

April 2025



Contents

[Message from the President](#)

[From the Secretary](#)

[From the Treasurer](#)

[ANS 2025 Conference](#)

[ANS 2025 – Call for Symposia Extended](#)

[ANS 2024 Perth – Brief Report](#)

[ACAN 2025 – Summary](#)

[ACAN 2025 – Thankyou Instructors](#)

[Now seeking members for the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee](#)

[Call for ANS Student State Representatives](#)

[Call for ANS Communications Representative!](#)

[Gordon Research Conference](#)

[Researcher Profile: Pradeep Manuneehi Cholan](#)

[Researcher Profile: Shiva Soltani Dehnavi](#)

[Minutes for ANS 2024 AGM](#)

Australasian Neuroscience Society Newsletter



*The 43rd ANS Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM)
to be held in Hobart on 30 November – 3 December 2025*

Notifications

Become an ANS member or student member!

Please join us by becoming a Member of ANS.

You can join online at any time!

<https://tas.currinda.com/register/organisation/172>

Check out our website and follow updates on the ANS Twitter, Bluesky and LinkedIn accounts.

 <https://www.ans.org.au>

 <https://twitter.com/AusNeuroSoc>

 <https://bsky.app/profile/ausneurosoc.bsky.social>

 <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/8362021/>

Acknowledgements

ANS Executive

ANS President

Prof Jason B. Mattingley
*Queensland Brain Institute /
School of Psychology
The University of Queensland
St Lucia, QLD, 4072*
T: +61-7-3346-6331
j.mattingley@uq.edu.au

ANS Secretary

Dr Matilde Balbi
*Queensland Brain Institute
The University of Queensland
Brisbane, QLD, 4072*
T: +61 -7-3443-3013
m.balbi@uq.edu.au

ANS Treasurer

Dr Steve Kassem
*Neuroscience Research
Australia
Randwick, NSW, 2031*
T: +61-2-9399-1128
s.kassem@neura.edu.au

ANS Conference

Executive Chair
A/Prof Jenna Ziebell
*Wicking Dementia Research
and Education Centre
University of Tasmania
Hobart, TAS, 7000*
T: +61-3-6226-4705
jenna.ziebell@utas.edu.au

ANS Communication Committee

Newsletter Editors

A/Prof Marco Morsch
*Macquarie Medical School,
Faculty of Medicine, Health
and Human Sciences,
Macquarie University
Sydney, NSW, 2109*
marco.morsch@mq.edu.au

Dr Nathalie Dehorter
*Queensland Brain Institute,
The University of Queensland
Brisbane, QLD, 4073*
n.dehorter@uq.edu.au

Authorised by

Dr Matilde Balbi
*Queensland Brain Institute
The University of Queensland
Brisbane, QLD, 4072*
T: +61 -7-3443-3013
m.balbi@uq.edu.au

Message from the President

It is an honour to be taking over as President of ANS for 2025/26.

I would like to thank Janet Keast for her tireless efforts as President over the last two years, and for taking the time to show me the ropes as President-Elect in 2024. Janet will be a tough act to follow, but I am pleased to say she will remain as a member of Council as Past-President throughout 2025.



Professor
Jason
Mattingley

President, ANS
j.mattingley@uq.edu.au

It is an honour to be taking over as President of ANS for 2025/26. I would like to thank Janet Keast for her tireless efforts as President over the last two years, and for taking the time to show me the ropes as President-Elect in 2024. Janet will be a tough act to follow, but I am pleased to say she will remain as a member of Council as Past-President throughout 2025. Many thanks also to Jana Vukovic (Treasurer, 2023/24) and Michael Lardelli (Secretary, 2023/24) for their service, and welcome to Steve Kassem and Matilde Balbi, who are the new Treasurer and Secretary, respectively.

I was delighted to see so many members, friends and colleagues at the Annual Scientific Meeting held in Perth in December 2024. On behalf of the ANS Council, I would like to thank Hamid Sohrabi (Conference Executive Chair) and the entire Local Organising Committee, including Stuart Hodgetts, Stephanie Rainy-Smith, Sarah Hellewell, Chidozie Anyaegbu, Lishan Chiu, Belinda Brown, and Jenny Rodger for all their hard work. Their success in “Forging the Nexus, Crossing the Synapse” was strongly supported by our many exhibitors and sponsors, and the professionalism of the TAS team.

The scientific program for the Perth meeting was packed with high quality neuroscience research, complemented by a superb line-up of plenary speakers, including Tracy Bale (University of Colorado), Gavan McNally (UNSW), Andrew Morokoff (University of Melbourne), Jenny Rodger (UWA), and Susannah Tye (UQ). I would like to extend my congratulations in particular to Natalie Matosin, winner of the AW Campbell Award, Melanie Bahlo, winner of the Nina Kondelos Award, and to the recipients of the student and ECR awards.

I hope to see all of you at the Hotel Grand Chancellor in Hobart for the 43rd Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM), which will run from 30 November to 3 December. The theme of this year’s meeting is “Diversifying the Network”, and an exciting program is being developed by the new Conference Executive Chair, Jenna Ziebell (UTAS), and Chair of the Local Organising Committee, Brad Sutherland (UTAS). We have now locked-in our plenary speakers for the 2025 ASM in Hobart. These include Professor Marina Mikhaylova (International Plenary Lecturer), Professor Alex Fornito (Lawrie Austin Plenary Lecturer), Professor Miriam Matamales (ANS Plenary Lecture), Professor Peter Crack (Elspeth McLachlan Plenary Lecturer), and Professor Melinda Fitzgerald (Eccles Plenary Lecturer).

