

June 2021



Australasian
Neuroscience
Society

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*Upcoming Australian Neuroscience Society 40th Annual
Scientific Meeting*

www.ans.org.au

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

www.ans.org.au and follow updates on the ANS

Twitter account (<https://twitter.com/AusNeuroSoc>)

or via our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/AusNeuroSoc>).

Acknowledgements

ANS Executive

ANS President

Prof Peter Schofield
*Neuroscience Research
Australia (NeuRA)*
Sydney, NSW, 2031
T: +61-2-9399-1604
p.schofield@neura.edu.au

ANS Secretary

A/Prof Michael Lardelli
*Alzheimer's Disease Genetics
Laboratory, Department of
Molecular Bioscience
School of Biological Sciences
The University of Adelaide*
Adelaide, SA, 5005
T: +61-8-8313-3212
michael.lardelli@adelaide.edu.au

ANS Treasurer

Dr Jana Vukovic
*Queensland Brain Institute
University of Queensland*
Brisbane, QLD, 4000
T: +61-7-3365-2818
jvukovic@uq.edu.au

ANS Conference Executive Chair

A/Prof Kaylene Young
*Menzies Institute for Medical
Research, The University
of Tasmania*
Hobart, TAS 7000, Australia
T: +61-3-6226-7700
kaylene.young@utas.edu.au

Sponsors *(We thank our Society partners)*

- Melbourne Neuroscience Institute, The University of Melbourne
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- Otago Division of Sciences, University of Otago
- University of Tasmania
- The Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health
- The Eccles Institute of Neuroscience, Australian National University
- The John Curtin School of Medical Research, The Australian National University
- Centre for Neuroscience, Flinders University
- Centre of Excellence for Integrative Brain Function, ARC Centre of Excellence
- South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute
- Hopwood Centre for Neurobiology, South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute
- Queensland Brain Institute, The University of Queensland

ANS Communication Committee

Newsletter Editor

Dr Marco Morsch
*Department of Biomedical
Sciences, Faculty of Medicine
and Health Sciences,
Macquarie University*
Sydney, NSW 2109, Australia
marco.morsch@mq.edu.au

Authorised by

A/Prof Michael Lardelli
*Alzheimer's Disease Genetics
Laboratory, Department of
Molecular Bioscience School
of Biological Sciences
The University of Adelaide*
Adelaide, SA, 5005
michael.lardelli@adelaide.edu.au

Message from the President

The past few months have been most concerning for all members of our society following the announcement by the Australian National University of their proposed closure of the Eccles Institute of Neuroscience. Following extensive individual and group submissions, including over 750 people who signed the ANS Open Letter, it was with great delight that we welcomed the news from the Dean and Vice Chancellor that the ANU will retain the Eccles Institute of Neuroscience.

Australia has a proud history of neuroscience, with the Australian National University as one of our most esteemed leaders. Notable neuroscientists from the John Curtin School of Medical Research, where the Eccles Institute is located, include:

- Sir John ('Jack') Eccles (Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine, 1963, for fundamental work on synaptic transmission)
- David Curtis FAA FRS (fundamental research on the pharmacology of glutamate, GABA, and glycine receptors in the brain)
- William Levick FAA FRS (fundamental work on the physiology of the retina)
- Peter Gage FAA (fundamental work on synaptic transmission at the nerve-muscle synapse)
- Stephen Redman AM FAA (fundamental work on the biophysics of synaptic transmission)
- Alan Finkel AO FAA FTSW FAHM (translational work on instrumentation for neuroscience; founder of Axon Instruments; Australia's Chief Scientist 2016-2020)
- Trevor Lamb FAA FRS (molecular mechanisms of phototransduction in the retina)
- Greg Stuart FAA (fundamental work on the electrical properties of dendrites)

This is a tradition of academic excellence that is enduring yet current and contemporary. The Eccles Institute of Neuroscience is widely regarded as the best location in the country for doing fundamental research in cellular neuroscience in Australia. The researchers do not try to do all things, but what they do, they do with excellence. In our ANS submissions, we stated that this is not the time to abandon neuroscience, rather, it is the time to shore up the critical importance of neuroscience research and that it remains a priority on the national agenda. As the great Sir John Eccles once said, *"brain research is the ultimate problem confronting man"*.

