

January 2018



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Australasian Neuroscience Society Newsletter



ANS President

Professor Linda Richards
*Queensland Brain Institute
University of Queensland*
Brisbane, QLD 4072, Australia
T: +61-7 334 66355
richards@uq.edu.au

ANS Secretary

A/Prof Kay Double
*Biomedical Science and Brain and
Mind Centre, University of Sydney*
Sydney, NSW 2006, Australia
T: +61-2-9114-4292
kay.double@sydney.edu.au

ANS Treasurer

Professor Gary Egan
*Monash Biomedical Imaging
Monash University*
Clayton, VIC 3800, Australia
T: +61-3 9905 0100
gary.egan@monash.edu

ANS Editor

A/Prof Helen Cooper
*Queensland Brain Institute
University of Queensland*
Brisbane, QLD 4072, Australia
T: +61-7 334 66354
h.cooper@uq.edu.au

Message from the President

“Education is applied neuroscience” Prof. James Vickers, Director, Wicking Dementia Research and Education Centre, University of Tasmania

“Understanding the brain will improve the quality of life for all people in obvious ways and in ways we are yet to imagine.” Prof. Linda Richards, ANS President, Deputy Director Queensland Brain Institute

Have an inspiring science quote?
I'd love to hear it (richards@uq.edu.au)



**Prof Linda
Richards**

*PhD, FAA, FAHMS
President, ANS*

ANS Annual Meeting

What an exciting way to close 2017! The ANS annual meeting in Sydney was a wonderful success with so many scientific highlights for all participants. ANS Council extends a huge thank you to the Sydney local organising committee (Thomas Fath (Chair), Melissa Tadros, Andrew Affleck, Greg Sutherland) and to All Occasions Group, who were the professional conference organisers.

Conference delegates were treated to the beautiful views from the newly renovated Sydney International Convention Centre at Darling Harbour. There are many highlights from the conference which will be detailed further in this issue. I was especially impressed by the activities of the ANS student body who ran a very successful image competition, speed-mentoring session and social. In addition to the exciting scientific symposia, talks and poster sessions, the Australian and New Zealand Brain Bee Challenge was an exciting and nail-biting event as usual. An inaugural ACAN alumni event was also held, as well as an open meeting of the new ANS Equity and Diversity committee.

The Animals in Research Symposium at the annual meeting sparked some interesting discussion of our responsibilities to educate the public and government around the importance of using animals in research. We expect the committee to develop some policy documents in this area over the coming year.

The ANS annual meeting also provided an opportunity to highlight neuroscience discoveries

(Message from the President
...continued)

by New Zealand and Australian scientists to the wider public. We are very grateful to Dr Tom Keeble and the Florey Neuroscience Institute who managed the media and press releases and obtained a huge media exposure for ANS. A total of 39 media articles resulted from the meeting reaching over 110 million people, and ANS science was featured on two ABC radio segments and a television segment on Seven news. Promoting ANS science is extremely important to maintain public support for our work – thank you Tom!

Australian Brain Alliance Update

The ANS meeting included the Presidential Symposium on Global Brain Projects and was followed by the *Brains at the Dome* event in Canberra the next day, organised by the Australian Brain Alliance (www.brainalliance.org.au), which I chair. The Australian Brain Alliance (ABA) was established to lobby the Australian Government for increased brain research funding.

The Brains at the Dome event outlined the ABA proposal for funding an Australian Brain Initiative followed by talks from the different brain projects underway in the USA, Europe, Japan and Korea. Each project stressed the need for international collaboration to answer the biggest questions in neuroscience.

The afternoon included talks from Dr Caroline Montojo from the Kavli Foundation and Dr John McGrath on his epidemiological work with the World Health Organisation on the prevalence of neurological disease and mental illness in the world.

John talked about the *disability-adjusted life years (DALY)* measure which is the number of years of healthy life lost due to premature death, disabling illness or injury, as a measure of the impact of neurological disease and mental illness on human life.

A valuable website for searching this data is <http://www.healthdata.org/data-visualization/gbd-compare> and a useful overview article is, *Global, regional, and national burden of neurological disorders during 1990–2015: a systematic analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2015*; Lancet Neurol 2017; 16: 877–97; [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S1474-4422\(17\)30299-5](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S1474-4422(17)30299-5). The talk highlighted that global disease has focussed on death as a measure of prevalence and impact whereas neurological disease and mental illness rarely cause immediate death and instead affect a person's quality of life over the long term.

An exciting development at the end of the day was that the international participants, together with Australia, decided to join together to form an International Brain Initiative, akin to the Human Genome project. Download the “Canberra Declaration” here: <http://www.brainalliance.org.au/latest/news/worlds-brain-initiatives-move-forward-together>

The excitement of this declaration led the President of the Australian Academy of Science, Professor Andrew Holmes, to pledge secretariat support for the International Brain Initiative to help establish this group. The ABA will be working hard this year

to secure additional funding for brain research. Please visit the ABA website and pledge your support by clicking on the *be a brain champion* button (<http://www.brainalliance.org.au/join-us>).

In the coming year ANS Council will work on finalising the new ANS website, increasing our sponsorship and membership, and finalising our 5-year strategic plan. We greatly appreciate the input we received via the member survey and will ensure that we incorporate these suggestions into our strategic plan and planning for the upcoming annual meeting in Brisbane, December 3-6, 2018.

I wish all our members a productive and healthy year ahead.



Meeting Report: ANS 2017

Last month more than 750 delegates enjoyed the highly successful 37th Annual Scientific Meeting of the Society at the International Convention Centre, Sydney.

On behalf of the organising committee, I would like to thank all ANS members who helped to shape the meeting by submitting symposia proposals and abstracts, allowing us to put together an exciting scientific program. We would also like to thank everyone who worked behind the scenes, including members of the various programming committees and the poster and oral prize judges.

Thomas Fath

*On behalf of the ANS 2017
Local Organising Committee*

Attendees enjoyed a diverse program with many highlights, including fabulous plenary lectures by Junichi Nabekura (International Plenary, National Institute for Physiological Sciences, Japan), Jürgen Götz (ANS Plenary, The Clem Jones Centre for Ageing Dementia Research), Kathy North (Eccles Plenary, Murdoch Children's Research Institute) and Andrew Lawrence (Laurie Austen Plenary, Florey Institute of Neuroscience & Mental Health). Another major highlight was the opportunity to celebrate the success of one of our own, Prof. Alan Mackay-Sim (ANS Distinguished Achievement Award), who was Australian of the Year in 2017.

Any meeting of this size would not be possible without substantial institutional and corporate

support. We would like to thank all of our sponsors. In particular, we received generous contributions from Neuroscience Research Australia, NSW Health, Brain and Mind Centre (University of Sydney), Mindgardens (UNSW), the Mark Wainwright Analytical Centre (UNSW), Zeiss Imaging and Multichannel Systems. We were also pleased to welcome back our regular trade exhibitors, as well as make the acquaintance of new exhibitors.

An innovation this year was the imaging workshops, sponsored by Zeiss, which were held on the first day of the meeting. The workshops featured talks by senior and early-career scientists about cutting-edge imaging technologies for neuroscience research. The popularity of these workshops raised the possibility that specialised sessions of this kind will be offered in future meetings.