We will shortly be calling for nominations for the ANS Annual Awards, including the A.W. Campbell, Nina Kondelos, Paxinos-Watson, Mark Rowe and Marcello Costa awards. Please give some thought to colleagues whose achievements might appropriately be recognised in this way. We will also be calling for nominations for the 2025 round of the ANS

April 2025

(Message from the President ... continued)

Finkel Foundation Travelling Fellowships. These Fellowships, valued at up to \$50,000 each, aim to provide career development opportunities to early and mid-career ANS Members based in Australia or New Zealand by supporting a “mini-sabbatical” to a host laboratory with world-leading expertise relevant to development of brain-computer interfaces or related areas of innovative neurotechnology. Congratulations to the 2024 recipients of Finkel Foundation Travelling Fellowships, Dr Amr Al Abed (UNSW) and Dr Caio Seguin (University of Melbourne).

Thank you for your support of ANS, and I look forward to working with you over the next two years.



Annual Scientific Meeting to be held in Hobart from 30 November – 3 December 2025

From the Secretary

It is my pleasure to take on the role of Secretary of the Australasian Neuroscience Society, and I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Michael Lardelli for his many years of dedication and contributions as the previous secretary of ANS. His commitment to the society has been invaluable, and I look forward to building upon his work to continue supporting our vibrant neuroscience community.



Dr Matilde
Balbi

Secretary, ANS
m.balbi@uq.edu.au

I want to take this opportunity to highlight the invaluable opportunities available for students and early career researchers to engage with ANS initiatives. Getting involved, whether through committee service, leadership roles, or society events, provides career-enhancing leadership experience. These roles allow you to develop skills in scientific advocacy, governance, and networking, which are essential for future success in academia and industry.

Additionally, I encourage you to consider applying for ANS awards, which recognise outstanding contributions to neuroscience. Applications will open soon, including the Australasian Neuroscience Society Finkel Foundation Travelling Fellowships, which will run for the second time in 2025. This prestigious fellowship provides career development opportunities for early and mid-career ANS members by supporting travel to a host laboratory with world-leading expertise in brain-computer interfaces and innovative neurotechnology. This is an incredible chance to expand your research horizons and establish international collaborations.

I encourage all students and ECRs to engage with ANS initiatives and take advantage of the many opportunities available. Stay connected, get involved, and make the most of what ANS has to offer!



Dr Steve
Kassem

Treasurer, ANS
s.kassem@neura.edu.au

From the Treasurer

I am enthusiastic to serve as your new Treasurer, particularly for a society with such a rich history. As I step into this role, I would like to extend my gratitude to A/Prof Jana Vukovic for her mentorship during my treasurer-elect period. Her dedication over the past four years has been instrumental in guiding ANS through its financial recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, setting the society on a strong and sustainable financial trajectory. I thank her for her time and contributions.

I am pleased to report that the society's financial position remains strong in the post-COVID era. Our budgets have consistently reflected a positive financial outcome in recent years, with each annual conference generating progressively higher revenue. This year's conference in Hobart is supported by a conservative budget, and early indicators suggest a healthy financial return.

As I present my first budget as Treasurer, I have made only a few adjustments from previous years, with a particular emphasis on increasing funding for our sub-committees and state representatives. My goal is to provide greater autonomy to these groups, enabling them to deliver more targeted and impactful events that enhance member engagement across the society.

I look forward to working with you all to ensure the continued financial stability and growth of ANS.

ANS 2025 Conference



Planning is well underway for the 43rd ANS Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM), and we are thrilled to welcome you to Hobart from November 30th to December 3rd.

Held in Tasmania for the first time in nearly a decade, the theme for this year's meeting is 'Diversifying the Network'. This reflects our commitment to fostering inclusion and diversity among researchers across Australia, bridging diverse fields of neuroscience, and expanding the horizons of our collective knowledge. Please join us to discuss cutting edge neuroscience discoveries and technologies and foster future generations of neuroscientists.

The ASM will be held at the Grand Chancellor Hotel in Hobart's CBD. Its central location offers convenient access to the picturesque waterfront, hotels and the best of Hobart's dining and entertainment. Whether it's your first visit to Tasmania or your first in a while, you will find Hobart to be a charming city with rich history, unique wildlife, and breathtaking landscapes.

The Local Organising Committee, chaired by A/Prof Brad Sutherland, is planning an exciting program. We are delighted to announce the following distinguished speakers:

International Plenary Lecturer

Professor Marina Mikhaylova

Lawrie Austin Plenary Lecturer

Professor Alex Fornito

ANS Plenary Lecturer

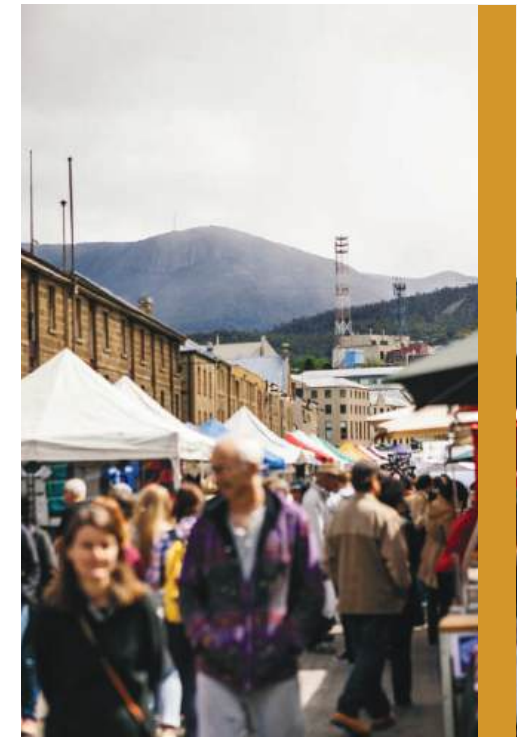
Dr Miriam Matamales

Elsbeth McLachlan Plenary Lecturer

Professor Peter Crack

Eccles Plenary Lecturer

Professor Melinda Fitzgerald



ANS 2025 – Call for Symposia Extended



The Local Organising Committee would like to announce the call for symposia for the upcoming Australasian Neuroscience Meeting has been extended by 2 weeks, and will now close at 17:00 AEST on Monday, 7 April.

Proposals will be accepted in Currinda from current ANS members. Please provide a concise overview of the symposium (150 words max), outlining the main themes and objectives. Highlight the significance of the topic within the field of neuroscience and the unique perspectives each speaker will bring.

