



Australian Neuroscience Society Newsletter

No. 4

December, 2012

www.ans.org.au

President's Perspective

Internationalisation

Some of the unexpected duties and joys of being President of ANS are the ex-officio positions where I represent Australia (and now New Zealand) on boards and committees to do with a variety of neuroscience related activities on the world stage. So it was that, at the recent New Orleans meeting for the Society for Neuroscience, I attended my first meeting of the International Brain Research Organisation (IBRO) Governing Council. In addition I also attended a number of more informal meetings including the committee for global advocacy for neuroscience, the Federation of European Neurosciences Societies (FENS) and the Federation of Asian Oceanian Neuroscience Societies (FAONS) whose current President is Professor Sarah Dunlop.

These meetings reflect an increasingly global scale of activities in neuroscience and science generally, as Universities, Institutes and individual researchers strive to enhance their competitive edge, forging strong international links becomes more important. The opportunity to access specialised instruments and/or reagents, different data sets, cohorts or populations of humans or animals, tissue biobanks, and so on allows us to tackle problems and initiate programs of research that would not be possible with the resources available in just one country. Such links also provide an opportunity for enhanced research training through the exchange of personnel.

The program for the Melbourne meeting of ANS in February already reflects this increased international profile. IBRO-APRC (Asia Pacific Research Committee) is contributing funding towards a 2-day Course on Advanced Neuroscience Brain Imaging. The course is being convened by Professor Sarah Dunlop, together with Professor Gary Egan, Director, Monash Biomedical Imaging and Dr James Bourne, Chair LOC ANS 2013 and will host 30 students from the Asia-Pacific region including students from Australia. The course involves lectures, hand-on practical sessions, and site tours of the clinical and preclinical research facilities at MRI and the Australian Synchrotron. FAONS will also be sponsoring two major symposia ("Development of Cortical Circuits" and "Stress and Drug Addiction") featuring speakers from China, India, Israel, Japan, Korea and Australia.



To develop closer international ties with the Asia-Pacific region, FENS has reserved one place on the program committee for its biannual major conference - the FENS Forum. The Japanese Neuroscience Society nominated the Asian program committee representative for the last FENS Forum in Barcelona and it was decided that ANS should nominate the Asian representative for the 2014 FENS Forum to be held in Milan. ANS nominated me to be that representative so I look forward to making sure that outstanding scientists from our region play a significant role in Milan in 2014.

Funding by and of NHMRC

It has been a few weeks since the outcomes of NHMRC applications were announced. Now that the congratulations for some, and commiserations for many more, have been said it is timely to reflect on the current situation.

The NHMRC system is clearly struggling to cope with the volume of applications. The CEO, Professor Warwick Anderson, reported that the number of applications submitted has more than doubled in the last decade but the allocated funding has not kept pace. Although there has been a substantial increase in the number of grants funded, the percent success is the lowest on record. Even more disturbing is that the number of applications rated as 'Fundable but not funded' has more than tripled in the same period i.e. the average quality of the applications submitted has improved greatly. The result is that a progressively smaller proportion of an increasing number of good applications is being funded. This in turn results in random factors unrelated to quality playing an increas

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ANS Annual General meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Australian Neuroscience Society will be held at 3.40pm on Tuesday, 5th February 2013 at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre.

Proposed Changes to ANS Constitution:

Name change to recognise New Zealand

At the 2012 AGM at the Gold Coast, there was overwhelming support to change the constitution to formally include New Zealand. However, the vote to change the society name to include New Zealand did not attain the required 75% approval. During the debate at the AGM and afterwards, it became apparent that an extended opportunity to consider alternative names would be appreciated by the membership. Council therefore decided to hold an on-line forum about: 1) the issue of name change; and 2) the preferred name for the Society. This forum ran for six weeks and was followed by a poll on five different names that ran for two weeks. A total of 331 votes were received. Eighty percent of the votes favoured a name change as their first preference. 'Australasian Neuroscience Society' was by far the most popular option with 150 first choice votes. Accordingly, the following motion will be put to the general ANS membership for discussion and voting at the AGM in 2013 in Melbourne:

- *Motion: that the name of the Australian Neuroscience Society be changed to the Australasian Neuroscience Society*

Compliance with ACT Associations legislation

ANS is incorporated in the ACT. The Public Officer recently discovered that the ANS constitution was technically in breach of ACT Associations legislation by failing to include rules covering proxy voting at AGMs or rules for disciplining members. Given that this legislation overrides our constitution, it is possible that next time we submit a constitutional change we may be forced to comply with the legislation. To circumvent this without making any changes to our established procedures, Council has decided to put

President's Perspective *(cont.)*

ing role in grant success. For peer review to be trustworthy and effective, the influence of random factors must be kept to a minimum.

The obvious solution is more funding for the NHMRC. This is when global advocacy becomes local. We should take every opportunity to impress upon politicians and influential people/organisations that without more funding the NHMRC peer review system is in danger. Expert peer review provides the best guarantee of quality. In addition, the proposed extra funding for translational research recommended by the McKeon Review, should be funded from *new* money (as recommended by the McKeon Review). If the translational research initiatives are funded by redirecting money from existing schemes that support basic and clinical research, it will exacerbate the stresses on the peer review system and damage our ability to make new discoveries that can be translated into better health care.

John Rostas
President ANS

the following motions to the general ANS membership for discussion and voting at the AGM in 2013 in Melbourne:

- *Motion: that a new item 12.5 be added to section 12 (Annual General Meeting) of the ANS Constitution to read "No member shall be entitled to appoint another member as a proxy for the purpose of voting".*
- *Motion: that a new item 3.6 be added to section 3 (Membership) of the ANS Constitution to read. "The Society does not undertake to discipline its members".*

The current ANS Constitution is available online at www.ans.org.au/news/constitution.

ANS Council Elections

ANS Council called for nominations for ANS Council positions that fall vacant in 2013, for the positions of President-elect and State Representatives for TAS, NSW and QLD. Nominations for President-elect were received from Pankaj Sah (University of Queensland) and James Vickers (University of Tasmania). For the State Representatives, nominations were received from Tracey Dickson for TAS Rep, Michael Piper for QLD Rep and from Kay Double, for NSW Rep for a second consecutive term.

As two nominations were received for President-elect, a postal ballot will be required to fill this position. Included below are brief statements from each of the candidates to assist members with their decision. Also enclosed is a ballot paper, with instructions on how to vote and two voting envelopes. Please make sure that you read the instructions carefully so that your vote will count. Completed ballot papers are to be posted to the ANS Secretariat, Sally Jay Conferences and MUST be received by **Wednesday 18th January 2012**. All members are encouraged to vote.

President-elect Policy Statements

Pankaj Sah:

The strength of the Australian Neuroscience Society, which includes our NZ colleagues, I believe, enables us to broaden our scope to become a leader in promoting neuroscience in our region through increased exchanges and collaborations. Neuroscience is seeing huge growth in the Asia-Pacific region and I envisage greatly increasing our international profile by establishing regular symposia at ANS meetings jointly with neuroscience societies in our region, particularly China, Japan and India, creating a forum for collaboration and scientific exchange, and more importantly actively lobbying regional governments for increased funding for collaborations. As one of the founders of the Australian Course in Advanced Neuroscience (ACAN) my vision is to develop it into a local Woods Hole that attracts the best young and visiting scientists to Australia. As previous chair of a Gordon conference, I would further my discussions with the organization to establish regular Gordon Conferences in Australia in association with the ANS.

Although promoting our neuroscience to the world is important, one of my major goals would remain to increase funding available to neuroscience through actively lobbying state and federal government, and pursuing increased funding from pharmaceutical and related corporates.

James Vickers:

There is unprecedented public interest in the neurosciences and the diseases and conditions that affect the nervous system. The significant burden of mental health condi-

tions is increasingly recognised in the community, and the prevalence of neurodegenerative disease is on a sharp rise with the 'ageing' of the population. Neuroscience is also a significant focus of international research, and Australia and New Zealand university and institutes are well recognised for their contribution across a range of areas of basic and clinically-oriented neuroscience research. The Society now has a great opportunity to make use of its extensive base of research excellence to take a more prominent role in the public domain for the purpose of informing debate and policy, to provide an evidence base for current areas of public interest, to attract and support new generations of neuroscientists, and to market the research expertise, success and outcomes of Society members.