Also new to the Sydney meeting were two special student/early-career researcher events. On the Sunday afternoon there was a session about grant and fellowship writing, while on the Monday evening there was a "speed mentoring" event with senior academics giving advice on topics such as establishing collaborations and writing papers. Thanks to a very active ANS student committee, these events were a great success for our younger and slightly older researchers alike.

On the Tuesday the weather cleared up just in time for the conference Gala Dinner cruise on Sydney Harbour. Delegates enjoyed fine food, plenty of drink, and live music by 'Group Therapy', with the fabulous Sydney skyline as a backdrop.



(Meeting Report: ANS 2017
...continued)



1st Prize for Oral Presentation.

Sangwon Yoo with
Kay Double

As always, the student oral and poster presentations were of outstanding quality. Congratulations to the following six students who received awards for their presentations.

The **1st Prize for Oral Presentation** (sponsored by the Brain and Mind Centre, University of Sydney) was awarded to Sangwon Yoo (The University of Melbourne) for her talk entitled: *'Identifying neuropathological deficits in the cuprizone model of demyelination by utilising a novel imaging technique.'*

The **Istvan Törk Prize for Oral Presentation** was awarded to Paul Mirabella (Monash University) for his talk entitled: *'Glucose-sensing neurons of the mediobasal hypothalamus project to brown adipose tissue.'*



ANS 2017 Local Organising Committee

[L-R] Greg Sutherland, Thomas Fath (Chair), Andrew Affleck (not shown Melissa Tadros)

The **3rd Prize for Oral Presentation** was awarded to Rebecca Norris (The Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health, University of Melbourne) for her talk entitled: *'Mice lacking the synaptic protein neuroligin-3 show altered cognition in a battery of touchscreen tests.'*

The **Sir Grafton Elliot Smith Prize for best Poster Presentation** was awarded to Diana Sketriene (The University of Melbourne) for her poster entitled: *'N-acetylcysteine reduces compulsive-like behavior in diet-induced obese rats.'*

The **2nd Prize for Poster Presentation** was awarded to Lauren Whyte (South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute) for her poster entitled: *'Reduction in open field activity in APP NL-G-F mice is not modified by heterozygous deletion of Hexb.'*

The **3rd Prize for Poster Presentation** was awarded to Dylan Fox (Monash University) for his poster entitled: *'The marmoset as a model for understanding complex visual behaviour.'*

ANS Sydney 2017 was a great success overall, with much positive feedback. Of course, there are always improvements to make, and we also sought and received constructive feedback on how future meetings can even better serve Australian and New Zealand neuroscience.

We look forward to seeing you all in Brisbane in December 2018 to celebrate neuroscience and collegiality.



Istvan Törk Prize for Oral Presentation

Paul Mirabella with Tom Burns

Society Awards at ANS 2017

The Society offers a number of prestigious annual awards in recognition of excellence in neuroscience research. At the Sydney AGM I was pleased to announce the following awards for 2017.

Kay Double

ANS Secretary

Mark Rowe Award: For a first or senior author publication based on research completed as a PhD student or postdoc and published within 3 years of the award of PhD. Awarded to Brendan Bicknell, a PhD candidate at the Queensland Brain Institute and the University of Queensland for his publication: Bicknell BA, Goodhill GJ. 'Emergence of ion channel modal gating from independent subunit kinetics', *Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A*. 2016 Sep 6;113(36):E5288-97.

AW Campbell Award: Awarded for the best contribution by a member of the Society in their first 5 postdoctoral years. The 2017 AW Campbell awardee is Dr Susanna Park, University of Sydney, who will present the 2018 AW Campbell Plenary lecture at the 2018 ANS meeting in Brisbane.

Nina Kondelos Award: Awarded to a female neuroscientist who has made an outstanding contribution to basic or clinical neuroscience research. This award was made possible by a generous donation by Professor George Paxinos and is named after his late sister. In 2017 the Nina Kondelos Award was presented to Associate Professor Ulrike Grünert of the Save Sight Institute at the University of Sydney.

Articles about the above three awardees will appear in the next issue of the ANS Newsletter.

Paxinos-Watson Award: Acknowledges the most significant paper published by a Society member in 2016. This award was made possible by a generous donation to the Society by Professors George Paxinos and Charles Watson commemorating the publication of their key reference text "The rat brain in stereotaxic coordinates". In 2017 the Paxinos-Watson Award was a dual award to two equally ranked papers: to Jay Bertran-Gonzalez and colleagues for their paper: Matamales M, Skrbis Z, Hatch RJ, Balleine BW, Götz J, Bertran-Gonzalez J, 'Aging-related dysfunction of striatal cholinergic interneurons produces conflict in action selection', *Neuron* 2016 Apr 20; 90(2):362-73; and also to Arne Ittner and colleagues for their paper: Ittner A, Chua SW, Bertz J, Volkerling A, van der Hoven J, Gladbach A, Przybyla M, Bi M, van Hummel A, Stevens CH, Ippati S, Suh LS, Macmillan A, Sutherland G, Kril JJ, Silva AP, Mackay J, Poljak A, Delerue F, Ke YD, Ittner LM, 'Site-specific phosphorylation of tau inhibits amyloid- β toxicity in Alzheimer's mice', *Science* 2016 Nov 18;354(6314):904-908.



Honorary Membership

At the 2017 AGM Emeritus Professor David Vaney of the Queensland Brain Institute and University of Queensland received Honorary Membership of ANS for his distinguished career in neuroscience research, as well as his significant service to the Society. See the article later in this issue for more about David's achievements.

Winners of the 2017

Paxinos-Watson Award
[L-R] Lars Ittner, Arne Ittner,
Jay Bertran-Gonzalez,
Miriam Matamales with
Linda Richards

Student Events at ANS 2017



Rachelle Balez
New student representative
on ANS Council

The ANS Student Body Committee (SBC) held its inaugural events at the recent ANS meeting in Sydney. These events focussed on networking and skill-building for students and early-career researchers (ECRs). We also held a photo competition with the finalists displayed in the main foyer and which generated lots of discussion and interest from meeting delegates.

Our first events, held on the first day of the meeting, were structured as workshops. Dr Lezanne Ooi led a grant and fellowship writing workshop in which she outlined essential tips and tricks for applications. This was followed by a career development symposium and question-and-answer session, where students and ECRs heard from representatives from academia, industry, and science communication, who each discussed the steps they have taken and the lessons they learned along their respective career paths to date. These events were well attended and sparked interesting conversations in-person and on social media during the conference.

Our most popular event was the 'speed networking' session held the following evening, attended by more than 230 students and ECRs. This event was designed to expand networking and employment opportunities for students and ECRs by introducing them to researchers from multiple neuroscience fields and career stages and encouraging conversation on topics of interest, including publishing tips and tricks, how to land an academic job, managing work-life balance, and many more. To lead these discussions, 20 leading scientists

were invited to speak to these topics and students and ECRs rotated every 10-15 minutes to hear from multiple speakers throughout the evening. Many attendees and invited speakers reported having lively and engaging discussions.

