

July 2017



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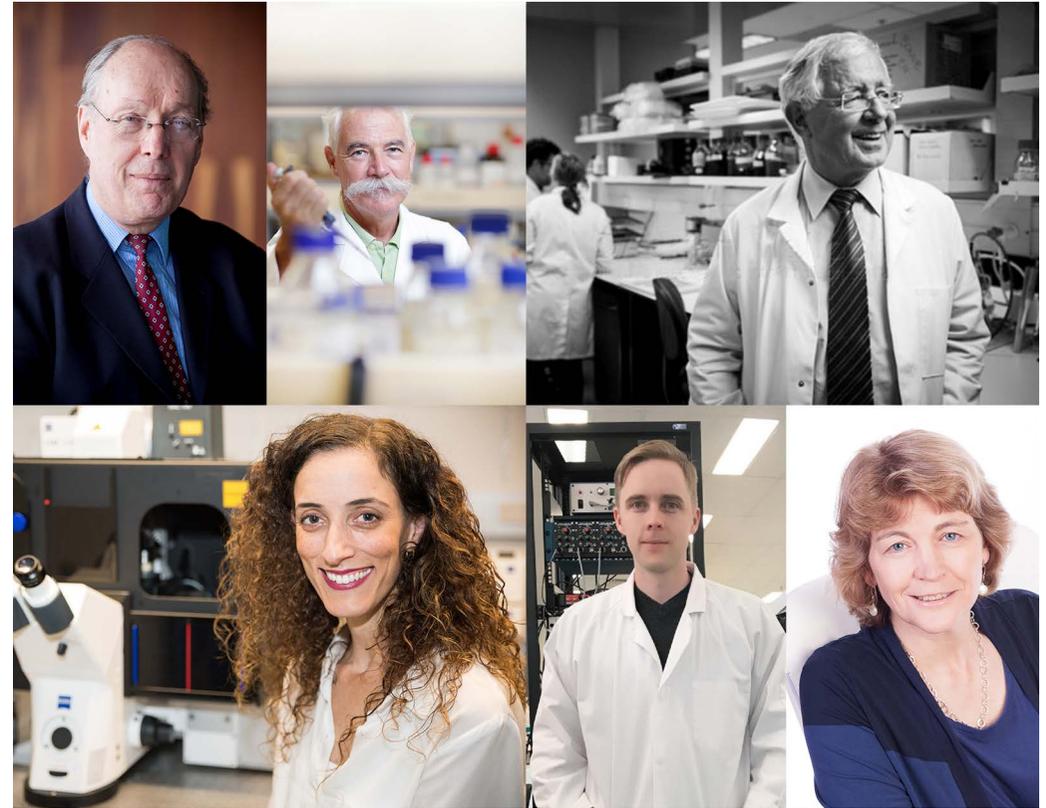
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# Australasian Neuroscience Society Newsletter



### 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

“If I had not been discriminated against or had not suffered persecution, I would never have received the Nobel Prize... Above all, don't fear difficult moments. The best comes from them.”

Rita Levi-Montalcini, Neurobiologist, Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 1986 for her discovery of growth factors.



**Prof Linda Richards**

*PhD, FAA, FAHMS  
President, ANS*

In this issue of the Newsletter we celebrate six of our members who have recently been honoured with major awards. I'm sure I speak for all members of ANS in offering warm congratulations to our colleagues for their remarkable achievements in neuroscience.

ANS exists to serve our members. It is therefore crucially important for ANS Council to constantly strive to both understand our members' needs and develop ways of delivering a Society that exceeds its members' expectations.

There are two issues to which ANS Council needs to alert the membership. The first is that ANS membership numbers are currently low, and the second is that ANS budgets were in deficit in both FY15 and FY16 partly due to the integration of ACAN into ANS. ANS Council has been urgently addressing these issues and we are in the process of developing a plan that we believe will regain and increase our membership and will provide a sure financial footing in the coming years. Fortunately, we have the opportunity to develop this plan because ANS does have a corpus of funds banked through the good planning and governance of previous ANS Councils. I want to reassure members that our current Council will also ensure that ANS has the financial means to comfortably afford our new initiatives.

ANS Council has been engaged in the following initiatives:

1. Appointment of an association management secretariat
2. Development of a 3-5 year ANS strategic plan
3. Formulation of an annual meeting schedule and venue sponsorship strategy that will attract at least \$275,000 in new conference revenue between 2018-2023
4. Establishment of new committees/working groups to manage the annual conference, media & communications, membership & sponsorship, and finance & risk management

Here are the details of these ANS Council activities:

## **1. Appointment of an association management secretariat**

Since the beginning of 2017, ANS Executive and Council have been engaged in understanding how to deliver the best possible outcomes and Society functions for our members. A crucial first step was to engage a professional secretariat. ANS Executive undertook an exhaustive process, assessing whether to hire our own staff or to engage a company that could provide a variety of association management services. We sought advice from other societies in Australia and overseas, and received the important and unanimous advice that hiring our own staff would not be the most economical or beneficial strategy for the Society, at least in the short term. We therefore sought proposals from five different association management companies

*(Message from the  
President ...continued)*

and interviewed three of these. I am pleased to report that we have now engaged "The Association Specialists" (TAS) as our ANS secretariat, effective July 1, 2017. TAS have been operating for over 30 years and currently manage over 60 societies and associations, including many in the health, medical and science sectors.