Renew your membership

Membership renewals are now due for the year from July 2021 to June 2022. There is no increase to our membership fees for 2021-2022 and a 10% discount for 3-year regular membership, making this choice even more economical. While there are many benefits that we hope you will consider as you renew your membership, one of the biggest incentives is the substantial discount for attending the Annual Scientific Meeting, to be held in Melbourne in December. An ANS member with an early-bird registration will save \$300 compared to non-member registrants, making your \$165 membership fee well worthwhile. You can renew your membership online via your membership dashboard on the ANS website. Thank you to those members who have already renewed, we greatly value your support.

June 2021

(Message from the President ... continued)

Webinars, Courses and Conference

The Australasian Course in Advanced Neuroscience (ACAN) led by Director Prof Chris Reid is being held at the Florey Institute from 25 July to 14 August. While this course is fully subscribed, there are plans to move to a February meeting date in 2022, providing yet another outstanding opportunity for early and mid-career researchers to gain hands on experience in a wide range of cellular neuroscience methods from some of the world's leading neuroscientists.

Thank you to everyone who has participated in the ongoing webinars programs. These have provided a wonderful way of hearing of some of the fantastic research that is being conducted by Australasian neuroscientists, include ACAN alumni.

The symposia have been selected, prize nominations are coming in, and abstract submission and registration is now open for our Annual Scientific Meeting "Reconnect the Network" to be held from 6 to 8 December 2021 in Melbourne. Start planning and submit your abstract. By December, with the national vaccination rollout hopefully near completion, I hope we can all be able to return to enjoying each other's company, engaging in stimulating scientific exchange, and presenting our world class neuroscience research findings.



**Prof Peter R
Schofield AO**

President, ANS
p.schofield@neura.edu.au

A Word from the ANS Secretary

It was a great relief to receive the news that ANU's Eccles Institute of Neuroscience will continue in some form. Thank you to everyone who put their name to ANS' open letter to the ANU and/or signed other online petitions supporting the call to retain the Institute.

We also need to credit the ANU administration for being truly consultative and receptive to outside opinion when, all too often nowadays in broader academic life, we see faux consultation preceding top-down-driven change.

The very strong support for the Eccles Institute of Neuroscience demonstrates the strength of the Australasian neuroscience community even in a time of constrained research funding. Personally, it is a little unexpected that such a broad discipline should show such unity of purpose, but it is that positivity that makes participation in the Australasian Neuroscience Society, for me, so rewarding. I get to interact with some incredibly smart people who generously give their time to advance neuroscience and, particularly, the ever-developing community of neuroscientists.

Aside from conference organisation, one way that ANS supports the ambitions of its members is to acclaim their outstanding work publicly. For this reason, I would like to encourage members to submit self-nominations for the **A.W. Campbell Award** for the most outstanding contribution to

neuroscience by a member of the Society in their first five postdoctoral years, the **Mark Rowe Award** for the best publication during 2020 by an early career researcher, the **Nina Kondelos Award** to a female neuroscientist for outstanding contribution to basic or clinical neuroscience research, and the **Paxinos-Watson Award** for the most significant neuroscience paper published during 2020 by any member of the Society. You can find details of the awards and the nomination procedure at <http://ans.org.au/awards/ans-awards>. The application procedures are not difficult, so I look forward to receiving your nominations by Friday 23 July!

**Michael
Lardelli**

ANS Secretary
michael.lardelli@adelaide.edu.au

Upcoming ANS2021 Symposium – Australian Neuroscience Society 40th Annual Scientific Meeting

June 2021



ANS 2021 AUSTRALASIAN NEUROSCIENCE SOCIETY
40TH ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC MEETING

RECONNECT THE NETWORK

Pullman Albert Park, Melbourne, Australia
6 - 8 December 2021



Call for abstracts now open!

Time to [register and submit](#) an abstract to the upcoming Australasian Neuroscience Society 40th Annual Scientific Meeting. ANS 2021 in Melbourne will bring together a stimulating 3-day scientific program of international and national plenaries and symposia.