Overall, these events were well received and would not have been possible without the work of SBC committee members, and the support of Council members, invited speakers, and photo competition judges. Thank you to everyone who attended.

My term as SBC chair and student representative on the ANS Council ended in December 2017. It has been an honour and a pleasure to represent our student members.

I am pleased to introduce Rachelle Balez, who will be taking over my role this year. Rachelle served as the inaugural SBC Secretary and I have every confidence she will lead the SBC to new heights in 2018!

Tom Burns

*Outgoing student
representative on ANS Council*

Brain Bee 2017 Finals



The finals of the Australian and New Zealand Brain Bee Challenges were held on Monday 4 December during the ANS conference in Sydney.

The Australian winner was Elaine Cheung from MacRobertson Girls' High School in Melbourne and the runner-up was Wenjing Chen from James Ruse Agricultural High School in NSW.

The New Zealand champion was Alan Li from Lincoln High School on the South Island and the runner-up was Jemima Po from the Diocesan School for Girls on the North Island.



Each country's champion received a place to compete at the International Brain Bee, to be held during the FENS Forum, Berlin, in 2018. Expenses will be covered for the champion and a chaperone. The champion and runner-up also received a gift voucher, a 3D brain trophy and a medal and certificate.

The champions were invited to attend the rest of the ANS conference, with three of them taking up the opportunity to attend a variety of talks and to view posters.

Planning for the 2018 challenge will begin soon with online rounds due to commence in March.

Mar Quiroga

*Brain Bee Challenge
coordinator*

Annual General Meeting, ANS 2017

Kay Double

ANS Secretary

The 2017 ANS Annual General Meeting was held on Tuesday 5th December at the Sydney International Convention Centre during the annual conference. The AGM was an opportunity for the Executive to update the members on the activities of the Executive and Council in 2017 and to report on plans for 2018. Reports were presented by the President, Secretary, Treasurer and Editor. For a summary of these reports, please see the AGM Minutes at the end of this issue of the Newsletter.

The AGM Minutes, as well as the audited financial reports of the Society, will soon be available on the new ANS website, currently under development. The webpage will feature the new ANS logo (see next article) and will offer members and the general public a clearer platform for communication and information.

Given that the annual conference and AGM now take place in December, there is less time to

complete and audit the annual financial report. For this reason, Council moved a motion at the AGM to change the ANS financial year to end on June 30th each year, rather than on 30th September as previously. This motion was accepted by the membership and the Society's Constitution will be updated accordingly.

The 2017 ANS awards were presented during the AGM. See an earlier article in this newsletter for the list of awardees. Full articles about each of the major awardees will also appear in the next issue of the newsletter.

We were pleased to present occasional awards to two distinguished members of the Society. Emeritus Professor David Vaney (University of Queensland) was presented with Honorary Membership of ANS, as voted by the membership at the 2015 AGM. See an article about David later in this issue. Professor Alan Mackay-Sim (Griffith University, and 2017 Australian of the Year) was presented with a Distinguished Achievement Award. See the July 2017 issue of the newsletter (available on the ANS website) for an article about Alan.

Council for 2018 were introduced to the membership, including new Council members in the roles of President-Elect, Western Australia State Representative, Neuroscience Research Professional Representative and Student Representative. See elsewhere in this issue for articles about some of the new Council members.



ANS Executive at 2017 AGM

[L-R] Gary Egan (Treasurer), Kay Double (Secretary), James Vickers (Past-President), Linda Richards (President), Helen Cooper (Editor)

Our New Logo

It has served us well for several decades, but our old ANS logo has finally been retired. In its place we have a sharp new logo created for us by Appletree Design.

Note the witty design elements...

- Bubbles that form the shape of the brain
- The Southern Cross traced out in pale blue



**Australasian
Neuroscience
Society**

Call for Symposia – ANS 2018



The next ANS annual conference will be held at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre on 3-6 December 2018. The organizing committee for the conference will be chaired by Prof Joe Lynch (QBI).

The call for symposium proposals for the Brisbane meeting will open on 15 February 2018. The deadline for the submission of proposals will be 31 March 2018. About twenty proposals will be selected by the ANS Council.

As always, the success of the 2018 meeting will depend on the quality and breadth of the symposium program. We encourage submissions from all areas of neuroscience represented within the membership. Consideration will also be given to symposia that include speakers from broader areas of research that are likely to be of interest to Australian and New Zealand neuroscientists. We welcome submissions from both ECRs and senior researchers.

Things to remember when designing your symposium proposal:

- Speakers should come from different regions of Australia and New Zealand
- Symposium proposals that include early career researchers as a chair or speaker are encouraged
- A gender balance of speakers/chairs is strongly encouraged, if not mandatory (see article by the ANS Equity and Diversity Committee later in this issue)
- All Australasian proposers, chairs and speakers must be current members of ANS
- Prior to submission, the proposer should obtain confirmation from *all* speakers that they are willing and able to attend the conference
- The symposium chair cannot speak in the symposium
- ANS will provide support for travel and accommodation costs (\$2500) to assist the participation of *one* overseas speaker in each symposium, and will also pay their registration fee and provide one set of social function tickets

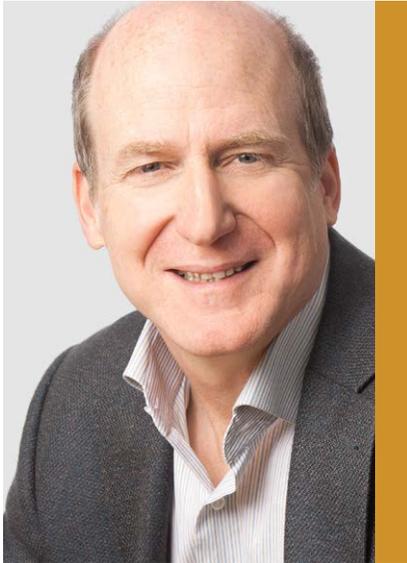
Full guidelines and a new submission form will be posted on the ANS website.

We look forward to receiving your proposal.

Helen Cooper

ANS Editor

First NZ-based President of ANS



Prof Cliff Abraham

ANS President-Elect

For the first time in its history, ANS will be headed by a NZ-based neuroscientist when Professor Cliff Abraham steps into the role of ANS President at the end of 2018.

Cliff is an internationally renowned cellular neuroscientist with a long-standing research interest in the rules and mechanisms governing synaptic plasticity, metaplasticity and memory formation in the brain. His research interests also extend to clinically related areas such as Alzheimer's disease, schizophrenia, neurogenesis and neuroprotection, using animal models.

Originally from the United States, Cliff completed his PhD at the University of Florida before doing a postdoc with Graham Goddard at the University of Otago in Dunedin. After a second postdoc in Sweden, he returned to Dunedin to take up a faculty position at the university and to settle in New Zealand.

For over a decade Cliff chaired the Australasian Winter Conference on Brain Research (AWCBBR), the key annual neuroscience meeting held in NZ. He also founded Otago's Brain Health Research Centre, has served as Director of Health Research Council Programme grants for many years, and is currently co-Director of a national Centre of

Research Excellence, Brain Research NZ – Rangahau Roro Aotearoa. Cliff has received many honours and awards, including election as a Fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand.