You will also need to detail what each speaker will discuss (200 words/speaker max). Ensure gender balance and the inclusion of one or more early/mid-career researchers (<10 years post-PhD) in the proposed speakers. Priority will be given to symposia proposals that emphasize equity and diversity including career stage and cultural and linguistic diversity of speakers.

Please read the [Symposia Policy and Guidelines](#) document for full details and eligibility requirements.



ANS 2024 Perth – Brief Report

We were thrilled to welcome members of the ANS and wider Australasian neuroscience community to the newly refurbished Pan Pacific Hotel <https://www.panpacific.com/en/hotels-and-resorts/pp-perth.html> in Perth, Western Australia, with spectacular views over the culturally significant and picturesque Swan River.

Twenty years since the last ANS conference in Perth, Western Australia, the 42nd Australasian Neuroscience Society's Annual Scientific Meeting (ANS 2024-Perth) was a major success. The event brought together researchers from across Australasia to explore the nexus of neuroscience, neurotechnology, and forward-thinking. The Local Organising Committee, coordinated by the ANS National Conference Executive Chair, Professor Hamid Sohrabi, was chaired by Dr. Sarah Hellewell, Dr. Chidozie Anyaegbu, Dr. Stuart Hodgetts, and A/Prof. Stephanie Rainey-Smith, who ensured a well-coordinated and smoothly executed event.

Held at the newly refurbished Pan Pacific Hotel in Perth CBD, the conference was attended by more than 400 delegates and featured an engaging program that included 12 symposia, 98 abstract presentations, over 150 poster presentations, and more than 20 exhibitors. We were fortunate to welcome five plenary lectures from esteemed researchers: Prof Tracy Bale (University of Colorado), Prof Gavan McNally, A/Prof Andrew Morokoff, Prof Jenny Rodger, and A/Prof Susannah Tye.

Further highlights of the ANS 2024 meeting included the final of the Australian Brain Bee Challenge as well as the ANS Awards, which added further excitement and engagement to the conference.

The winners included the following:

- **ANS Distinguished Achievement Award**
Professor Glenda Halliday, University of Sydney.
- **Mark Rowe Award**
Ashlea Segal, Yale University.
- **Paxinos-Watson Award**
James Pang, Monash University.
- **Marcello Costa Award**
Jessica Maddern, South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute.
- **AW Campbell Award**
Dr. Natalie Matosin, the MINDS Lab at the University of Sydney.
- **Nina Kondelos Award**
Prof Melanie Bahlo, The Walter and Eliza Hall Institute.
- **Education Excellence Award**
Jennifer Rodger, The University of Western Australia.
- **ANS Finkel Foundation Travelling Fellowships**
Two fellowships were awarded to:
 - Amr Al Abed
Graduate School of Bioengineering, UNSW.
 - Caio Seguin
Dept Psychiatry, University of Melbourne.

The winners of the ANS presentation awards were also celebrated, with notable mentions including:

- Maitri Tomar, winner of the Sir Grafton Elliot-Smith Poster Award.
- Kady Braack, winner of the Istvan Tork Student Oral Award.
- Kristin Barry, winner of the ECR Oral Award.
- Matthew Williams-Spooner, winner of the Poster ECR Award.

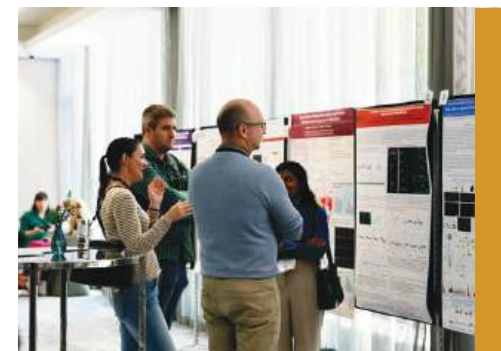
The social functions were another highlight of the event, with the ANS Welcome Drinks held on December 4th, the IBRO-Sponsored Early and Mid-Career Researchers Networking Social on December 3rd, and the ANS Party on the same evening at The Point Rooftop Bar and Restaurant. These events provided ample opportunities for attendees to network and enjoy the vibrant atmosphere of Perth.

Overall, ANS 2024 was a highly successful and memorable event, leaving a lasting impact on all who attended.

**Professor
Hamid Sohrabi**

*National Conference
Executive Chair, ANS*

(ANS 2024 Perth - Brief Report ... continued)



ACAN 2025 – Summary

This year's Australian Course for Advanced Neuroscience (ACAN) was very special as we celebrated the 20th year since the course was first established.

This year's Australian Course for Advanced Neuroscience (ACAN) was very special as we celebrated the 20th year since the course was first established. The course was hosted at UNSW across January and February and continued the design of three themes over three weeks: Neurons and Networks, Network and Systems, and Systems and Behaviour. Each week, students conducted experiments tied to the lectures, learned to analyse the data and presented their findings at the end of the week.

This year we had an international showcase with students and lecturers coming from all over the world including Finland, Netherlands and New Zealand! In week one, students focused on electrophysiology, learned to patch clamp and competed fiercely for the highly esteemed Abraham prize for the dendrite patched furthest from the soma. In the second week, students explored various imaging techniques, evoking and recorded neuronal activity with optogenetics and fluorescent calcium indicators. They were exposed to tools such as multi-photon, TIRF, and light sheet microscopy.

Finally, in week three, students ran an instrumental conditioning paradigm and learned how to analyse the data using human-in-loop AI assisted analysis pipelines.