Plenaries

- Professor Edvard Moser, Nobel Laureate, Kavli Institute for Systems Neuroscience, Norway
- Professor Linda Richards, Queensland Brain Institute, Australia
- Professor Lars Ittner, Macquarie University, Australia
- Professor Clare Parish, Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health, Australia
- Professor Bernard Balleine, University of New South Wales, Australia

Symposia

- Adaptation and neural basis of context-dependent sensory processing.
- Advances and applications of neurogenetic techniques.
- Advances in enteric nervous system research.
- Decompartmentalising neuron and glial interactions and their role in brain function.
- Imaging the presynapse: advancing our understanding of neurotransmitter release.
- Network mechanisms regulating distinct features of motivated behaviour.
- New models and research directions for ALS/MND.
- New perspectives in childhood dementia.
- Noncoding RNAs in brain and behaviour: new horizons.
- Peripheral immune contributions to neuroinflammation.
- Restructuring the striatal mosaic: macro-and micro-circuit interactions in learning-related plasticity.
- Seedlings to forests: Growing a collaborative cerebrovascular research pipeline (StrokeCORE) from the ground up.

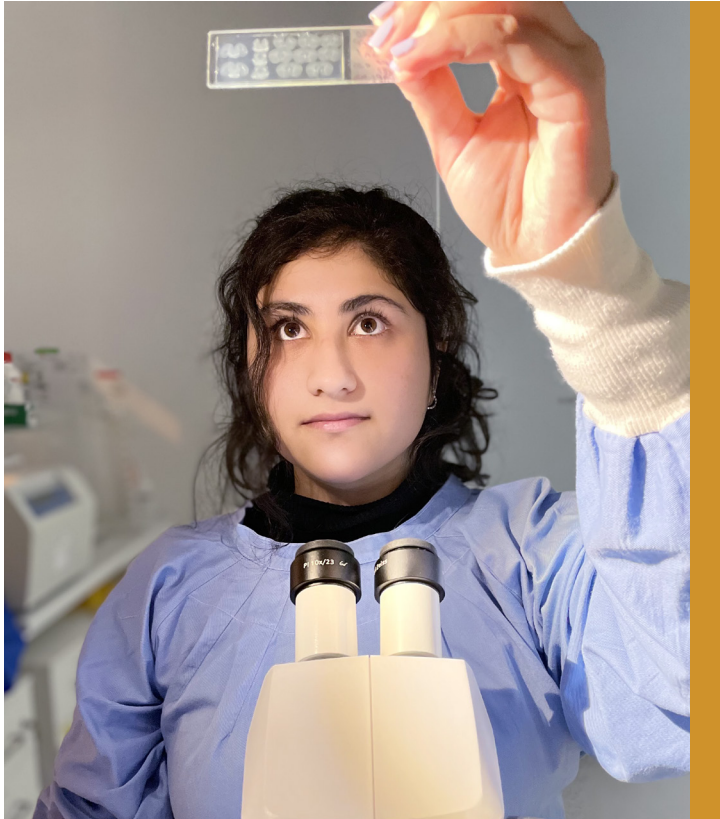
Register Now!

Early Bird Registration closes **20 August 2021** but abstract submission for **Oral Presentations** closes **Friday 30 July 2021**.

Abstracts for **Poster Presentations** can be submitted up until **Friday 22 October 2021**.

Important reminder that the first 150 student registrations will be subsidised upon approval of supporting documentation (applicable to full registration only).

Research Highlight: Neuroscientist in the Making



Noorya Ahmed is a PhD student at the Eccles Institute of Neuroscience at The John Curtin School of Medical Research, The Australian National University.

Noorya Ahmed is a PhD student at the Eccles Institute of Neuroscience at The John Curtin School of Medical Research, The Australian National University.

Noorya completed undergraduate degree studies in science, specialising in neuroscience and physiology, and then commenced PhD studies dealing with neuronal connection formation in the laboratory of Dr Nathalie Dehorter.

Neuroscience is something Noorya has wanted to do since she was young. Since beginning to learn about the brain, she has wanted to understand it thoroughly. What fascinates her is the idea of being able to elucidate the process by which the brain builds itself; the way that neurons form specific connections and form specific networks that create complex thoughts and actions.

Noorya wishes to build a career around understanding the fine aspects of brain development. She is also passionate about retaining women in research, and ensuring that neuroscience is communicated to the wider community.