Commenting on his selection to be the new President of ANS, Cliff said, "It is a huge honour and challenge to have been nominated and elected as the incoming President. Working with our outstanding Executive and Council, I hope to continue the fine traditions of the Presidents before me, in particular helping shepherd the ongoing growth and development of the Society to make it ever more relevant to the neuroscience communities of Australia and New Zealand, while becoming increasingly engaged with its international partners".

Cliff became President-Elect of ANS at the Sydney AGM and will take over as ANS President from the next AGM in Brisbane in December 2018.

John Bekkers

ANS Newsletter Editor

New Council Representative for ECRs

ANS has recently created a new position on the ANS Council for a “Neuroscience Research Professional representative” who will represent members who are professional neuroscience researchers but not senior group leaders. The first holder of this new position is Dr Erin McAllum, who introduces herself below.

I am a current NHMRC-ARC Dementia Research Development Fellow at the Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health. My background is in biochemistry and neuroscience with particular expertise in using bioanalytical techniques to investigate the role of metals in biology and neurodegenerative disease. My current research is focused on investigating the role of metals in dementia with Lewy bodies and other synucleinopathies.

I have also been actively involved in various organisations and committees that advocate on behalf of young scientists, including being the former chair of my institute’s postdoctoral committee and a former member of the Students of Brain Research (SoBR) committee during my PhD. As a result, I bring a wealth of experience to the role of Neuroscience Research Professional representative for the ANS council.

My vision for this role is to establish an Australian and New Zealand network of early career neuroscience researchers and to encourage their active participation in the Society, including career development events and opportunities.

I am currently establishing the postdoctoral committee of the ANS Council and encourage all those interested in being involved to email me at erin.mcallum@florey.edu.au.



Erin McAllum
New Neuroscience Research
Professional representative on
ANS Council.

Honorary Membership for David Vaney

Professor Emeritus David Vaney was made an Honorary Member of the Australasian Neuroscience Society this year in recognition of his distinguished service to the Society and to neuroscience in Australia and New Zealand. During his productive career, David established an international reputation as a pre-eminent visual neuroscientist, and a leader in promoting and advancing neuroscience both at home and abroad.

David studied zoology at the University of Canterbury (1972-1974) before moving to the John Curtin School of Medical Research to complete his PhD. David's postdoctoral training took him to the Max Planck Institute in Tübingen, Germany, and to the University of Cambridge, where he established an independent research program under the guidance of Professor Horace Barlow. On returning to Australia, David continued to pursue his research as an NHMRC research fellow at the National Vision Research Institute, the Vision, Touch and Hearing Research Centre, and finally at the Queensland Brain Institute.

David is best known for his analysis of the morphological and molecular properties of amacrine cells, the inhibitory interneurons in the mammalian retina, and for his ground-breaking physiological studies focused on retinal ganglion cells. To date, his publications have garnered over 6000 citations, with 26 papers receiving more than 100 citations each.

David has been an outstanding ambassador for Australasian neuroscience. He was a regular invitee at international meetings, and has been honoured with a number of awards, including the 2010 FASEB Boycott Prize for career achievement in retinal neuroscience. He also organized local meetings that raised the international profile of Australasian neuroscience. His now legendary Vision Down Under meetings in 2005, 2007 and 2010 attracted strong interest and participation from the local and international community.

David has a remarkable record for supporting and promoting neuroscience within Australia and New Zealand. He served as President of the (then) Australian Neuroscience Society (2008-2009) and took senior roles on many NHMRC committees.

It is a great pleasure to see David's very significant contributions to Australasian neuroscience acknowledged by this prestigious honour.

Rowland
Taylor

*University of California,
Berkeley*

David Vaney with
Linda Richards



Meeting Report: SCiNDU 2017

SCiNDU Plenary Speakers

[Back L-R] Rafael Yuste,
Alex Pouget, Geoff Goodhill
[Middle L-R] Tobias
Bonhoeffer, John Bekkers,
Adrienne Fairhall, Andre
Van Schaik
[Front L-R] Rosa Cossart,
Daphne Bavelier, Kenji Doya,
Marta Garrido
[Not shown] Pankaj Sah,
Kwabena Boahen, Bernard
Balleine



The 2nd SCiNDU (Systems & Computational Neuroscience Down Under) conference, held from Dec 13th to 15th 2017, followed on from the first such meeting in Dec 2015, both held at QBI. This time it was also a joint meeting with the 10th Australasian Workshop on Neuro-Engineering and Computational Neuroscience, and the 2017 QBI Plasticity Workshop. Financial support was provided by QBI and the ARC Center of Excellence for Integrative Brain Function.

There were 26 talks and 71 posters enjoyed by almost 200 attendees. Fortunately the fears of some members of QBI that the talks would contain

nothing but equations proved to be unfounded. The invited speakers, from France (Rosa Cossart), Switzerland (Alex Pouget and Daphne Bavelier), Germany (Tobias Bonhoeffer), the USA (Rafael Yuste, Adrienne Fairhall and Kwabena Boahen), Japan (Kenji Doya) and Australia (Bernard Balleine, John Bekkers, Marta Garrido, Pankaj Sah and Andre Van Schaik), all gave excellent overviews of their latest exciting results. In addition there were 3-hour tutorials before the start of the main conference from Rafael Yuste (Imaging the function of neural circuits), Alex Pouget (Probabilistic models of decision making) and Kwabena Boahen (Neuromorphic computing).

The late-afternoon poster sessions were well-attended, with both the discussion and the wine flowing freely. The conference dinner was also a hit, enlivened by a piano trio from Brisbane's Jazz Music Institute.

Although all the presentations were very stimulating, two personal favourites of mine were Kwabena Boahen discussing how neuromorphic computing technologies can circumvent some of the fundamental physical limitations that increasingly constrain conventional digital computing, and Daphne Bavelier's demonstrations of the remarkable abilities of certain types of video games to produce generalised improvements in top-down attentional control.