ACAN is a unique all immersive experience. We were given a unique environment where we were free to pursue science solely for the sake of pursuing science, learning, expanding our skillsets and our knowledge, without worrying about needing to get specific results or meet deadlines. At the same time, we had a cohort of like-minded peers, made up of people who had very different research backgrounds but were all equally passionate about neuroscience. Having this community allowed us to share our

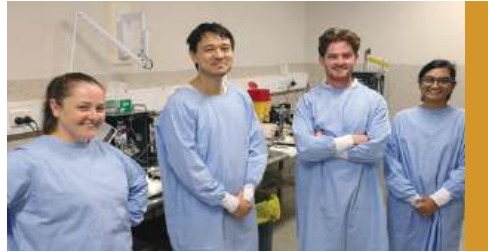
varying experiences in academia, discuss research ideas, and support each other in our struggles with the more abstruse components of the course. Equally valuable to our experience were the directors, lecturers, organisers and instructors, who put untold effort into giving us the best learning environment possible. Their infectious passion for neuroscience did much to stimulate our curiosity and engagement, and they gladly encouraged us to develop our abilities, even if they had to stay with us late at night so we can try to get a good recording from a cell. We'd like to share a huge thank you to all that were involved in making ACAN happen, we deeply appreciate the ability to experience such a fantastic course.



ACAN 2025 – Thank you Instructors

A massive THANK YOU to our ACAN instructors and everyone involved in organising this event!

- Ian Forster** (Florey)
- Cherry Mao** (Florey)
- Alex Tang** (UWA)
- Benjamin Lau** (UNSW)
- Tobias Bluett** (UQ)
- Bryony Winters** (USyD)
- Yossi Buskila** (UWS)
- Saba Gharaei** (ANU)
- Dennis Cheung** (NIPS, Japan)
- Chanchanok Chaichim** (AbCellera)
- Chelsea Goulton** (UNSW)
- Christopher Nolan** (UNSW)
- Thomas Burton** (UNSW)
- Dylan Black** (UQ)
- Karly Turner** (UNSW)
- Phil Jean-Richard Dit Bressel** (UNSW)
- Leigh Walker** (Florey)
- Laura Fenlon** (UQ)
- Rodrigo Suarez** (UQ)



Now seeking members for the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee

Are you passionate about issues surrounding equity and diversity? Do you have ideas of how ANS can improve equity, diversity and inclusion? Do you have issues you would like to advocate for to improve equity and diversity in research?

Adele
Woodhouse
(she/her)

*Chair of the E and D
Committee, ANS*

The ANS Equity and Diversity committee is now seeking expressions of interest for members. We particularly encourage applications from men, people from linguistically diverse backgrounds, Indigenous people, PhD students, EMCRs and people that are living in New Zealand.

If interested, please write a brief statement about why you are interested in this position and send it, along with a short CV, to:
adele.woodhouse@utas.edu.au

More information and terms of reference can be found here:
https://www.ans.org.au/images/191021_Ratified_ANS_Equity_and_Diversity_ToR.pdf

Expressions of interest open until Friday, 31st of May.

Call for ANS Student State Representatives

The Student Committee is looking for student state representatives to join our team! This is a fantastic opportunity to get involved in the neuroscience community, help organize local events, and represent students in your state. If you're passionate about neuroscience and keen to contribute, we'd love to hear from you!

Interested?

Contact the ANS Student Committee Chair at anli3670@uni.sydney.edu.au for more details. We look forward to working with you!

Call for ANS Communications Representative!

We are seeking an enthusiastic Communications Representative to join the Australian Neuroscience Society (ANS) team. This role offers an exciting opportunity to enhance your science communication skills, broaden your professional network, and play a key role in connecting and informing our vibrant neuroscience community. Responsibilities include managing social media channels, drafting engaging communications, and promoting ANS activities and initiatives. Ideal candidates will have strong written communication skills, creativity, and a keen interest in neuroscience outreach.

Join us in shaping effective communication strategies and showcasing neuroscience excellence across Australia!

Expressions of interest can be submitted via email to marco.morsch@mq.edu.au

GRC *Neurotrophic Mechanisms in Health and Disease*

June 1st-6th 2025 Newport RI USA

Chair and Vice Chair: Elizabeth (Lizzie) Coulson & Bruce Carter

Sessions:

The history and future of BDNF
Wiring the Brain with Neurotrophic Factors
Neurotrophic Factors and Dementia
Neurotrophic Factors in Development
Neurotrophic Factors in Axonal function,
Degeneration, and Regeneration
Cell Biology and Signalling of Neurotrophic Factors
Neurotrophic Factors in Sensory Perception and Pain
Neural-Non Neural Functions of Neurotrophic Factors
Short Talks Selected From Poster Abstracts
Power Hour™



Apply Now

there is a pre-meeting
GRS for trainees and ECRs

Confirmed Speakers:

Antonella Riccio
Azad Bonni
Baoji Xu
Christopher Deppmann
Eran Perlon
Francis Lee
Frank Longo
Freda Miller
Gary Lewin
Chloe Peach
James Sleigh

Karine Loulier
Mart Saarma
Michael Stryker
Rejji Kuruville
Rosa Uribe
Shahzad Khan
Sandra Maday
Wenqin Luo
Yves Barde
Zhigang He

Discussion leaders:

Antonino Cattaneo
Barbara Hempstead
David Kaplan
Francisca Bronfman
Lino Tessarollo
Lisa Monteggia
Rosalind Segal
Wilma Friedman

Confence Venue: Salve Regina University RI



Speaker slots from abstracts still available

<https://www.grc.org/neurotrophic-mechanisms-in-health-and-disease-conference/2025/>

Researcher Profile: Pradeep Manuneedhi Cholan, Macquarie University



Pradeep
Manuneedhi
Cholan

*Post doctoral research fellow
Motor Neuron Disease
Research Centre, Macquarie
University*

PhD received (year and place):

2019, University of Sydney

Previous workplaces (Phd and/or Postdoc):

PhD - Heart Research Institute

1st Post-doc - Centenary Institute

Email: pradeep.manuneedhicholan@mq.edu.au

1) **How did you get into science and your current position?**

I did my Bachelor of Biomedical Science (Honours) at Griffith University and my PhD at the Heart Research Institute, University of Sydney. In my first post-doctoral position I designed a germ-free zebrafish model to study the role of gut microbiome in cardiovascular disease. Following which, I brought my germ-free zebrafish model to Macquarie University's Motor Neuron Disease research centre to study the role of gut microbiome in neurodegenerative disease. Since then, I have secured the international Race Against Dementia fellowship to study the role of gut microbiome in Alzheimer's disease.