Members will begin to see the benefits of this over the next 12 months. First, ANS will have a fully integrated website that will handle all our memberships (within a few months), future (from 2018) conference registration, abstract submission, plenary, symposia and award nominations and other Society business. There will be the opportunity to house both the ACAN and ABBC websites as well as provide a platform for all the activities of the newly formed student, equity and diversity, animals in research, and teaching resources committees. Members will have professional support to help with membership renewals and any other Society business. The secretariat will also provide professional support to the ANS Council in areas of governance, finance, sponsorship and making certain that we meet our legal obligations and mitigate risks to the Society. We will also maintain a secure and ongoing archive of all Society business and documents, which is crucial for not-for-profit societies, run by volunteers, with limited terms of office. Having this support will allow the ANS Council to focus on our members and to develop and implement new initiatives that will provide year-round benefits and cement our Society as the peak body for neuroscience in Australia and New Zealand.

## **2. Development of a 3-5 year ANS strategic plan**

Stage two of our agenda is to develop a strategic plan for ANS. As I write, ANS Council has just (on July 5th 2017) gathered for a face-to-face meeting in Melbourne to begin to develop a 3-5 year strategic plan for ANS. The strategic plan will cover the vision, mission and purpose of ANS and identify how we can implement new initiatives to build on our Society's long and distinguished history of leadership in the field. To provide an opportunity for all ANS members to be involved in this process, ANS Council will seek input and discussion via a member survey to be distributed in August. Council will incorporate this feedback into the ANS strategic plan document that will be presented to the membership in advance of the annual general meeting in December.

## **3. Formulation of an annual meeting schedule and venue sponsorship strategy that will attract at least \$275,000 in new conference revenue between 2018-2023**

ANS Executive has been exploring how we can obtain better value for money from conference venues for our annual meeting. We want to achieve a world class conference that showcases and recognises research excellence, provides opportunities for training and career advancement and provides a mechanism for Australasian neuroscientists to interact, collaborate and socialise. Keeping the costs to a minimum is extremely important so that everyone, especially our students, can attend our annual meeting.

Previously ANS Council would first nominate the city in which to hold the conference and subsequently identify the venue. However, this approach severely limits our options for obtaining the best deal from the venue. Given the size of our conference and our wish to provide a high quality and professional conference experience, our annual meetings need to be held in the convention centre in each city. However, once the convention centre becomes aware that we have already chosen their city for our conference there is no incentive for them to provide a highly competitive rate or sponsorship.

Over the past few months, ANS Executive has identified those convention centres and state tourism bureaus that have the capacity to offer considerable incentives, allowing us to obtain the best deal for ANS. Additionally, enhanced sponsorship deals are achievable if we allow the conference centres to bid for multiple years. Such multi-year deals have the added advantage of being able to lock in our preferred dates and provide members with certainty as to where the meeting will be held. We believe our aim should be to book venues up to five years in advance to achieve the best sponsorship outcome. Currently, ANS Council has proposals on the table that amount to \$275,000 in "cash" sponsorship, plus discounts on venue hire and other incentives for meetings from 2018-2023. We believe this approach will allow ANS Council to keep costs down for the annual meeting, while still enabling some rotation across different cities. A consideration for this approach, of course, is the workload on the local organising committee(s) in a city chosen multiple times in 5 years (please see below).

(Message from the  
President...continued)

#### **4. Establishment of new committees/working groups to manage the annual conference, media & communications, membership & sponsorship, and finance & risk management**

The equity & diversity and student body committees have been working hard on a new committee charter for ANS which will guide the membership composition of all committees. This charter will enable ANS to move towards a skills-based recruitment of committee members that will include members outside of ANS Council and across Australia and New Zealand.

ANS Council proposes the establishment of the following four new committees/working groups that will be established by the members of the ANS Executive. Membership of these committees will be made based on a skill requirement as outlined in the committee charter for each committee/working group. A committee is established for the long term. A working group is established to address a specific scope of work for a short term that may or may not be established as a future ANS committee.

a) *Conference & Program Committee*, chaired by the Editor. Choosing the venue city based on financial incentives could result in the conference being held in the same city more than once in five years. For this reason, and because ANS Council would like to provide more opportunity for national input into the program, ANS Council proposes the establishment of a new conference and program committee, chaired by the Editor and made up of members from within and outside the venue city. The term for members

on this committee would be two years (with a possible renewal of two years), as for other ANS committees. This will provide more stability as committee members will have the opportunity to contribute to more than one conference.

b) *Membership & Society Sponsorship Working Group*, chaired by the President. This focused working group will look at ways of boosting membership and overall Society sponsorship and engagement. One initiative will be to promote our members through their nomination, by the ANS President, for prestigious national and international awards and prizes. Additionally, ANS Council would like to establish more named, endowed medals and awards for ANS members to be given by the Society. If members are interested in these initiatives, and would like more information, please contact me directly.

c) *Media & Communications Working Group*, chaired by the Secretary. This working group will review ANS's current media and communications avenues which include the development of the new website, Facebook and Twitter accounts and the newsletter. It will also develop a social media policy and address ways of increasing the profile of ANS and its members. The ANS Facebook page currently has over 5000 followers thanks to the work of Past-President Prof. James Vickers. This working group will appoint a new manager of the Facebook page and shepherd the transfer to ensure we retain and build our Facebook followers.

