB, ESA, ASMR, AACB, ASI, ANS and ASB.

The President's Medal. As always, a highlight of the Society's year is the President's Medal. It recognizes excellence in our disciplines and ideally does honor both to the recipient and the ANZSCDB. I'm delighted to record here that the President's Medalist for 2008 is Professor Rob Saint of ANU. Rob's work elegantly encompasses both our disciplines of Cell and Developmental Biology. His accomplishments, both through outstanding research and unstinting support of the scientific community, continue the proud lineage of President's Medalists.

Finally, I want to thank my colleagues, Helen Cooper, Fiona Simpson, Edna Hardeman and Graham Lieschke for their unstinting support, sage advice and boundless energy. I know the Society will be in good hands with Edna and her Executive team.

Alpha Yap

President

*Australia and New Zealand Society for Cell and Developmental Biology
September 23th, 2008.*