2) **Please outline the goal of your research in three short sentences.**

The goal of my research program is to develop a medium/high throughput disease model than can be used to study the role of gut microbiome in various neurodegenerative diseases. Collaborating with various biobanks and clinical research programs in Australia, I aim to identify unique bacterial fingerprint in Alzheimer's disease patients that can be used for early diagnosis and aim to identify novel gut directed therapies that can slow down disease progression in Alzheimer's disease.

3) **What do you love about your job?**

As a researcher I get to do something novel every day. I love solving problems and finding innovative solutions in the lab. In the field of Alzheimer's disease and gut microbiome, I feel like my research will have a great impact on the population, considering the rising prevalence of Alzheimer's disease. All these factors make me love my job.

4) **What project(s) are you currently working on?**

Currently I am working on studying the role of gut microbiome in Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, Alzheimer's disease and Huntington's disease. I also create mutant zebrafish disease models that can be used for high throughput drug screening.

5) **Do you have any advice for anyone considering a career in science? What advice would you give your 5-year younger self?**

I would give the same advice to my younger self and to anyone considering a career in science, persistence and resilience are two very important characteristics to have when you are a researcher. Working smart is much more important than working hard. There is heavy competition in the field of research with limited funding, but if you persist research is one of the most rewarding careers.

6) **What do you do when you are not working?**

When not working, I love cooking and I am involved in short film productions.

7) **What are your future plans?**

In the next 5 years, I aim to develop my own niche research program that investigates the role of gut microbiome in various neurodegenerative diseases. I aspire to train and educate researchers in this field to increase the discovery of novel gut directed therapies for neurodegeneration.

April 2025

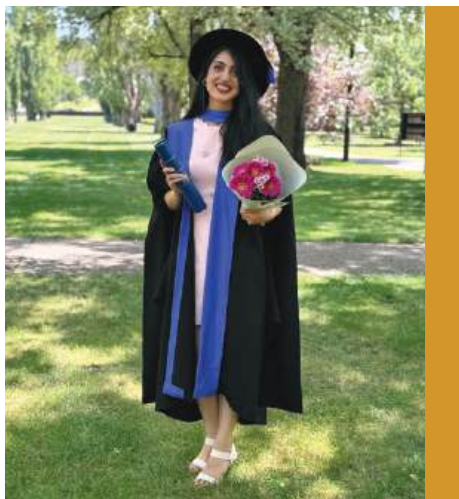
(Researcher Profile: Pradeep Manuneechi Cholan ... continued)



Researcher Profile:

Shiva Soltani Dehnavi, Australian National University

April 2025



Shiva Soltani Dehnavi

Postdoctoral Research Fellow
Eccles Institute of Neuroscience,
John Curtin School of Medical
Research, The Australian
National University

PhD received (year and place):

November 2024, School of Engineering,
Australian National University

Previous workplaces (Phd and/or Postdoc):

Australian National University

Email: shiva.soltani@anu.edu.au

1) How did you get into science and your current position?

I have always been fascinated by the intersection of engineering and biology, particularly how biomaterials can be used to treat neurological disorders. My journey started with a master's in biomedical engineering (biomaterials) in Iran, followed by research in tissue engineering, drug delivery and regenerative medicine. Moving to Australia for my PhD at ANU, I explored advanced targeted therapies for Huntington's disease, which deepened my interest in neuroscience. Now, as a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at JCSMR, I use calcium imaging techniques like miniscopes to study olfactory learning in the piriform cortex.

2) Please outline the goal of your research in three short sentences.

My research aims to understand how the brain processes sensory information, particularly in olfactory learning. Using miniscope imaging, I study neuronal activity in the piriform cortex of mice during learning tasks. This work contributes to unravelling neural mechanisms in both healthy and diseased brains.

3) What do you love about your job?

I love the constant learning and the excitement of uncovering new insights into brain function. Being able to combine engineering, neuroscience, and imaging to answer complex biological questions is incredibly rewarding. Also, working in a collaborative research environment and mentoring students keeps me motivated.

4) What project(s) are you currently working on?

I am studying how the piriform cortex encodes and processes olfactory information using calcium imaging and behavioral tasks in mice. Additionally, I am interested in potential therapeutic strategies for neurodegenerative and neurological disorders, exploring how neuronal activity changes in disease conditions.

5) Do you have any advice for anyone considering a career in science? What advice would you give your 5-year younger self?

Science is challenging but deeply fulfilling—stay curious, persistent, and open to collaboration. My advice to my younger self would be: Take more risks, seek out interdisciplinary collaborations earlier, and trust the process—progress takes time!

6) What do you do when you are not working?

Outside the lab, I enjoy painting, cooking, playing tennis, and spending time with friends.

7) What are your future plans?