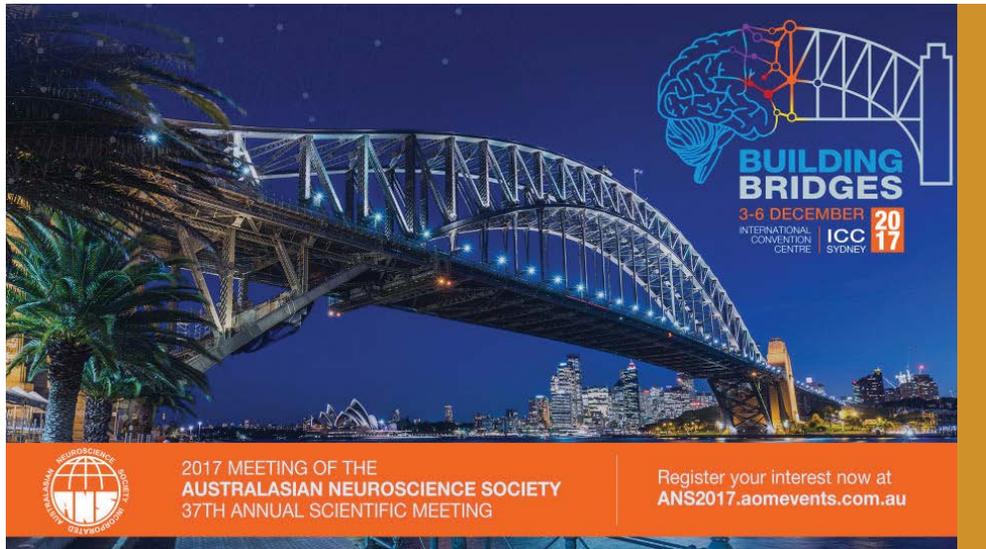
d) *Finance & Risk Management Working Group*, chaired by the Treasurer. This working group, with advice from TAS, is currently rationalising the legal status of the Society. For example, the working group is completing the paperwork and requirements to register the Society with ASIC (Australian Securities and Investments Commission) as a Registrable Australian Body. ANS will still remain a registered charity with the Australian Charities & Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) as a 'Health Promotion Charity' with Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status. The Treasurer, Prof. Gary Egan, has also identified and established a secure and conservative high interest investment strategy for the total ANS corpus of funds and has shifted the funds from a low interest-bearing savings account. This will maximise the benefit for members from Society funds.

**If any ANS member is interested in contributing to any of these committees please let me know.**

ANS Council is excited by the possibilities that lay ahead and I look forward on reporting on our progress.

In closing, I draw your attention to a great Australian science website with inspirational quotes, especially those from students, that highlights the enormous talent we have in this part of the world:  
<https://womeninscienceaust.org/stem-profiles/>

# ANS 2017 - Sydney



## Thomas and Greg

*On behalf of the Local Organising Committee, ANS 2017 (Thomas Fath, Greg Sutherland, Andrew Affleck and Melissa Tadros)*

As this article is being written we are exactly 150 days away from the annual meeting in Sydney. The local organising committee is excited to welcome you to the new International Conference Centre in the redeveloped Darling Harbour precinct. This is truly a world class facility set against the backdrop of Sydney Harbour and the Sydney skyline.

**Early Bird registration is now open but the discount will end on July 31, so please encourage all your colleagues and students to take advantage of the reduced prices. The link to the registration portal can be found here: <https://aomevents.eventsair.com/ans2017/ans17-registration/Site/Register>.**

As in previous years, the scientific program spans three and a half days, starting on Sunday 3rd December. The program, including four plenary talks and 20 symposia, is now available online on the conference website: <http://ans2017.aomevents.com.au/>. In particular, we welcome Prof Yunichi Nabekura (National Institute for Physiological Sciences, Japan) to give the International Plenary lecture. Furthermore, there are a number of preceding Satellite Meetings including the neurodegenerative disease-focused Alzheimer's & Parkinson's Disease/Cell Architecture in Development & Disease meeting (31st Nov/ 1st Dec) and the Australasian Auditory Neuroscience Workshop (2nd Dec). Please check the website for details before planning your trip.

As a novel addition to the Sydney meeting we will be running Imaging Workshops on Sunday 3rd from 11am. These will feature advanced imaging applications with presentations by leaders in the field of super-resolution microscopy, single-molecule and intra vital imaging. Confirmed speakers are Daniel Choquet (University of Bordeaux, France), Yunichi Nabekura, Roland Brandt (University of Osnabrück, Germany) and Fred Meunier (University of Queensland, Brisbane). These sessions are included in your registration but please indicate your participation on the Registration page.

The theme for the Sydney meeting is 'Building Bridges'. This refers not only to the Darling Harbour venue nestled between Sydney's two iconic bridges, but also to the fact that the program is intended

to facilitate new collaborations between young and experienced scientists, clinicians and industry. As such, the student and ECR program will include both a networking session with industry on Sunday after the workshops and a "meet and greet" with senior scientists on Monday evening. This two-pronged approach recognises the importance of both academia and industry as future opportunities for the next generation of neuroscientists in Australia and New Zealand. Student members and ECRs are encouraged to attend these events and indicate their participation via the Registration page. The Society will also be providing student travel awards, so all student members should confirm their interest on the Registration page.