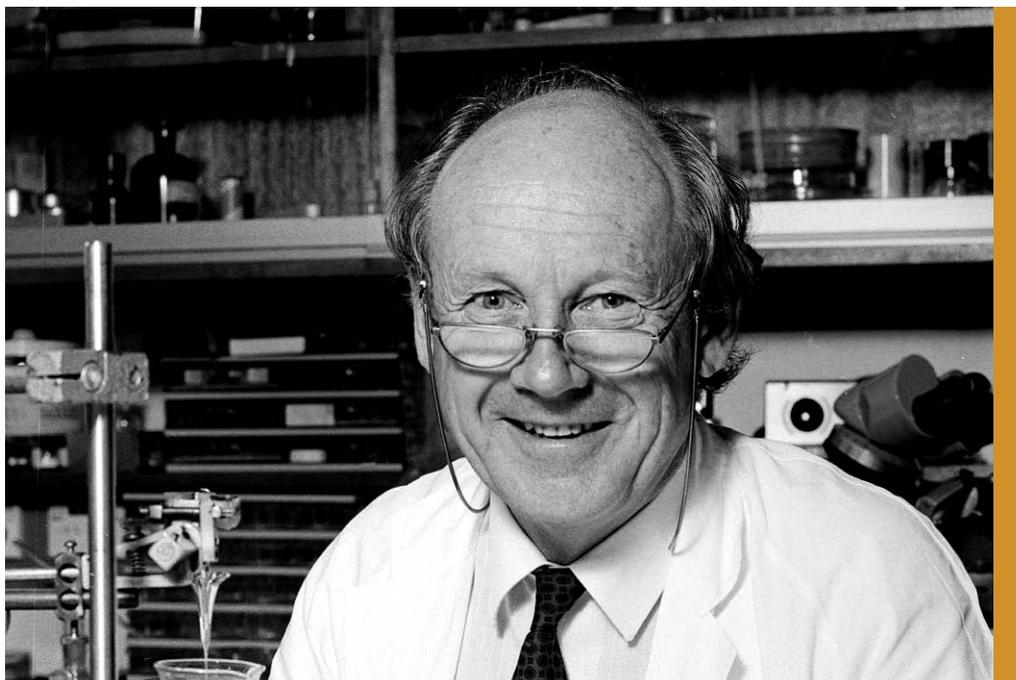
At the conference it was announced that next year's Australasian Workshop on Neuro-Engineering and Computational Neuroscience will be organised by the Complex Systems Group at the University of Sydney. Contact (pulin.gong@sydney.edu.au) for more information.

Funding permitting, we very much hope to hold the 3rd SCiNDU at QBI in 2019, and look forward to seeing you there!

Geoff
Goodhill

Queensland Brain Institute

In Memoriam: David Curtis



David Curtis AC MBBS PhD
FRACP FAA FRS (1927-2017)

Australia lost a legendary neurochemist and neuroscientist when Emeritus Professor David Curtis passed away in December 2017. Here three of his former colleagues give their recollections.

Philip Beart writes:

I have always realized in hindsight that working in David Curtis's team at the John Curtin School was an incredibly amazing and totally unique experience. As a naïve medicinal chemist, who eventually became a neurochemist, when I arrived I had no background in physiology and knew nothing about synapses or neurotransmission. And what was GABA? Indeed at this time in 1969 there were only some 30 papers on GABA and my PhD project was to synthesize structurally rigid analogues of GABA and then David's team would evaluate

their neuropharmacology. When I wandered up to the shielded room I was amazed by the fully exposed cat spinal cord, the recording of synaptic activity and the surrounding electrical gadgetry. How different electrophysiology is today! Surgery was completed before morning tea and recording went until 3-4AM! Microelectrophoresis, 5 and 7 barrel micropipettes, and passage of ion currents of charged molecules on to neurones in the cat spinal cord. Success with Jeff Watkins and NMDA had made David conscious of molecules and pharmacology, and there were amazing repositories of L-glutamate and GABA analogues tucked away in the cupboards. I never knew this was a world famous laboratory and that Sir John Eccles had been involved – how lucky could a postgraduate student be?

Graham Johnston writes:

I spent 15 exciting years working with David Curtis in the John Curtin School. I was recruited by Jeff Watkins of NMDA fame to provide chemical input for David's investigations. The collaboration produced 48 publications including a substantial review on amino acid neurotransmitters that is both David's and my most highly cited publication. These were the days before tissue slices, oocytes and recombinant receptors where we worked on live animals under anaesthesia. David was a highly skilled surgeon who made such investigations possible. He was most at home in his shielded room, filled with custom-built electronics. Many a productive day (and night) was spent in the 'Tardis'. David was greatly influenced by his mentor Sir John Eccles and by the concept of falsifiability as

conceived by Eccles' colleague Karl Popper. His attention to detail was legendary. Sadly David never had many students. To work with him was a privilege for all too few of us. His extensive autobiography written in 2006 for the Society for Neuroscience (USA) is a fascinating read and reveals much about the man.

David Lodge writes:

I came to David Curtis's laboratory in JCSMR in 1974 to join what was the most active group of scientists working on both inhibitory and excitatory amino acid pharmacology in the world. I had travelled overland most of the way to Australia with my wife and four young sons. David and Laurie warmly welcomed this crazy Pom family to Aussie life. Here in Canberra was the cradle of electropharmacology largely based on David's development of multibarrel microelectrophoresis for studying synaptic transmission. The exciting interactions between medicinal chemists and electrophysiologists provided a platform for the new discoveries in identifying amino acids (glutamate and GABA) as the major transmitters of excitation and inhibition within the brain and spinal cord. David was demanding as a senior colleague, requiring high technical and analytical standards, at the same time offering encouragement and constructive criticism in equal measure. His knowledge of the literature was awesome; journal clubs were very lively affairs; visits from eminent international scientists were common. Five years in David's group provided me with the knowledge, excitement and ideas to start a career of my own back in Pommie-land. Thank You.

Phillip Beart

DSc

*Professorial Fellow in the
Florey Neuroscience Institutes
and Adjunct Professor in
Pharmacology, University
of Melbourne*

Graham

Johnston AM

*Emeritus Professor
of Pharmacology and
Medicinal Chemistry,
University of Sydney*

David Lodge

FRS

*Honorary Research Fellow,
University of Bristol*

David Curtis [L] with
Arthur Duggan in the "Tardis"
electrically shielded room
testing a report that whisky
potentiates GABA responses.

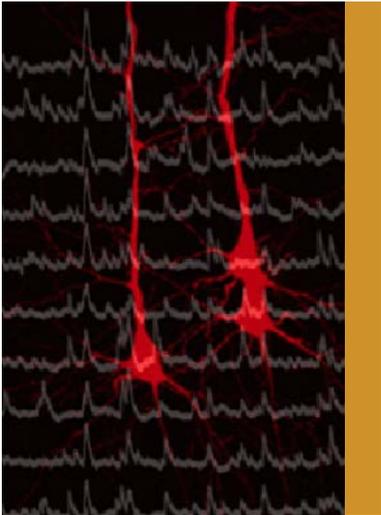


Call for Applications for ACAN 2018

Graduate students and postdoctoral fellows interested in using electrophysiological and optical techniques in their research are encouraged to apply for a place on the Australian Course in Advanced Neuroscience (ACAN) 2018, which will be held from the 8th to the 28th of April 2018 at the Moreton Bay Research Station, North Stradbroke Island, Queensland.

Stephen Williams

ACAN Director
acan-admin@uq.edu.au



ACAN is an intensive three-week course that teaches the theory and practice of electrophysiological recording and optical imaging techniques. Our Australasian and International faculty will guide each participant in the latest research methods in cellular and systems neuroscience.

During the course, each participant will become proficient in patch-clamp recording, calcium imaging, optogenetics, and many other techniques through unbridled access to state-of-the-art equipment.

Thanks to the generous support of *The Finkel Foundation*, ACAN 2018 will feature a dedicated 2-photon imaging/electrophysiology setup, which will complement an array of *in vitro* and *in vivo* recording techniques.