Her current research focusses on developmental mechanisms regulating interneuron connection formation in the striatum and cortex, how it can be modulated, and how it is affected in neurodevelopmental disorders such as autism spectrum disorder. She utilises various approaches ranging from molecular biology, electrophysiology to behaviour, to explore developing neuronal function and circuit formation. Her recent paper published in *The Journal of Neuroscience* has investigated the role of a specific molecular factor, the ETV1/Er81 transcription factor, in fine-tuning the physiology of cholinergic interneurons of the striatum, which strongly affects in vivo striatal function and behaviour.

ANS Awards up for Grabs

Each year, ANS grants a number of prestigious Awards to members at various career levels for achievements in research.

These include:

- **The Mark Rowe Award** for the best publication by an early career (PhD student or up to 3 years postdoc) researcher member of the Society.
- **The A.W. Campbell Award** which recognises the best contribution by a member of the Society in their first five postdoctoral years.
- **The Nina Kondelos Prize** which is awarded to a female neuroscientist for an outstanding contribution to basic or clinical neuroscience research.
- **The Paxinos-Watson Award** which recognises the most significant neuroscience paper published by any Member of the Society.

These prestigious Awards enhance your CV, look great on your wall and are accompanied by a monetary prize, so please consider applying, and encourage your students and mentees to apply. Note the winners of the AW Campbell and Nina Kondelos Prizes will be invited to present Plenaries at the 2021 ANS Conference associated with these Awards.

The ANS website has all details of these Awards and how to apply [here](#).

All applications should be emailed to the ANS Secretariat at secretariat@ans.org.au. Questions regarding the Awards should be directed to the Secretary, A/Prof Michael Lardelli at michael.lardelli@adelaide.edu.au.

Applications close by COB 23 July 2021.

The Brain Prize Nominations

The Lundbeck Foundation is now accepting nominations for next year's winners of The Brain Prize, the world's largest prize for neuroscience.

Find out about the nomination and selection process [here](#) and nominate [here](#).

The Brain Prize recognizes ground-breaking advances in any field of neuroscience, from basic to clinical research with an award of DKK 10 million (~€1.3M) Recipients may be of any nationality and working in any country in the world. Anyone can nominate and the Lundbeck Foundation warmly welcomes nominees and nominators from diverse backgrounds. Applications close on 1 September.

Australian neuroscientist Peter Goadsby, along with Lars Edvinsson, Michael Moskowitz and Jes Olesen, was one of four winners of 2021 Brain Prize for their groundbreaking work on the causes and treatment of migraine.



*Professor Peter Goadsby
MBBS MD PhD DSc FRACP
FRCP Director of NIHR
Clinical Research Facility
& Professor of Neurology*

Equity and Diversity Committee Report

In January, ANS was asked to be an early signer of the ALBA Declaration on Equity and Inclusion (<http://www.alba.network/declaration>).

The aim of this document is to serve as a resource for specific, positive, and evidence-based actions that can be taken at both the individual and organisational level to promote equity and inclusivity in STEM. By creating fair and diverse scientific communities, the hope is that members of all groups will feel welcome and represented and, in turn, will be encouraged to continue in the field.

As part of ANS' consideration of this proposal, the Equity and Diversity committee was tasked with considering how we as a society can put the recommendations of this declaration into effect. This led to an exercise examining areas where ANS is already meeting the recommendations, as well as areas where there is still room for improvement. Areas that were identified as already meeting the recommendations include:

- The work of the Equity and Diversity committee, which includes broad representation of gender, LGBTQI persons, career stage and geographic location.
- Our adoption of a written Equity, Diversity and Inclusion policy (i.e. The Strategic Plan of the E+D committee), which is available to all members on the ANS website.
- The commitment to gender and career stage balance across speakers and chairs at ANS seminars.
- The survey of ANS members conducted every 3 years, which allows for collection of member attitudes towards key issues facing ANS.
- The commitment of the ANS awards to celebrate diverse individuals and to encourage diverse nomination.
- The existence of awards to recognise service to the Society (e.g. ANS medal).
- Offering of a family/childcare subsidy to members to facilitate conference attendance.
- The introduction of virtual seminar series to provide flexibility and increase participation and networking opportunities for all members of ANS.