**A major highlight of the meeting will be the Conference Dinner on Tuesday night, a Sydney Harbour cruise on the "Starship Sydney". There will be a live band playing music to suit everyone's taste, fantastic food and wine, and of course the beautiful Sydney Harbour at night.**

**Please confirm your attendance (and your partner's) on the Registration page.**

ANS 2017 in Sydney is shaping up as a great opportunity to combine world class neuroscience with the excitement of being in a city that's consistently ranked among the best destinations in the world. We would love you to join us.

## Society Award Winners

Dr Stephen Abbott, Heart Research Institute and Department of Physiology, University of Sydney. Winner of the 2016 A.W. Campbell Award for the best contribution by a member of the Society in their first five postdoctoral years.

In 2013, Steve relocated to Boston, Massachusetts, under the auspices of an NHMRC CJ Martin Fellowship to study the hypothalamic networks controlling autonomic function with Prof Clifford Saper at Harvard University. After two years in Boston, Steve returned to Sydney to take a senior scientist position in the High Blood Pressure Group at the Heart Research Institute in Sydney where he continues to study the neurobiology of the central autonomic network.

Conceptually, Steve's studies have helped to pioneer the notion that functional compartments of cardio-respiratory control can be disaggregated on a genetic basis. This concept is now well established and several labs around the world utilise the knowledge and tools developed in Prof Guyenet's lab. Technically, Steve's work as an early adopter of the optogenetic toolbox set the stage for the burgeoning use of this approach. It serves as a benchmark for applying 'light switches' to neurons to perturb cellular networks with exquisite precision. The technology has allowed researchers to understand the mechanisms underlying cardiorespiratory function in an effective and meaningful way.

Over a decade of interactions, I have watched Steve grow and adapt professionally, as well as on a personal front. As a colleague and friend he has influenced and motivated me to push frontiers. He now manages a research career with bold vision, as well as the needs of his growing family.

### Natasha Kumar

UNSW Sydney

Having known and collaborated with Steve since 2007, when we were both students based at the Royal North Shore Hospital, I can attest to his determined focus and interest in neuroscience. Following formative years with Prof Paul Pilowsky at the University of Sydney and Macquarie University, first as an honours student and then as a PhD student, Steve moved abroad to work with Prof Guyenet at the University of Virginia (UVA), Charlottesville, USA.

During his time in Prof Guyenet's lab, Steve performed ground-breaking studies using optogenetic actuators to genetically target brainstem neurons that mediate the respiratory response to changes in blood pCO<sub>2</sub>, and the presympathetic C1 neurons that are differentially recruited by autonomic stressors to maintain homeostasis. His research was supported by a post-doctoral fellowship from the American Heart Association. Over the course of 4 years at UVA, Steve performed research that resulted in 14 publications, including several first-author *Journal of Neuroscience* papers and collaborative efforts in *Nature* and *Science*.



**Dr Stephen Abbott**, Heart Research Institute and Department of Physiology, University of Sydney

(Society Award  
Winners ...continued)

**Professor Naomi Wray, Institute for Molecular Bioscience and the Queensland Brain Institute, University of Queensland. Winner of the 2016 Nina Kondelos Award for a female neuroscientist who has made an outstanding contribution to basic or clinical neuroscience research.**

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Mental disorders – including depression, anxiety and psychosis – are a major cause of disabilities in Australia, with 1 in 5 people experiencing mental illness over their lifetime.

Professor Naomi Wray's invaluable contribution in understanding the genetic causes of mental illnesses has been recognised by award of the ANS 2016 Nina Kondelos Prize.

"I feel honoured that my work and that of my team was considered worthy of a prize awarded by ANS, especially as my work is not mainstream neuroscience."

Holding joint appointments at the Institute for Molecular Bioscience (IMB) and the Queensland Brain Institute (QBI) at the University of Queensland (UQ), Naomi is described by her team members as refined, generous, rigorous and insightful.

Naomi's career starts far away and develops across three continents in a rather variegated way. Her Bachelor studies in Agricultural Science were conducted at the University of Edinburgh, to which she would return for her PhD research in quantitative population genetics after completing a Masters degree at Cornell University in animal breeding and statistics. "My story, from PhD in applied agriculture to prize in neuroscience, provides a lesson for early career researchers, that the research skills gained as a student can lead in many directions over the course of a career!"

In 2005, after working in academia and consulting to industry, Naomi began her adventure in Australia at the Queensland Institute of Medical Research, working on the genetics of anxiety and depression. "I joined the University of Queensland in 2011 as QBI founder director Prof [Perry] Bartlett had a vision on how genomics could crucially contribute to neuroscience."

Today, Naomi is a leader in the field of psychiatric genomics, as has been recognised by her peers through election to the Board member of the International Society for Psychiatric Genetics and as Fellow of the Australian Academy of Science. She is an NHMRC Principal Research Fellow and, together with Prof Peter Visscher and Prof Jian Yang, holds an NHMRC Program Grant in complex trait genomics.

In the last three years, Naomi's neuroscience interests have turned also to motor neurone diseases. She co-leads a 1 million-dollar Ice Bucket Challenge project from the Motor Neurone Disease Research Institute Australia, awarded to establish the Sporadic Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Australia System Genomics consortium (SALSA-SGC).