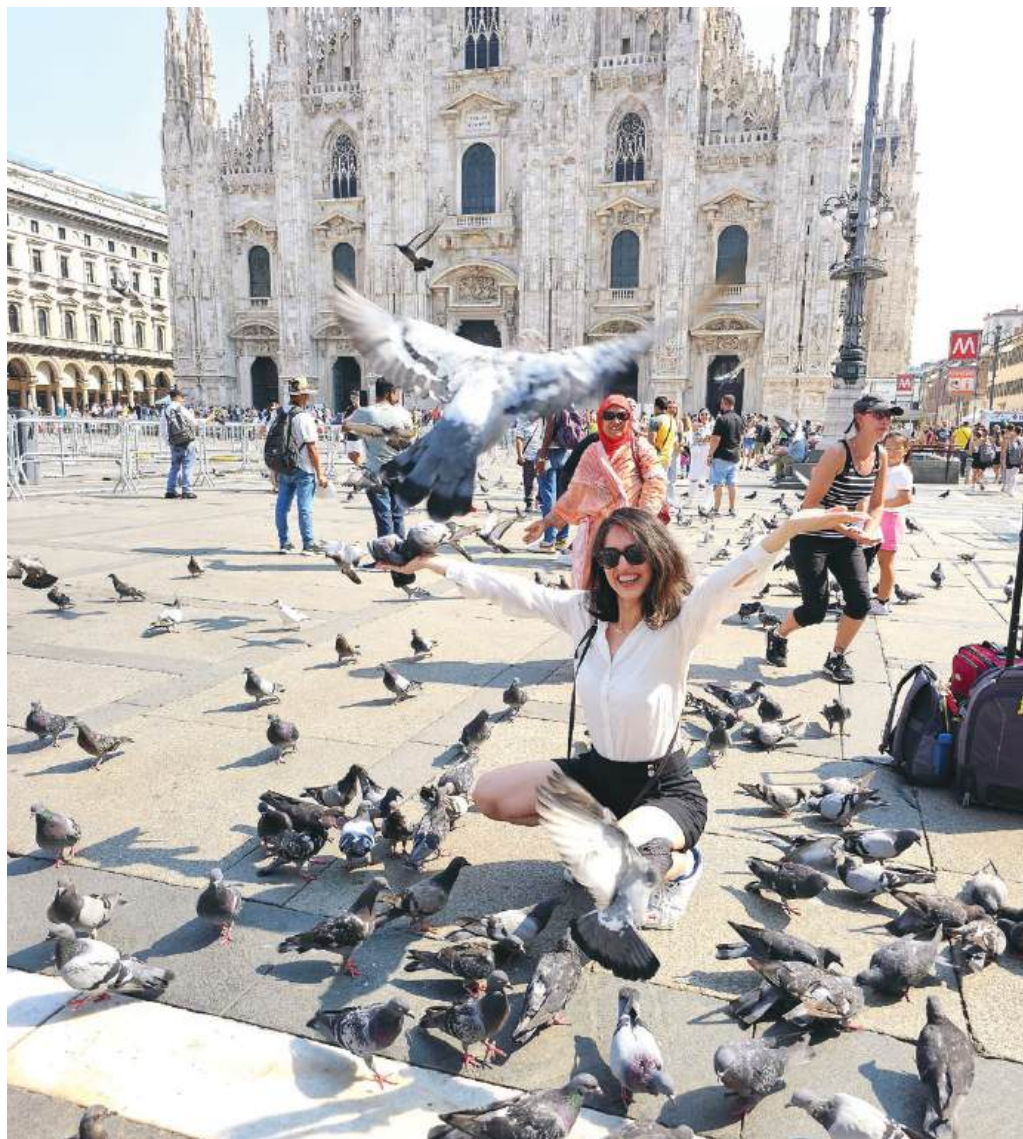
I aim to continue bridging bioengineering and neuroscience to develop new imaging and therapeutic approaches for brain disorders. Long-term, I hope to lead my own research group, focusing on sensory processing and neurodegeneration.

Anything else you would like to share that's not covered in the questions above?

I'm passionate about supporting early-career researchers (EMCRs) and advocating for collaborative and inclusive scientific communities. As the ACT EMCR representative for ANS, I actively work to create opportunities for networking, mentorship, and career development in neuroscience.

Links to my research:

<https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=KawkBCcAAAAJ&hl=en>



Australasian Neuroscience Society Annual General Meeting

Held at Pan Pacific Hotel, Perth

03/12/2024 @ 17:00 pm – 17:30 pm AWST

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Meeting Chair, Matilde Balbi (Secretary-elect) opened the meeting at 5:05pm AWST. She respectfully acknowledged the traditional owners of the land where the meeting was being held, the Whadjuk Nyoongar people of Western Australia and paid respects to Elders past and present.

Matilde Balbi advised that she was Chairing the meeting today, as Michael Lardelli the current ANS Secretary was unable to attend the meeting.

In Attendance: Janet Keast, Jana Vukovic, Jason Mattingley, Matilde Balbi, Hamid Sohrabi, Jenna Ziebell, Samantha Gardener, Marianne Keller, Sayed Koushik Ahamed, James O'Loughlin, Kai-Hei Tse, Glenda Halliday, Elspeth McLachlan, Roisin Moloney, Sarah Hellewell, Jenny Gunnerson, Lucy Palmer, Wickliffe Abraham, Peter Schofield, Nicholas Price, Anastazja Gorecki, James Pang, John Bekkers, Andrew Affleck, Nafiseh Atapour, Mickayla Compton, Mehrdad Savar, Ulrike Gruner, Gary Morris, Chidozie Anyaegbu, Stuart Hodgetts, Anthony Hannan, Raphael Ricci, Okobi Ekpo, Peregrine Osborne, James Fallon, Christopher Dayas, Abdur Rahman,

Thrift Henderson, Fleur Garton, Giuseppe Verdile, Marc Ruitenber, Jade Noho, John-Paul Fuller-Jackson, Helen Murray, Phillip Janowicz, Mohammad Hassan Tajik, Melinda Fitzgerald, Brad Sutherland, Charlotte Moore, Mirian Matamales, Paul R. Martin, Jamie Beros, Jennifer Rodger, Maitri Tomar, Loren Skudder-Hill, Alex Tang, Lizzie Coulson, Vladimir Sytnyk, Xiaoying Cui, Darryl Eyles, George Paxinos, Khalid Elsaafien, Kay Double, Marcello Rosa, Victor Dieriks, Ethan Scott, Shepard HE, Lizzie Manning, Andrew Gibbons.

Apologies: Michael Lardelli, Paul Pilowsky, Jay Bertran-Gonzalez, Allan Kermode, Nathalie Dehorter and David Vaney.

A quorum of more than 50 members present was confirmed for the Annual General Meeting.

2. Confirm the minutes of the 2023 Annual General Meeting

Motion: The Society accepts the minutes of the 2023 Annual General Meeting as the correct record.

Motion accepted

Minutes for ANS 2024 AGM

3. President's Report

Janet Keast presented the President's Report.