The course is also a lot of fun, with many ACAN students developing close friendships and collaborations during and after the course.

In order to apply for ACAN 2018, you should be a currently enrolled PhD student, a postdoctoral fellow, or junior faculty (preferably with no more than 5 years after completing your PhD).

The application deadline is **Thursday 1st of February 2018** and successful applicants will be notified by the 15th of February 2018. For full details about the course and the online application process please visit <https://acan.qbi.uq.edu.au/>

The fee for ACAN 2018 is A\$5000, which covers all meals, accommodation, laboratory supplies and teaching materials. Scholarships from the Neurological Foundation of New Zealand are available for NZ citizens/permanent residents.

Donation from *The Finkel Foundation*



The Finkel Foundation, whose original donation enabled the establishment of ACAN in 2005, has made another large donation to ACAN that will further enhance the course.

In December 2017, Alan and Elizabeth Finkel made a donation of nearly \$200,000 to ANS for the purchase of a new 2-photon microscope system to be used at ACAN.

Starting this year, students attending ACAN will be able to use the new system for hands-on training in the latest techniques in 2-photon imaging.

Meeting Announcement: 'Kioloa at Newcastle' 2018

We are pleased to invite you to the 2018 *Kioloa at Newcastle* Neuroscience Colloquium, to be held on the 19th and 20th May, 2018.

The colloquium will be held at Point Wolstoncroft Sport and Recreation Camp, at the southern end of Lake Macquarie, Newcastle. This is a perfect setting to meet regional neuroscientists and discuss your favourite topic in a relaxed and informal setting.

The 2-day meeting (beginning Saturday morning and ending Sunday lunchtime) includes a poster session, oral presentations and two plenary lectures as well as ample opportunities for networking. In 2018, we have attracted Dr Suellen Walker, from University College London to present her research on the long-term impact of early pain and injury.

PhD students, post-docs and senior scientists are invited to register and submit titles for poster or oral communications.

Registration includes accommodation for Friday 18th and Saturday 19th May plus morning and afternoon teas and a fully catered dinner on Saturday evening.

Registration is \$160 for academics and visitors and \$90 for students.

To register, or for further information, please email Dr Melissa Tadros (Melissa.Tadros@newcastle.edu.au)



**Point Wolstoncroft,
Lake Macquarie**

FENS Forum Awards



The 2018 meeting of the Federation of European Neuroscience Societies (FENS; www.forum2018.fens.org) will be held in Berlin, 7th-11th July. The FENS meetings (or Forums as they are called) are the largest international neuroscience meetings.

As part of the current ANS-FENS collaboration agreement, ANS will be providing opportunities to assist ANS members to attend the 2018 FENS Forum in one of two ways.

1. Two ANS travel scholarships for Early Career Researchers to attend FENS 2018

ANS will provide two travel scholarships to members registered and presenting an accepted abstract at the 2018 FENS meeting. Each scholarship will be up to the equivalent of €2000 in Australian dollars. To be eligible, applicants should be either undertaking a higher degree by research or be up to five years postdoctoral (relative to opportunity) and should be submitting an abstract to the meeting. Note the FENS *abstract submission deadline is Feb 13th 2018*.

To apply for these ANS scholarships, please submit a two page CV, including a statement regarding why you wish to attend the meeting, a copy of the abstract to be submitted and evidence of student or postdoctoral status to the ANS Secretariat at secretariat@ans.org.au by **COB Tuesday, 30 January 2018**. An additional support letter from your supervisor can be included if wished but is not required. Note that payment of the travel scholarship will be dependent on evidence of acceptance of the abstract included in the application by the FENS meeting. The travel scholarships will also include a free ticket to the Young Investigators "Jump the FENS" party.

2. ANS members can benefit from registration at FENS members rates

All ANS members wishing to register for the FENS meeting can also benefit from the cheaper FENS member rates. This means significant savings; for example, ANS members registering at the FENS Early Bird rate, save over 30% of the non-member rate.

To take advantage of this opportunity please email your name, affiliation, email address and status (student or non-student) to the ANS Secretariat at secretariat@ans.org.au by **COB Monday, 5 February 2018** (for Early Bird registration) or **COB Monday, 11 June 2018** (for the regular registration deadline). We will then organise an email to you from FENS with instructions on how to register for the meeting, paying the same rates as FENS members.

If you have any question about these opportunities, please email the ANS Secretary A/Prof Kay Double (kay.double@sydney.edu.au).

Equity & Diversity Committee Report

Karin Nordström

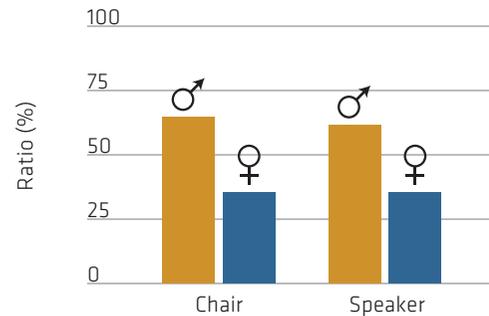
Chair, ANS Equity & Diversity Committee

The ANS Committee for Equity and Diversity was established in 2017. One of our main aims is to increase the equity and diversity at the Society's annual meeting. Here we present our analysis of the gender equity of the presenters at the recent ANS 2017 meeting in Sydney.

We scored the speakers and chairs in each symposium as either male or female based on their name. As a point of reference, keep in mind that 53% of current ANS members identify as male, 46% as female, and 1% prefer not to say.

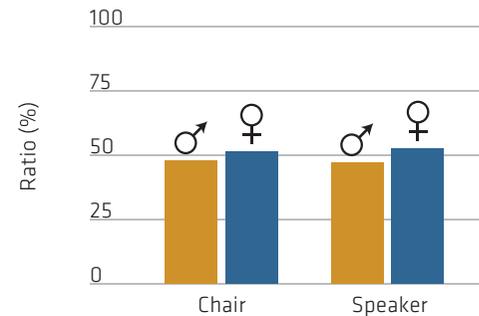
We found that in the invited symposia (i.e. the symposia selected from member submissions) men were overrepresented both as chairs and as speakers (Figure 1). Especially depressing was the finding that 3 symposia had zero female speakers.

Figure 1: Speakers in Member-Proposed Symposia



In contrast to the invited symposia, speakers in the oral symposia were chosen based on abstract submissions and the chairs were suggested by the program committee. These sessions were gender balanced (Figure 2). We would like to congratulate the Sydney Local Organizing Committee (LOC) on this achievement.

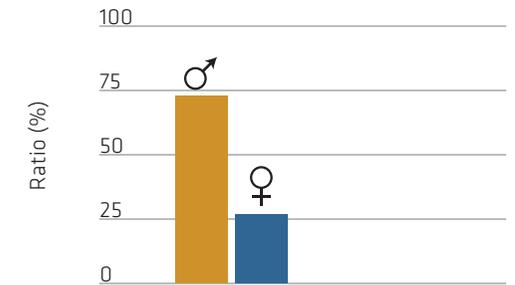
Figure 2: Oral Presentations Selected from Abstracts



Finally, we looked at the speakers in the named plenaries, the Presidential symposium and the awards session. Here, male speakers were again strikingly overrepresented (Figure 3).