In between raising her three kids and pursuing her love of outdoor sports, Naomi has achieved authorship of 272 publications with over 17000 citations.

"The Nina Kondelos award is for a female neuroscientist, and so it is relevant to say that I worked only 7 years full-time equivalent over a 16 year-period. I believe we can be more creative in supporting careers for both women and men in the early family-hood years."

**Alessandra  
Donato**

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PhD Student, Queensland  
Brain Institute



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**Prof Naomi Wray**, Institute for Molecular Bioscience and the Queensland Brain Institute, University of Queensland

## Notification of ANS Annual General Meeting 2017

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The ANS Annual General Meeting will be held from 5pm to 6.30pm on Tuesday 5th December 2017 during the annual conference in Sydney. Members are invited to submit motions for consideration at the AGM by the membership. Any submitted motion must be seconded by another member of the Society and be accompanied by a statement by the proposer explaining the rationale for the motion, and must be received by the Secretary no later than Monday 4th September 2017.

# Society Business

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## Nominations open for Plenary Lecturers for ANS 2018 in Brisbane

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Members are now invited to nominate distinguished researchers for the invited ANS Plenary Lectures which will be held during the 2018 ANS meeting in Brisbane. The lectures include the following:

### *ANS Plenary Lecture*

This prestigious lecture is given by an outstanding Australasian researcher in any field of neuroscience.

### *ANS Overseas Plenary Lecture*

This lecture is given by a researcher in any field of neuroscience who is based outside of Australia and New Zealand whose work is of wide interest to our membership.

### *ANS Lawrie Austin Plenary Lecture*

This lecture is named in honour of Lawrie Austin, the first President of ANS and the first Australian elected to the Council of the International Society for Neurochemistry, and is presented by either a male or female neuroscientist nominated by the ANS membership.

### *ANS Elspeth McLachlan Plenary Lecture*

This new plenary lecture is named in honour of Elspeth McLachlan, a prominent neuroscientist and the first woman President of ANS, and will be presented for the first time in 2018 by either a male or female neuroscientist nominated by the ANS membership.

**Nominations for any of the above lectures must be submitted on the ANS Plenary Speaker Proposal Form available on the ANS website. Nominations must be received by the ANS Secretary Assoc Prof Kay Double by 31st August 2017.**

Note that in 2018 the Eccles Lecturer will be nominated by the Neurosurgical Society of Australasia. This follows our established agreement whereby the nomination in odd years comes from ANS and in even years from the Neurosurgical Society.



## Honours for Members

### Professor Alan Mackay-Sim is 2017 Australian of the Year

I first met Emeritus Professor Alan Mackay-Sim in 2012 when I was a new graduate from Griffith University. At this meeting Alan and I discussed the many interesting projects that he was working on. One stood out above all the others: a project to treat victims of spinal cord injury with growth factors to modify the autoimmune response to the injury. The existing research Alan and his team had completed showed great promise for a treatment for spinal cord injury that I had never encountered or thought possible.

It was at this point I had a decision to make – go on to medical school or become a medical researcher. It would be too simple to say there was one factor that drew me to medical research, but if there was one, it was Alan.

Soon afterward I started my Masters of Medical Research on the growth factor project under Alan's supervision. Alan inspired me to take ownership of the project and run with it. Very early in the project I discovered that we required some modifications of the animal surgical protocol. This concept was quite abstract to begin with but, thanks to Alan's guidance and vast cross-institutional connections, we were able to consult with experts to assist with the optimisation. Very soon he put me in touch with a scientist from the University of São Paulo's Department of Surgery for modifications to the animal surgery, and with another scientist from The University of Queensland's School of Biomedical Science for the animal injury model.

During the year that I spent undertaking my Masters research Alan presented his work at many different functions that I was always invited to attend. These were unmissable opportunities and it was at these events that I saw another side of Alan – the master of ceremonies. The presentations I attended were to a wide variety of audiences, ranging from patient groups with little to no scientific background to very experienced medical doctors and researchers. The ease with which Alan could relate to these groups was amazing. He never failed to capture the complete attention of everyone in the room.

Over the course of my Masters degree Alan guided and encouraged me to learn new things and make broad connections to obtain the best outcomes for every project. I value the discussions Alan and I had during my Masters as some of the greatest interactions of my early career.

Working with Alan has been and continues to be a great privilege. He is a deserving recipient of the award of Australian of the Year, and I'm sure that all his colleagues in the Australian and New Zealand neuroscience communities will join me in congratulating him for this very high honour.

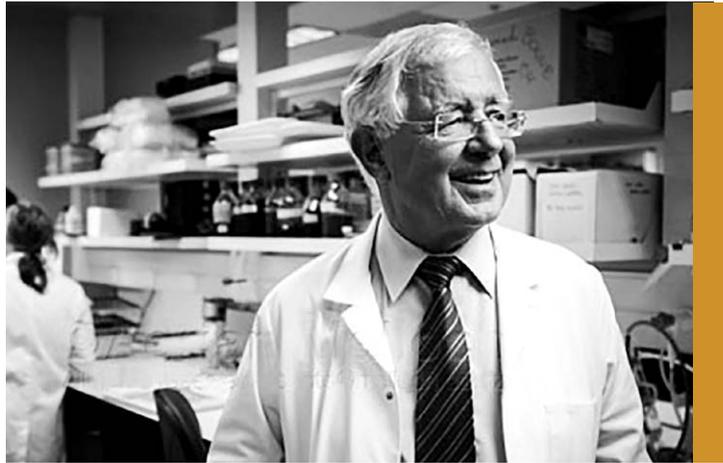
**Simon  
Ledwidge**

*Research Fellow and  
Surgical Lead, Menzies Health  
Institute, Griffith University*



Prof Alan Mackay-Sim

(Honours for Members  
...continued)



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Prof Richard Faull

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## Distinguished Professor Richard Faull knighted for his contributions to neuroscience

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Professor Richard Faull was made a Knight Companion of the Order of New Zealand in the New Year Honours list for services to brain research.