In this regard, the Society has great capacity to take on a more prominent 'peak body' role, taking a lead from neuroscience organisations internationally, and hopefully adding to the profile of neuroscience research in Australia and New Zealand in a competitive funding environment. The will require strong advocacy on behalf of the Society, engaging both the political and public domains, and enlisting the expertise and capacity that exists in our institutes and universities. These would be the areas of focus for me if elected into the role of President. I would also look to engage Society members in a review of future annual meetings, to identify useful ways to develop the scientific and translational dimensions of the meeting further, and where it may also serve the purpose of advancing the public understanding of Society research. I also believe the Society has a particular responsibility in attracting, guiding and supporting our students and early career researchers into successful careers, be that in research, education or other areas related to neuroscience.

Science meets Parliament 2012

Siobhan Schabrun

Few scientists have ever met a politician, and few politicians have experience with science (just 15 of Australia's 226 federal parliamentarians have a qualification in science or engineering). Yet, engaging politicians in science is fundamental for strong science policy. How then, can scientists bridge the gap and effectively communicate the economic, social and political value of our work to parliamentarians? On September 17th 2012, 200 scientists descended on parliament to find out.

The 13th annual Science meets Parliament organised by Science & Technology Australia, brought together working scientists, politicians and journalists for two days of workshops, networking and face-to-face meetings. This year, I was fortunate to attend as an Early Career Researcher representative of the Australian Neuroscience Society. The first day was spent learning how to effectively deliver a message to politicians and the media. The hot tips for communicating with politicians were:

- Don't just ask for more funding! Politicians get asked for money by countless different groups each day.
- Discuss issues relevant to the politician and their constituents.
- Focus on the social and economic outcomes.

On day two, scientists had the opportunity to meet and speak with politicians working in a similar area of interest. I met with The Hon. Mark Butler MP (Minister for Mental Health and Ageing) where the main topic of discussion was the need to rapidly adopt the recommendations of the

McKeon Strategic Review of Health and Medical Research, including recommendations for the development and progression of Australia's early-mid career researchers. As part of Science & Technology Australia's 'Geek the Vote' campaign, we also delivered a copy of The Geek Manifesto (authored by Mark Henderson) which seeks to ensure that science is at the heart of policy decisions.

The opportunity to deliver a message directly to one of Australia's parliamentarians was a highlight of the two day program. However, other events such as a National Press Club address from Nobel Prize winner Brain Schmidt and the launch of the APS200 Project: The Place of Science in Policy Development in the Public Service (authored by Patricia Kelly) were not to be missed! I would strongly encourage all scientists, especially early career researchers, to keep a look out for Science meets Parliament 2013. The program is truly an excellent opportunity to see science from a different perspective.

Picture: Dr Siobhan Schabrun



George Paxinos elected to the Academy of Athens

On the 20th of November 2012 George Paxinos became corresponding member of the Academy of Athens. Professor Konstantin Stefanis made the introductory remarks and Professor Paxinos gave a presentation with the title "Is the Brain the Right Size?" Approximately 400 people were in attendance at the ceremonial hall of the Academy in the neo-classic building next to the University of Athens. Professor Paxinos, of Neuroscience Research Australia, is the second living Australian to receive the distinction, the first being the former Prime Minister Gough Whitlam. Professor Paxinos was ANS president from 2004-5.

Below: Professor Paxinos (left) is receiving the Academy's membership certificate from the President of the Academy, Professor George Kontopoulos.



News from State Representatives

Symposium of WA Neuroscience, 2012 (from Lindy Fitzgerald)

The University of Western Australia (UWA) played host to SWAN (Symposium of Western Australian Neurosciences) on Thursday 27th September. This year the SWAN format was an afternoon of student and early career research presentations, co-hosted by ANS and the Neurotrauma Research Program of WA (NRP). Approximately 60 people – students and researchers representing a broad cross section of the WA neuroscience community and some members of the public – attended the event.