In the last few annual meetings the plenaries have been completely male-dominated, being close to a 'manel' (<http://blogs.nature.com/naturejobs/2017/12/19/tackling-the-manel-problem/>). This year the ANS Council and LOC made an effort to have a 50-50 balance but, unfortunately, due to late speaker cancellations, this was not achieved.

Figure 3: Plenaries and Awards



In summary, we encourage future program committees to keep up their hard work when selecting oral symposia. Clearly, however, there is still work to do, especially in choosing plenary speakers and awardees. To assist this effort, the Equity & Diversity Committee is currently creating lists of female Australasian neuroscientists, which can be consulted when needed.

On a different matter, the Committee has encouraged the ANS Council to trial a carer's grant that will help carers pay for the extra costs when attending the next ANS conference in Brisbane. For example, the grant could be used for paying for childcare, or for airfares for an assistant carer. More information will come later.

For further information about our committee and how to contact us, please visit the ANS website.

For those of you identifying as women, there is also an excellent monitored Facebook page started by Sharna Jamadar and Lindy Fitzgerald. Search for 'Australasian Women in Neuroscience'.

Membership Renewals for 2018

Membership fees are now due for 2018 and can be completed through the ANS website using the “renewal” tab. <http://www.ans.org.au/membership/category/ans-membership>.

Benefits of ANS membership include:

- Opportunities to participate in and benefit from the lobbying by ANS for federal neuroscience funding and infrastructure support
- Eligibility for ANS awards for student researchers, as well as early-career, mid-career and senior researcher awards
- Reduced registration for the annual ANS conference
- Travel awards for student members
- Ability to nominate for ANS conference symposia and Plenary speakers
- Quarterly newsletter
- Free advertising of staff and student positions on the ANS website
- Ability to organise conferences for free via the ANS website
- Ability to open and participate in community forums

In 2018, full members who take out a 3 year membership will receive a **10% discount**, as well as avoiding the annual CPI fee rise. Choosing this option means you don't have to worry about completing your membership for the next several years, and you also enjoy a significant saving on membership fees.

Note that the 3 year membership option is not available for student members. However, to support our early career neuroscientists, **student membership fees for 2018 have been slashed to just \$40**, down from \$70 in 2017!

ANS is so much more than just the annual meeting – so be an active member of Australasia's peak body for neuroscience research and jump on the webpage and renew now!

If you have any questions about your membership, please contact the ANS Secretary, Kay Double (kay.double@sydney.edu.au).

ANS
MEMBERSHIP

Final Minutes

Australasian Neuroscience Society (ANS) 2017 Annual General Meeting (AGM)

5pm-6.30pm, Tuesday 5th December 2017, International Convention Centre, Sydney

1. Attendance and apologies (Kay Double)

Attendance: 87 members (see attendance sheets held by Secretary) Apologies: Chen Ling (University of Hong Kong), Geoff Donnan (Florey Institute), Sarah Dunlop (Uni of WA), Andrew Gundlach (Florey), Stuart Hodgetts (Uni WA), Matthew Kirkcaldie (Uni TAS), Robert Vink (Uni SA), Mark Hutchinson (Uni of Adelaide), Song Tieng Yao (Florey), Marcello Costa (Flinders)

2. Minutes of the 2016

Annual General Meeting (Kay Double)

The minutes were previously published on the ANS webpage (members section) as advised in the Jan 2017 Newsletter.

- Motion: To accept the Minutes of the 2016 ANS AGM as published on the ANS webpage (members section) and indicated as such in the January 2017 ANS Newsletter

Moved: Kay Double

Seconded: Elspeth McLachlan

Vote: unanimous: motion carried

3. President's Report (Linda Richards)

Linda thanked James Vickers, retiring as Past-President, and presented him with an ANS medallion. Linda introduced President-Elect Professor Cliff Abraham, University of Otago, New Zealand.

Council Achievements in 2017

- Appointed an association management secretariat – The Association Specialists (TAS) (Doug Wiles)
- Set up 5 new committees: Equity and Diversity, Teaching Resources, Animals in Research, Student Body, Professional Research/Postdoctoral
- Developed a new ANS logo with Appletree Design
- Established three new working groups
 - Media & Communications (website, Facebook, Twitter, newsletter, new logo etc.)
 - Sponsorship (a comprehensive sponsorship plan in development for 2018)
 - Finance and Risk management (plan to be developed in 2018)
- Engaged Jones Day Lawyers on a pro bono basis

- Launched the Australasian Women in Neuroscience group, supported by the Australasian Cognitive Neuroscience Society and ANS
- Equity and Diversity Committee
 - ANS equity and diversity policy
 - Carer's grants for 2018 ANS Brisbane to help support parents to attend ANS
- Established the Elspeth McLachlan Plenary Lecture
- Conducted a survey of ANS members (304 responses) that generated the following feedback:
 - More value for membership needed
 - More career development/job recruitment fair
 - More courses such as ACAN (imaging, computational neuroscience, anatomy, neuroscience techniques, transcriptomics, bioinformatics)
 - More recognition (MCR award, educator award, outreach/communication, industry engagement)
- Initiated an ANS Strategic plan – draft being prepared for members' comments and aiming for a final document by the middle of 2018
- Renewed FAONS, IBRO APRC memberships, SfN chapters
- Developed new FENS agreements:
 - ANS will provide two travel scholarships for ANS Early Career Researchers or Students to attend FENS 2018
 - ANS members can attend FENS at the FENS member rate

- Consolidated ACAN management – Stephen Williams (Director), Chris Reid (fundraising), Sam Berkovic (ACAN Committee Chair)
- Organised new management of Brain Bee Challenge – Ramesh Rajan (Australian Coordinator), Maurice Curtis (New Zealand Coordinator)
- Appointed Sydney LOC – Thomas Fath (chair), Melissa Tadros, Andrew Affleck, Greg Sutherland

4. Secretary's report (Kay Double)

- Current membership is 723, up from 675 at the Hobart meeting 2016. Not yet at the almost 1000 members we had in 2014 but Council is looking at ways to increase membership, including decreasing student membership rates to \$40 p.a. in 2018.
- Other activities of note:
 - New website under development
 - New logo design led by Dr Matthew Kirkcaldie
 - Changes to legal status of ANS: application for registration as a Registrable Australian Body led by John Bekkers
 - ANS policy portfolio under development
 - Neuroscience issue of the Medical Journal of Australia, May 2017, edited by Kay Double, Rachel Tan, Tom Duncan
- Council members for 2018:
 - Professor Linda Richards – President
 - Professor Cliff Abraham – President-Elect
 - Professor Gary Egan – Treasurer

Final Minutes

- A/Prof Helen Cooper – Editor
- A/Prof Kay Double – Secretary
- Professor John Bekkers – Public Officer & ACT
- A/Prof Thomas Fath – NSW
- A/Prof Srdjan Vlajkovic – NZ
- Dr Marta Garrido – QLD
- Dr Karin Nordstrom – SA
- Dr Matthew Kirkcaldie – TAS
- Professor Marcello Rosa – VIC
- Dr Anne Marie Vallence replacing Stuart Hodgetts as WA Rep
- Dr Erin McAllum added as the inaugural Neuroscience Research Professional Rep
- Ms Rachele Balez replacing Tom Burns as Student Committee Rep

- Tom Burns was thanked and presented with an ANS medallion for his work as the inaugural Student Body Rep on Council.