Janet Keast thanked the ANS Executive, Council, Committee members and members for supporting ANS events and activities and for sharing their views and ideas and thanked the Secretariat and Conference Team from The Association Specialists (TAS).

Janet Keast highlighted the teams leading ANS activities and events and thanked them for their efforts:

- Annual Scientific Meeting: Hamid Sohrabi (CEC), Local Organising Committee (LOC) Co-Chairs Sarah Hellewell, Stephanie Rainey-Smith, Chidozie Anyaegbu, Stuart Hodgetts.
- Brain Bee Challenge: Jenny Rodger, Bruno van Swinderen, Matt Kirkcaldie, Charles Watson.
- Preparation for ACAN 2025: hosted by UNSW Sydney, Jay Bertran-Gonzalez (Course Director) and team: Greg Stuart (Mngt Comm Chair). It was noted that ACAN had an outstanding number of applications for the 2025 Course.
- State and regional events

Janet Keast highlighted key ANS activities for 2024:

- Finalisation of Strategic Plan (2024-2028)
- New awards, fellowships: Marcello Costa (ECR), Education Excellence, ANS Finkel Foundation Travelling Fellowships. Janet Keast acknowledged the generous donation from the

Finkel Foundation.

- Second year of Indigenous Travel Awards; Indigenous Excellence in Brain Research symposium; IBRO and institutional support. Janet Keast acknowledged the contribution of the ANS Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee in driving these initiatives.
- Ongoing support of the Openness Agreement on Animal Research and Teaching in Australia.
- New approach to activities related to Brain Bee: focus on outreach, providing greater opportunities to students across Australia/NZ. Ongoing funding to support this new approach was being sought.
- Closer to restoring the ANS annual calendar of events, forward planning for conferences, documentation of processes.

4. Secretary's Report

Matilde Balbi presented the Secretary's Report:

- At the time of the meeting ANS had 549 members
- ANS had experienced a slight decline in members from the previous year
- She highlighted that being a member was more than attending the national conference and that it provided additional benefits such as Awards and Fellowship opportunities

Minutes for ANS 2024 AGM

5. Treasurer's Report

Jana Vukovic presented the Treasurer's Report and thanked members. She highlighted the following from the Audited Accounts for the year 1 July 2023 – 30 June 2024:

- There was \$679,652 in income
- Profit from ordinary activities was \$64,451
- ANS had weathered COVID and fluctuations in share returns and had achieved a balanced budget
- GFM Wealth Investment Total Value was \$1,070,177, consisting of two investment accounts ANS 1 and ANS 2. The ANS 1 investment account was used to supplement running ANS and the ANS 2 investment account was for ACAN, with returns used for replacing equipment.
- Net Assets totalled \$1,435,260

5.1 Receive the auditor's report of the financial accounts

Motion: The Society receives the annual Financial Report and accompanying Auditor's Report.

Motion accepted

5.2 Appointment of auditor

Motion: The Society appoints Mark Tinworth of Tinworth & Co as the Auditor for 2024-2025.

Motion accepted

6. Conference Executive Chair's Report

Hamid Sohrabi, Conference Executive Chair presented the report of the 42nd Annual Scientific Meeting, Perth:

- Statistics reported included 404 registrations 327 abstracts, 44 oral presentations, 47 data blitz talks, 182 posters, 12 symposia and 3 satellite meetings.
- There were 32 exhibitors and \$151,940 in sponsorship which was 70% of the target
- Thank you to the Local Organising Committee (LOC), for working tirelessly with acknowledgement to Co-Chairs Sarah Hellewell, Stuart Hodgetts, Chidozie Anyaegbu, Stephanie Rainey-Smith and LOC members Lishan Chiu, Belinda Brown, Jennifer Rodger and the WA ANS rep Samantha Gardener.
- The LOC Co-Chairs present at the meeting were invited to the stage and ANS medallions presented.
- Thank you also to The Association Specialists staff for the conference, Oliver, Amy and Andrea.

7. ANS Awards

Janet Keast presented the ANS Awards. The awards recipients were:

- **AW Campbell Award** – Natalie Matosin, The University of Sydney
- **Mark Rowe Award** – Ashlea Sehal, Yale University
Segal et al. Regional, circuit and network heterogeneity of brain abnormalities in psychiatric disorders. *Nature Neuroscience*, 2023, 26:1613-1629.
- **Nina Kondelos Award** – Melanie Bahlo, Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research
- **Paxinos-Watson Award** – James Pang, Monash University
Pang et al. Geometric constraints on human brain function. *Nature*, 2023;618:566-574
- **Marcello Costa Award** – Jessica Maddern, South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute
Castro et al., Peripheral and central neuroplasticity in a mouse model of endometriosis. *Journal of Neurochemistry*, 2023;00:1-24.
- **Education Excellence Award** – Jennifer Rodger, The University of Western Australia
- **ANS Finkel Foundation Travelling Fellowships**, two fellowships were awarded to:
 - Amr Al Abed, Graduate School of Bioengineering, UNSW
 - Caio Seguin, Dept Psychiatry, University of Melbourne

8. ANS Distinguished Achievement Award

Janet Keast presented the ANS Distinguished Achievement award to Professor Glenda Halliday, from the University of Sydney.

Professor Halliday was nominated by Professor Peter Schofield and Emeritus Professor Elspeth McLachlan and was supported unanimously at the ANS Council meeting on 24 September 2024.

Professor Halliday (ANS President, 2006-7) was acknowledged as a distinguished neuroscientist who had rendered notable service to the society, previously recognised by the AW Campbell Award, Nina Kondelos Award and Honorary Membership.

She was appointed as a Companion of the Order of Australia in the 2023 King's Birthday Honours for "eminent service to medical research in the field of neurodegenerative disorders, including the development of revised diagnostic criteria for Parkinson's disease, and as a mentor". She made many major discoveries that advanced the understanding of the nervous system, recognised by appointment as Fellow of the Australian Academy of Science in 2021, and many other national and international awards. Prof Halliday continues her strong involvement with the community, including patient support groups, policy development and professional leadership.