Excitingly, this also sparked conversations about initiatives that ANS may be able to undertake to better meet these objectives. Some potential initiatives proposed include:

- Education around tools to provide unconscious bias training.
- Introduction of a campaign to highlight the diversity of the ANS membership.
- Expansion of workshops and other EMCR-targeted events to highlight different career paths in neuroscience.
- Consideration of either an informal or formal mentoring program.

These will be a major focus of the committee in 2021 and beyond. For more information on the specific measures we are taking to meet the ALBA Declaration recommendations, as well as progress reports on initiatives, please visit: <http://www.ans.org.au/about-us/committees/equity-diversity-committee>.

Following conclusion of this exercise, the results were reported to Council, which considered them at its meeting in late April. The Council resolved to endorse the ALBA declaration and authorise its signing. We look forward to being part of such an important initiative.



ALBA NETWORK
Towards diversity and
equity in brain sciences

*ANS has endorsed the
ALBA Declaration on
Equity and Inclusion.*

South Australian Update

Recently, the South Australian Neuroscience Alliance (SANA) was founded, led by Karin Nordstrom from Flinders University, with support from Lyndsey Collins-Praino from the University of Adelaide, Hannah Keage from the University of South Australia, and Stuart Brierley and Michael Zablocki, both from SAHMRI.

The over-arching goal of SANA is to increase networking between neuroscience researchers based in SA, while also providing a platform for researchers to share their science. SANA hosted its first event in May, with a fantastic virtual presentation from Dr Yee Lian Chew of Flinders University. On 8 June SANA hosted a virtual talk by Dr Tim Sargeant, with additional virtual talks planned each month thereafter. This will culminate on 1 November, with an in-person day of neuroscience and networking, sponsored by the Flinders Health and Medical Research Institute (FHMRI). Interested in learning more? Send an email to Karin Nordstrom, karin.nordstrom@flinders.edu.au.

Kids Brain Activities at Scitech

The Perron institute for Neurological and Translational Science conducted a kids activity workshop on Sunday 21st March.

Key activities included:

- **Colouring in activities: brain hat and brain chatterbox**, teaching interesting facts about the brain to spark children's interest and discussion.
- **The Memory game: A classic activity that engages parents and children alike.**
- **A range of optical illusions.**
- **A collection of real and 3D-printed brains** from a range of animals (sheep, hamster, rat, mouse, fat-tailed dunnart, lizard, goldfish, sharks). Brain shape and size are discussed with children in simple evolutionary and ecological contexts.



Activities are inspired from the University of Washington Kids Activities website. They were run by staff and students affiliated with the Perron institute for Neurological and Translational Science in Perth. The activities aim to provide a basic overview of what the brain is and why it is important. By targeting children using simple language and fun concepts, we aimed to stimulate discussion at home and maybe even have children educate their parents!

The Kids Brain Activities at the Perron institute was a fun event for young and old.

June 2021

Communications

Is there information you would like included in our ANS Newsletter, sent out in our monthly ANS Bulletin, posted on our website, or Facebook page, 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 Dr Marco Morsch (Macquarie University). It oversees the production of the Newsletter and ensures that current content is posted on the ANS website (<http://www.ans.org.au/>), disseminated through the monthly ANS Bulletin email to

members, ANS Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/AusNeuroSoc>; curated by Dr Nathalie Dehorter) and disseminated through the ANS Twitter account (<https://twitter.com/AusNeuroSoc>; postings by Dr Lila Landowski, University of Tasmania) and LinkedIn (<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/8362021/>; curated by Prof Thomas Fath).

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

The deadline for inclusion of submissions in the next Newsletter is September 15th

We encourage everyone to visit the ANS website, www.ans.org.au.

www.ans.org.au



Policy

ANS Policy on Requests for Publicity via Email, Newsletter, or ANS Bulletin 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 Editor

Dr Marco Morsch
*Department of Biomedical
Sciences, Faculty of Medicine
and Health Sciences,
Macquarie University
Sydney, NSW 2109, Australia*
marco.morsch@mq.edu.au

Authorised by
A/Prof Michael Lardelli
*Alzheimer's Disease Genetics
Laboratory, Department of
Molecular Bioscience
School of Biological Sciences
The University of Adelaide
Adelaide, SA, 5005*
michael.lardelli@adelaide.edu.au