5. Treasurer's report (Gary Egan)

- The Society's finances are audited on an accrual basis with a year-end of 30th September.
- Our accountancy has been provided by Lynn Scholz and Georgi Collins at HLB Mann Judd. Our thanks to Lynn and Georgi for their excellent support over the past year.
- The auditing arm of HLB Mann Judd SA – a separate group within HLB Mann Judd – conducts the annual audit.

- Motion 1: Accept the financial report for the year ending 30 September, 2016.

Moved: Gary Egan

Seconded: Charles Watson

Vote: unanimous: motion carried

The audited financial statements for 2015-16 are available on the ANS website.

- Motion 2: Accept the audited financial report for the year ending 30 September, 2017.

Moved: Gary Egan

Seconded: Andrew Lawrence

Vote: unanimous: motion carried

The audited financial statements for 2016-17 are available on the ANS website.

- Motion 3: Appoint The Association Specialist (TAS) recommended auditors for the financial year 2017-18

Moved: Gary Egan

Seconded: Cliff Abraham

Vote: unanimous: motion carried

Special Resolution:

Proposed change to Constitution

Section 9. Finance and Property

Now:

9.2 The Treasurer shall be responsible for, and shall keep proper accounts of, all monies due or payable by the Society. Once at least in each financial year of the Society, which will

end on 30 September accounts of the Society shall be examined by the Auditor. The Auditor shall certify as the correctness of the accounts.

Proposed change:

9.2 The Treasurer shall be responsible for, and shall keep proper accounts of, all monies due or payable by the Society. Once at least in each financial year of the Society, which will end on 30 June accounts of the Society shall be examined by the Auditor. The Auditor shall certify as the correctness of the accounts.

- Motion 4: Change the Society's financial year to end 30 June of each year, commencing from 1 October 2017.

Moved: Gary Egan

Seconded: Tony Hannan

Vote: unanimous: motion carried

6. Editor's report (Helen Cooper)

- Helen presented a slide on a history of ANS registration prices & attendance numbers and noted the intention to reduce student registration prices
- Helen presented a slide on sponsorship and future meeting locations 2018-2022
- Helen presented a flyer on 2018 Brisbane meeting
- It was asked whether the printed program books could include abstracts in 2018 and it was agreed

- It was asked whether the Australian Registrable Body application covers Australia & New Zealand and it was confirmed

7. ANS Awards and Prizes (Kay Double)

Kay announced the following awards which were presented by Linda Richards.

Mark Rowe Award

This is an early career award for a 'first or senior author publication based on research completed as a PhD student or postdoc, published within 3 years of the award of PhD'. This award has been made possible by a generous donation to the Society by Janet Rowe in commemoration of her late husband, Professor Mark Rowe from UNSW. The winner of the 2017 award, for a paper published or accepted in 2016, is *Brendan Bicknell*, PhD Candidate, Queensland Brain Institute, University of Queensland for his paper: Bicknell BA, Goodhill GJ. Emergence of ion channel modal gating from independent subunit kinetics. *Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A*. 2016 Sep 6;113(36): E5288-97

AW Campbell Award

For best contribution by a member of the society in their first 5 postdoctoral years is awarded to *Dr Susanna Park*, Senior Lecturer, Physiology, University of Sydney for her work on peripheral nerve function and dysfunction.

Final Minutes

Nina Kondelos Prize

This is made possible by a donation from Professor George Paxinos and is named after his late sister. The prize is to a female neuroscientist who has made an outstanding contribution to basic or clinical neuroscience research. The 2017 prize is awarded to A/Prof *Ulrike Grünert*, Save Sight Institute, University of Sydney for her work on the visual system.

Paxinos-Watson Prize

For the most significant neuroscience paper published in 2016. This award has been made possible by a generous donation to the Society by Professors George Paxinos and Charles Watson, commemorating the publication of their important key reference text, "The Rat Brain in Stereotaxic Coordinates". First and last authors of winning papers are honoured with this award, with the prize money going to the nominating author. In 2017 the Paxinos-Watson prize has been awarded to 2 outstanding papers in a dual award.

The first of these was published in *Neuron* in April 2016 and reveals how movement function is altered with age. This year we honour the work of postdoctoral researcher *Miriam Matamales* and group leader *Jay Bertran-Gonzalez* at the Queensland Brain Institute, University of Queensland. Congratulations to Miriam, Jay and their colleagues.

The second paper to win this year was by *Arne Ittner* and *Lars Ittner* at the University of New South Wales and their collaborators. Their paper was published in *Science* in Nov 2016 and describes a molecular pathway leading to toxicity in a murine model of Alzheimer's disease. Congratulations Arne, Lars and their team.

8. Honorary Membership Award

This occasional award recognises distinguished neuroscientists who have rendered notable service to the Society and is awarded to Professor David Vaney, Queensland Brain Institute. This award was approved by the membership at the 2015 AGM but is awarded at today's meeting as David was unable to attend the 2016 AGM. The award is made in appreciation of both David's outstanding service to the Society, including as ANS President-Elect, President and Past-President from 2007-2010, and his sustained contributions to the development and promotion of neuroscience in Australia and New Zealand.

9. Distinguished Achievement Award

This occasional award recognises neuroscientists who have made major contributions to neuroscience as a discipline in Australia and New Zealand, and is presented to Professor Alan Mackay-Sim, National Adult Stem Cell Research Centre at

Griffith University. President Linda Richards acknowledged Alan for his outstanding work on the olfactory system and the use of olfactory ensheathing cells for nervous system repair, as well as his services to the neuroscience professional community.

10. Other business

There was a question from the floor about whether abstract deadlines would keep getting extended for the 2018 meeting, as occurred in 2017. Helen noted ANS have appointed a new professional conference organiser for 2018 which will help solve procedural issues next year.

Close time: 5:53pm

January 2018



We are always interested in receiving articles or information from ANS members for the Newsletter. Such material could include topics for discussion, meeting announcements, meeting reports, news about prizes and awards received by ANS members, obituaries, and any other items of potential interest to members of our Society.

The copy deadline for the next Newsletter is Tuesday 3 April 2018.

ANS Policy on Requests for Publicity via Email Circulation

The policy of ANS is to minimise email traffic to members. Advertisements for meetings and other significant announcements such as job vacancies can be added to the new website (currently under construction) and included in the newsletter if appropriate. Such requests should be directed to the ANS Secretary.

Newsletter Editor

Prof John Bekkers
John Curtin School of
Medical Research
The Australian
National University
Canberra, ACT 2601
john.bekkers@anu.edu.au

Authorised by

A/Prof Kay Double
Biomedical Science and
Brain and Mind Centre
University of Sydney
Sydney, NSW 2006
T: +61-2-9114-4292
kay.double@sydney.edu.au