Nine students undertaking Honours and PhD studies and five early-career (up to five years post-doctoral) researchers, from various disciplines and institutes, were selected to present their basic and clinical research findings, in competition for cash prizes. The judges concurred that the science presented was of a high quality, reflecting well on the calibre of up and coming neuroscientists and neuro-clinicians in WA. Prize-winners were announced at a Sundowner immediately after the Symposium.

• **In the Honours Student category –**

- 1st prize: **Alex Tang** (UWA) for his presentation ‘Pulsed magnetic fields induce collateral reinnervation in the adult mouse cerebellum’
- 2nd prize: **Ryan O’Hare Doig** (UWA) for his presentation ‘Combinatorial therapy inhibiting multiple routes of calcium entry reduces optic nerve swelling and restores axon density following partial injury to the central nervous system’

• **In the PhD Student category –**

- 1st prize: **Ivan Lozić** (UWA) for his presentation ‘Changes in calcium micro-domains in optic nerve vulnerable to secondary degeneration: A nanoscale secondary ion mass spectrometry study’
- 2nd prize: **Jonathan Teoh** (ANRI) for his presentation ‘The down/up-regulation of mitochondrial proteins using RNA interference and adenoviral vectors, and their effects on neuronal outcome following *in vitro* ischaemia-related insults’

• **In the Early-career Researcher category –**

- 1st prize (the NRP Prize): **Kara Yopak** (UWA) for her presentation ‘Can we infer function from brain morphology? A glimpse into the brains of sharks’
- 2nd prize: **Jennifer Thompson** (ECU) for her presentation ‘The effects of a multidisciplinary rehabilitation program on patients with early-mid stage Huntington’s disease’

ANS Victoria report (from Chris Reid)

Melbourne is gearing up for a Neuroscience extravaganza with the program for the ANS meeting now finalised and a range of satellite meetings organised. For those not already registered remember the late abstract submission ends 12th December. The only other major news is the successful SOBR 2012 symposium that was held at the Melbourne Brain Centre in November. Congratulations to Andrew Walker, Robert Smith and Philipp Roth for receiving prizes sponsored by ANS Victoria. The SOBR event attracted over 200 participants with over 85 presenters representing a range of institutes including ARMI, Baker IDI, Deakin, FINMH, Latrobe, MAPRC, MNC, Monash, Monash Pharmaceutical, Ritchie Centre, RMIT, Swinburne, University of Melbourne and WEHI. Our ‘grass roots’ are looking healthy!

Development And Neuroscience Network Australia (DaNA)

There is a substantial and expanding community of researchers actively studying different aspects of brain development from prenatal period into young adulthood in Australia. Interest in genetics and neuroimaging in particular are growing rapidly, and so are the clinical aspects of child/adolescent neurodevelopment. It has been suggested by several clinicians about the need to connect to basic science researchers in this field to share ideas and strengthen **collaboration**.

This collaboration could take several forms, ranging from investigators just being aware of each other, to hosting a common web site, to sponsoring joint events and symposia, to initiating new research projects, sharing paediatric data sets, developing a registry/ database etc. To this end, a joint effort might either help with sharing or obtaining expertise, applying for funding to develop a resource platform that could be tailored for individual projects or even form a **consortium** for study of specific aspects of neurodevelopment that could act as an organized entity or “brand” within the broader neuroscience community.

It is hoped that the network would act as a forum for **regular sharing of information** among investigators studying development, and enhance collaborative efforts. It is proposed that there will be regular meetings of the network at a frequency of once in two to three months. This meeting would be a venue for clinicians and researchers to familiarize each other with their work and host seminars/talks by the network members and invited faculty. It is envisaged that there will also be an annual satellite symposium with links to ANS/IBRO.

Professor Valsamma Eapen

Brain researcher wins a Victoria Fellowship to investigate touchscreen technology

Human brain disorders like dementia, schizophrenia, and autism spectrum disorders often lead to major problems with learning and memory.

Postdoctoral researcher Dr Emma Burrows of the Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health, focuses on major brain diseases which are common and poorly treated at present, leading to great distress for both patients and their families.