Sir Richard has been affiliated with the University of Auckland for nearly 40 years as a Professor of Anatomy. He is highly regarded internationally for his research on the human brain and neurodegenerative brain diseases. He is founder and director of the Centre for Brain Research (CBR) at the University of Auckland which brings together researchers and clinicians with a common aim to improve the understanding and treatment of brain disease. The Centre now includes 70 research groups, 450 researchers and students, and 40 clinicians.

Sir Richard is a founder of the Human Brain Bank at the Centre that now has more than 500 brains with nine different neurodegenerative diseases. He also instigated the annual Brain Day in Auckland, a public event that invites the community to the University to learn more about brain function and disease.

**Sir Richard credits his community-minded upbringing for his success in medicine and research. He was raised in a family of five boys in Tikorangi, a small rural town in North Taranaki (NZ), where his parents ran the general store.**

He has received numerous awards for his achievements in neuroscience, including the Supreme Winner of the World Class New Zealander Award.

The full article can be found at: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/brainy-obsession-leads-knighthood-our-co-director-athena-dennis>

Srdjan  
Vlajkovic

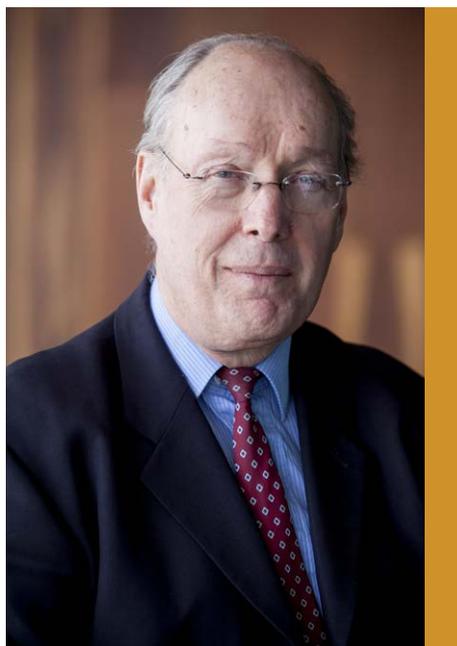
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*ANS Rep for New Zealand*

(Honours for Members  
...continued)

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Prof Colin Masters



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## Professor Colin Masters awarded the Order of Australia

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In this year's Australia Day Honours List, Colin Masters, Laureate Professor of the University of Melbourne and the Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health, was granted the privilege of adding 'AO' to his many suffixes. Appointed as an Officer in the General Division of the Order of Australia, Colin was recognised for his contributions to the understanding of Alzheimer's and other neurodegenerative diseases.

Colin's storied career began with his initial investigations into the transmissible spongiform encephalopathies in the mid-1960s when, as a medical student, his interest was piqued by an amyloid deposition known as the 'kuru plaque'. In 1976 he took up his first postdoctoral position at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, before moving to the NIH in 1977. His time in the United States was spent developing means of purifying amyloid plaques from the spongiform encephalopathies and, later, Alzheimer's disease tissue. In a fiercely competitive field, Colin and his network of collaborators tirelessly worked to produce samples of amyloid plaques for amino acid sequencing, ramping up their efforts when Colin returned to Australia in 1981. In 1984, with Professor Konrad Beyreuther of the Institute for Genetics in Cologne, Colin published the sequence of beta-amyloid protein, and by 1987 had isolated its encoding gene to chromosome 21.

With this critical biochemical information in hand, Colin and his colleagues would spearhead the amyloid hypothesis of Alzheimer's disease over the following decades. Few major discoveries regarding beta-amyloid and Alzheimer's disease did not bear Colin's name throughout the late 80s and early 90s; from structural insights into the A $\beta$  plaque to the identification of its elusive precursor protein. In more recent years, Colin has overseen the development of both in vivo and ex vivo assays for A $\beta$  in Alzheimer's disease; advised on major clinical trials targeting A $\beta$ ; and as recently as this year he (with Blaine Roberts) was able to identify that the difference in brain amyloid deposition between Alzheimer's disease and normal ageing is just five milligrams.

All the while, Colin has overseen a raft of new discoveries in neurodegenerative disease research. As Director of the Mental Health Research Institute and Head of Neurodegeneration, after the merger with the Florey Neuroscience Institute, Colin's wisdom and breadth of knowledge has seen many young scientists emerge under his mentorship. We are proud to be just two of them.

Colin personifies the adage "success in academia requires focus" and he has maintained a laser-like focus on understanding the natural history of A $\beta$  in Alzheimer's disease for over 30 years. His focus and general eagerness to work together to get the job done has helped make Colin a great person to work with, collaborate, and learn from. His dedication and commitment to medical research, and neurodegeneration specifically, have long been known and recognised. It is a testament to the scope of his influence that he has been granted this honour, and we congratulate him, and thank him for paving the way for those who will follow.