9. Appointment of 2025 office bearers and Council members

Matilde Balbi announced and thanked the outgoing office bearers from the ANS Executive for their services to ANS and Jason Mattingley presented their ANS Medallions.

Outgoing ANS Executive:

Janet Keast – President
Michael Lardelli – Secretary
Jana Vukovic – Treasurer
Hamid Sohrabi – Conference Executive Chair

Matilde Balbi announced the 2025 ANS Executive, announced and thanked outgoing ANS Council members and announced the 2025 ANS Council.

2025 ANS Executive:

Jason Mattingley – President
Janet Keast – Past President
Matilde Balbi – Secretary
Steve Kassem – Treasurer
Jenna Ziebell – Conference Executive Chair

Outgoing Council members:

Ehsan Kheradpezhoh – *Australian Capital Territory Representative*
Lyndsey Collins-Praino – *South Australia Representative*
Alastair Fortune – *Student Representative*

2025 ANS Council:

Karl Iremonger – *New Zealand Representative*
Saba Gahrei – *Australian Capital Territory Representative*
Nicholas Price – *Victoria Representative*
Thomas Burne – *Queensland Representative*
Lezanne Ooi – *New South Wales Representative*
Gary Morris – *Tasmania Representative*
Ian Musgrave – *South Australia Representative*
Kristie Smith – *Neuroscience Research Representative*
John Bekkers – *Public Officer*
Jennifer Rodger – *Brain Bee National Coordinator*
Jay Bertran-Gonzalez – *ACAN Director*
Vacant – *Student Representative*

It was noted that the Student Committee was active and that a representative would be appointed in 2025.

Matilde Balbi announced the 2025 National Committee Chair's and Leadership.

2025 National Committee Chairs and Leadership:

Lyndsey Collins-Praino – *Equity and Diversity Chair*
Nicholas Price – *Animals in Research Chair*
Catherine Leamey – *Neuroscience Education and Outreach Chair*
Vacant – *Student Body Chair*
Kristie Smith – *Early-Mid Career Researcher Committee*
Greg Stuart – *Chair, Management Committee, Australasian Course in Advanced Neuroscience*
Jay Bertran-Gonzalez – *ACAN Director*

Minutes for ANS 2024 AGM

Matt Kirkcaldie – *Australian Brain Bee Co-Convenor*
Jennifer Rodger – *Australian Brain Bee Co-Convenor*
Bruno Swinderen – *Australian Brain Bee Co-Convenor*
Charles Watson – *Australian Brain Bee Co-Convenor*
Marco Morsch – *Newsletter Co-Editor*
Nathalie Dehorter – *Newsletter Co-Editor*

10. Other business

Jenna Ziebell and Brad Sutherland announced the dates and location of the Australasian Neuroscience Society 43rd Annual Scientific Meeting and played a video showcasing Tasmania.

ANS 2025 would take place in Hobart Tasmania from 30th November – 3rd December 2025 at the Hotel Grand Chancellor. The ANS 2025 LOC had been confirmed with Jenna Ziebell, in the role of Conference Executive Chair and Brad Sutherland as Chair of the LOC.

The plenary speakers for the ANS 2025 conference were announced:

- Marina Mikhaylova, Humbolt University of Berlin – **International Plenary Speaker**
- Miriam Matamales, University of New South Wales – **ANS Plenary Lecture**
- Alex Fornito, Monash University – **Lawrie Austin Plenary Lecture**
- Peter Crack, University of Melbourne – **Elsbeth McLachlan Plenary Lecture**
- Melinda Fitzgerald, Curtin University – **Eccles Plenary Lecture**

Jason Mattingley, the new ANS President gave a special thanks to Janet Keast, outgoing ANS President, for her work in the role as President for the past two years.

A member raised a question regarding how to make the funding pot bigger in cellular/molecular basic neuroscience research. Janet Keast acknowledged the difficulties with seeking funding and discussed the case for working more strongly with other societies in advocacy efforts for funding.

11. Close





The meeting closed at 5:58pm AWST.

April 2025

Communications

Is there information you would like included in our ANS Newsletter, published in our monthly online Bulletin, posted on our website, or tweeted?

ANS has a Communications Committee to help members disseminate information and assist the Society in publicising its activities to Members and the public. This committee is Co-chaired by Dr Nathalie Dehorter (Australian National University) and A/Prof Marco Morsch (Macquarie University). It oversees the production of the newsletter and ensures that current content is posted on the ANS website, published in our monthly online Bulletin prepared by the ANS Secretariat, posted on outlets such as the ANS Twitter account (by Dr Lila Landowski, University of Tasmania), Bluesky (by Dr Sean Coakley, University of Queensland), and LinkedIn (curated by Prof Thomas Fath, Macquarie University).

-  <http://www.ans.org.au>
-  <https://twitter.com/AusNeuroSoc>
-  <https://bsky.app/profile/ausneurosoc.bsky.social>
-  <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/8362021/>

If you have content for us, please email Marco Morsch (marco.morsch@mq.edu.au).

Become an ANS member or student member!

Please join with your colleagues in Australia and New Zealand by becoming a Member of ANS. You can join online at any time!
<https://tas.currinda.com/register/organisation/172>

www.ans.org.au



Policy

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 website and included in the newsletter and monthly bulletin if appropriate. Such requests should be directed to the ANS Secretary.

Newsletter Editors

A/Prof Marco Morsch
*Macquarie Medical School,
Faculty of Medicine,
Health and Human Sciences,
Macquarie University
Sydney, NSW, 2109
marco.morsch@mq.edu.au*

Dr Nathalie Dehorter
*Queensland Brain Institute,
The University of Queensland
Brisbane, QLD, 4073
n.dehorter@uq.edu.au*

Authorised by
Dr Matilde Balbi
*Queensland Brain Institute
The University of Queensland
Brisbane, QLD, 4072
T: +61-7-3443-3013
m.balbi@uq.edu.au*