She works with rodents in a bid to contribute to knowledge that will lead to improved treatment for brain diseases. Mice are genetically similar to humans, with almost every human gene having a similar one in a mouse. Research has shown that mice can remember and use the same brain areas as people to do so, and that their memory capability gets worse with age, as for humans.

Dr Burrows is one of 12 young Victorian scientists to win a prestigious Victoria Fellowship. She received the Fellowship on Wednesday 21 November at the State Library of Victoria from the Minister for Innovation, Services and Small Business Louise Asher.

ANS Annual Meeting 2013

The **33rd Annual Meeting** of the Australian Neuroscience Society will be held in the state-of-art Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC). The MCEC is centrally located on the banks of the Yarra River adjacent to the Southbank entertainment precinct and within close walking distance of all major city hotels, motels and apartments. The final program and the abstracts will be up on the website (www.sallyjayconferences.com.au/ans2013) in mid December. An email broadcast will be sent when the program and abstracts are available for viewing.

Also - don't forget there are **six exciting satellite meetings** happening before and after the main ANS conference. Find out the details at <http://www.sallyjayconferences.com.au/ans2013/satellite.html>

Eureka! - Discoveries in Stem Cells, Melbourne Brain Centre, Royal Pde, Parkville. 1st February, 2013. Website: eurekastemcells.eventbrite.com/

Contact: Jenny Gunnerson or Mirella Dottori at eureka-stemcells@lists.unimelb.edu.au

First Asia-Pacific Molecular Cell and Cognition Society Meeting, Melbourne Brain Centre, Royal Pde, Parkville. 1-2 February, 2013. **Website:** www.molcellcog.org

Contact: Stephanie Bissiere sbissiere@gmail.com

DANDIS 2013 – New Insights into Neuropathologies: Neuroinflammation, Gliosis, Proteinopathies and More. Melbourne Brain Centre, Royal Pde, Parkville. 3rd February, 2013. **Website:** www.florey.edu.au/news-events/events-seminars/2013-02-03/dandis2013

Contact: Phil Beart philip.beart@florey.edu.au or Linda Mercer linda.mercer@florey.edu.au

Bioautism 2013. Melbourne Brain Centre, Kenneth Myer Building, Royal Pde, Parkville. 3rd February, 2013. **Website:** autismresearchaustralasia.blogspot.com.au/2012/08/bioautism-2013.html

Contact: Elisa Hill elhill@unimelb.edu.au or Anthony Hannan Anthony.hannan@unimelb.edu.au

Integrated control of visceral and vascular function. Melbourne Brain Centre, Royal Pde, Parkville. 7th February, 2013. **Website:** www.anatomy.unimelb.edu.au/furness%20seminar.html

Contact: Janet Keast jkeast@unimelb.edu.au

Huntington's Disease and other Tandem Repeat Disorders. Level 5 Seminar Room, Melbourne Brain Centre, Royal Pde, Parkville. 7th February, 2013

Website: <http://hrgv.org.au/> **Contact:** Anthony Hannan ajh@florey.edu.au

UPCOMING CONFERENCES & MEETINGS

For more detailed information go to the upcoming conferences webpage at www.ans.org.au/upcoming-conferences.

First Asia-Pacific Molecular Cell and Cognition Society Meeting. 1st - 2nd February 2013, Melbourne Brain Center, Parkville, Melbourne. Plenary speaker: Prof Mu-Ming Poo from ION Shanghai and Berkeley. All information on how to register and for students to send their abstracts will become available at the following website: www.molcellcog.org. For more details contact Stephanie Bissiere: sbissiere@gmail.com

The 44th International Narcotics Research Conference, Cairns, Queensland, July 14 – 18, 2013. The INRC Annual Meeting features all aspects of opioid research from cellular signaling, molecular biology and medicinal chemistry through addiction research and pain management. Since 1969, the INRC meeting has been a unique forum where scientists, clinicians and Pharma share the latest information about the key questions in opioid research. **Website:** <https://www.dconferences.com.au/inrc2013/home> For more details contact Mark Connor mark.connor@mq.edu.au or Mac Christie mac.christie@sydney.edu.au