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### Blaine Roberts

*Florey Institute, Melbourne*

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### Dominic Hare

*Florey Institute,  
Melbourne and University of  
Technology Sydney*

July 2017

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(Honours for Members  
...continued)



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Dr Lilach Avitan

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## Dr Lilach Avitan selected to be a Superstar of STEM

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After a competitive national search, Dr Lilach Avitan from the Queensland Brain Institute at The University of Queensland has been selected as one of 30 participants in the inaugural Superstars of STEM Program.

Dr Avitan edged out more than 300 female applicants across a range of fields in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Facilitated by Science & Technology Australia (STA), the peak group for Australia's 68,000 scientists and technologists, the Superstars of STEM program aims to create a critical mass of visible female role models in STEM across the country, by raising the public profile of dynamic female scientists.

A lack of female role models in STEM professions has been identified as a key problem in encouraging young women to choose careers in STEM. The Superstars of STEM were announced by Senator the Hon Arthur Sinodinos, Minister for Industry, Innovation & Science, in Sydney on Monday 3 July.

Dr Avitan, a computational neuroscientist, said she was thrilled to have been selected for the 2017 Superstars of STEM Program. "The Superstars of STEM program builds on the current push to address systemic challenges that face female scientists. I'm excited to participate in the program, which will equip us with the skills and opportunities to promote STEM and advocate for women in science publicly."

Do you know of any  
ANS member who has  
recently received a  
science-related honour or  
prize? Please let us know!  
Contact Kay Double  
([kay.double@sydney.edu.au](mailto:kay.double@sydney.edu.au))

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# Meeting Report

## Kioloa Neuroscience Colloquium

This year's annual Kioloa Neuroscience Colloquium was held on 22nd-23rd April 2017 at the Australian National University's idyllic Kioloa coastal campus on the south coast of NSW. This intimate and relaxed conference was once again the perfect combination of beach life, countryside and neuroscience.

The opening plenary presentation from one of ANU's newest recruits, Dr Nathalie Dehorter, provided a detailed overview of the mechanisms

underlying the developmental adaptation of cortical interneurons. We then enjoyed several high quality oral presentations where ECRs, postgraduate and undergraduate students showcased their work, which has traditionally been the focus of this meeting. This year, the Best Student Presentation Prize was awarded to Mark Gradwell from the University of Newcastle, for his talk on the role of parvalbumin-positive interneurons in spinal cord sensory circuits. Other highlights included work from Conrad Lee from ANU on animal models of sensory prioritisation, and Danielle Bradd from The University of Wollongong on the efficacy of animal models of schizophrenia.

With perfect autumn weather, the scheduled swim break was a welcome interruption, giving everyone a chance to stretch the legs and perfect their frisbee skills. The evening poster session concluded the day, with student presenters again taking the spotlight. Under the watchful gaze of the local kangaroos, the relaxing atmosphere was the perfect opportunity to network and catch up with colleagues and friends. The fun continued into the night, with a plentiful dinner and many a drink around the infamous Kioloa fire pit. Perhaps coincidentally, the Sunday morning plenary presentation by Dr Aaron Camp from The University of Sydney explained the mechanisms underlying our balance deficits from the night before as he presented work from his lab on peripheral and central control of balance.

The closing remarks from Kaori Ikeda and Khaled Chakli of the Australian Brain Alliance finished the meeting on an exciting note. This newly formed initiative is seeking to increase government funding to neuroscience research to help research institutes and industries form high impact collaborations to develop better treatments for neural disorders. If you want to get involved, find your local representative by contacting [kahled.chakli@science.org.au](mailto:kahled.chakli@science.org.au) (campaign director) or [kaori.ikeda@science.org.au](mailto:kaori.ikeda@science.org.au) (policy officer).

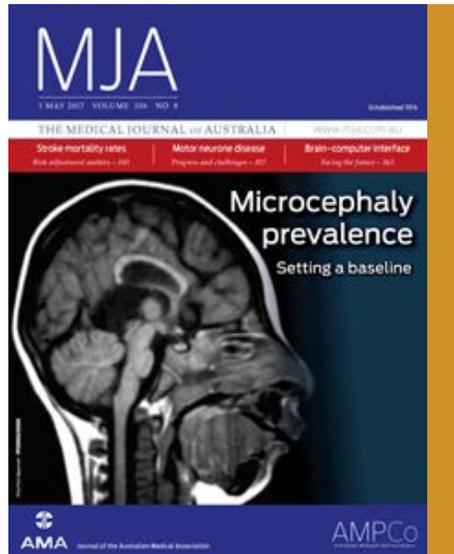
It was great to see so many new faces at this year's meeting, and so many students taking advantage of this opportunity to present their work and network with other local neuroscientists. Next year's meeting will return to Point Wolstoncroft sport and recreation camp, on stunning Lake Macquarie. We look forward to welcoming you all to Newcastle in 2018.