The 1st Australasian Brain Stimulation Meeting, Melbourne, 25 – 26 July, 2013. The use of non-invasive brain stimulation techniques in clinical and academic settings around Australasia and around the world has dramatically escalated in recent years. This meeting will, for the first time, present a multidisciplinary showcase of the exciting brain stimulation work that is occurring throughout Australasia. **Website:** <http://absmeet.org/>. For more details contact Paul Fitzgerald info@absmeet.org



Australasian Brain Stimulation Meeting 2013

[STIMULATING
CONNECTIONS]

Melbourne July 25 – 28, 2013

The first Australasian Brain Stimulation Meeting aims to provide a substantive forum for interaction between brain stimulation researchers across the region. This cross disciplinary meeting will bring together researchers engaged in brain stimulation research in a wide variety of areas to encourage collaboration and interaction. There will be significant opportunities for presentations by new researchers as well as presentations showcasing the breadth of brain stimulation research across Australasia.

Call for abstracts opens
December 10, 2012

abstract submission and more info via www.absmeet.org

"The major neuroscience conference in Australasia"



2014 meeting of the Australian Neuroscience Society



Australian Neuroscience Society 34th Annual Meeting

28th - 31st January, 2014
Adelaide Convention Centre, Adelaide

www.ans.org.au



ANS POLICY ON REQUESTS FOR PUBLICITY VIA EMAIL CIRCULATION

The standing policy of the ANS is to minimize email traffic to members. This is done by bundling brief announcements or news which needs to be disseminated between print newsletters into (at most) monthly plain text email circulars. Attachments are not sent with email to members, with very few exceptions (such as our core business of an annual Society meeting). This is to reduce both the risk of virus transmission via attachments received from outside sources, and the volume (ie. cost) of email traffic through University or Institute based servers. Meetings and other significant announcements (such as job vacancies) will also receive Society publicity, via links to appropriate web pages from the ANS web site, and by subsequent inclusion into the next print ANS newsletter when appropriate. Requests for these publicity services should be directed either to the Secretary, or to Sally Jay Conferences.

ANS WEBSITE AND NEWSLETTER

The ANS website is on-line at www.ans.org.au. Members are encouraged to regularly check the website for updated information on positions vacant, travel awards and national and international neuroscience meetings. While announcements and news items cannot always be broadcasted as an email to ANS members, they are promptly loaded on the ANS website and so it is always worth a regular check of the news page. Current and recent newsletters are available to be downloaded in PDF format and information about ANS, including the current list of council members, historical facts and how to apply for ANS Awards and Prizes is readily available. For further information or requests to place announcements on the ANS website, please contact Joe Lynch (email j.lynch@uq.edu.au, phone 07 3346 6375).

Similarly, we are very happy to include information or news items in the ANS newsletter. Anticipated copy deadlines are set out below. Material for inclusion can be topics for discussion, meeting announcements, meeting reports, prizes and awards received by ANS members, obituaries, and any other items of potential interest to members of our society.

DEADLINES FOR FUTURE NEWSLETTERS

April 2013	27th March
July 2013	10th July
October 2013	16th October 2012
December 2013	27th November 2012

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Annual General Meeting

15.40pm, Tuesday 5th February 2013

Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre

Agenda

1. Attendance and apologies
2. Minutes of the 2012 Annual General Meeting
3. President's report
4. Vote on motion to change the name of the Society (requires constitutional change)
 - *Motion: that the name of the Australian Neuroscience Society be changed to the Australasian Neuroscience Society.*
5. Secretary's report
6. Treasurer's report
7. Vote on motions to update constitution in accordance with ACT Associations legislation
 - *Motion: that a new item 12.5 be added to section 12 (Annual General Meeting) of the ANS Constitution to read "No member shall be entitled to appoint another member as a proxy for the purpose of voting".*
 - *Motion: that a new item 3.6 be added to section 3 (Membership) of the ANS Constitution to read. "The Society does not undertake to discipline its members".*
8. Editor's report
9. 2013 ANS Awards and Prizes
10. Presentation of Honorary ANS membership to Perry Bartlett and Fred Mendelsohn.
11. Future ANS meetings
12. Council members for 2013
13. Other business

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