**Kelly Smith**  
**Kristen Farrell**

*PhD Students, The University  
of Newcastle*



Neuroscientists at play, Kioloa



**The neuroscience issue of the MJA was published on May 1st 2017 and featured articles on clinical neuroscience research invited by the ANS MJA committee and the MJA Editorial team.**

The Medical Journal of Australia. Microcephaly prevalence: setting a baseline. Med J Aust 2017; 1 May 206(8): Full Cover Image. © Copyright 2017 The Medical Journal of Australia reproduced with permission.

## Neuroscience issue of The Medical Journal of Australia inspired by ANS

One goal of the current ANS Council is to increase awareness of ANS in the clinical community and to encourage collaborations between researchers and clinicians. With this in mind, a neuroscience-focused issue of The Medical Journal of Australia (MJA), the journal of the Australian Medical Association, was proposed by the ANS Secretary Kay Double who, together with Dr Tom Duncan and Dr Rachel Tan (all from the University of Sydney), invited prominent Australian researchers in clinical research, the focus of the journal, to submit proposals for articles.

The neuroscience issue of the MJA appeared on May 1st and featured articles by ANS researchers and clinicians, as well as articles on topics suggested by the MJA Editors, such as stroke, motor neurone disease, regenerative neurology and neurobionics. The issue also included an Editorial by the ANS President and Secretary that discussed the value and importance of both basic and clinical neuroscience research in Australia, and the role of the Australian Brain Alliance, of which ANS is a member, in global efforts to understand brain function and dysfunction.

The print version of the MJA is read each fortnight by 33,000 clinicians and researchers in Australia, with an even larger audience reading the online version.

The neuroscience issue of the MJA can be viewed at <https://www.mja.com.au/journal/2017/206/8>.

### Kay Double

*University of Sydney*

## Announcements

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With the ANS 2017 meeting in Sydney fast approaching, now is the perfect time to renew your ANS membership and take advantage of big discounts in the cost of registration.

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### 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

Renewal of membership can be quickly and easily completed online at: <http://www.ans.org.au/membership/category/ans-membership>.

Membership fees for 2017 are \$150 for Full (Ordinary) Membership and \$70 for Student Membership.

Alternatively, you can take advantage of our new three year membership. Selecting this option this year means you won't have to worry about membership payments until 2019. In addition, as the three year rate is calculated at three times the 2017 fee, you avoid the annual CPI fee increase so this option is also budget friendly. Note that the three year membership option is not available for student members, due to the limited time of student candidatures.

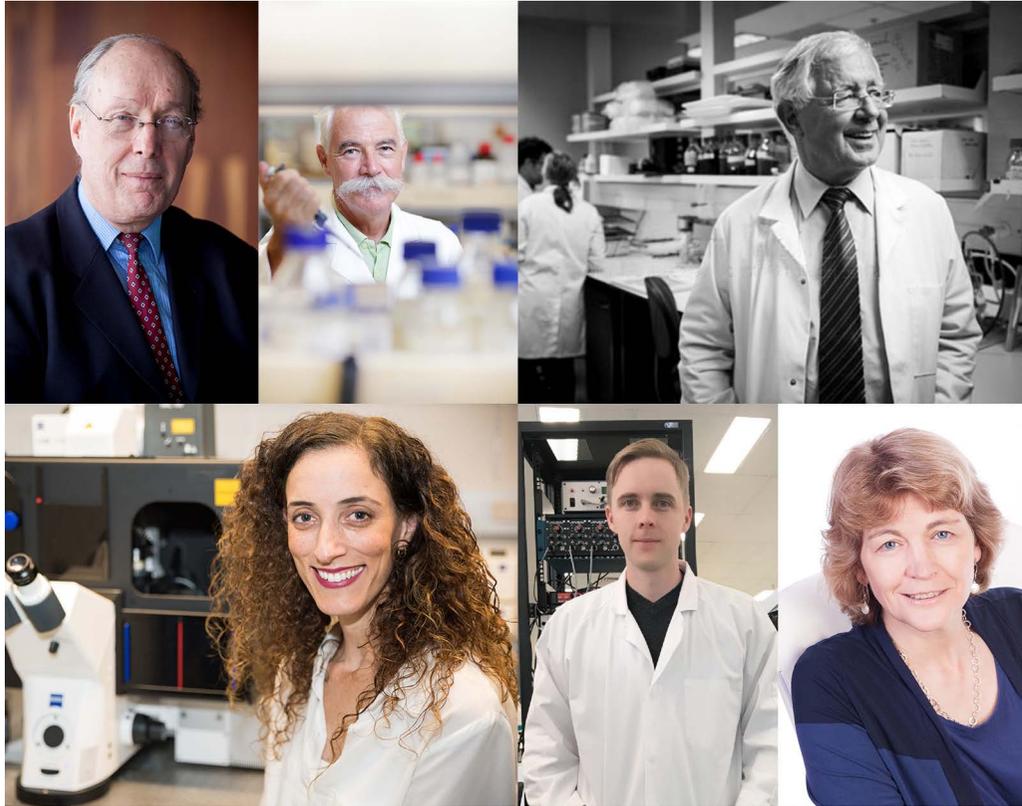
If you have any questions regarding your membership, please contact the ANS Secretary ([kay.double@sydney.edu.au](mailto:kay.double@sydney.edu.au)).

**Please encourage your students and colleagues to renew their ANS membership for 2017!**

ANS  
MEMBERSHIP

July 2017

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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 Monday 2 October 2017

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**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 if appropriate. Such requests should be directed to the ANS Secretary.

**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*

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