

December 2014



## Contents

- [Message from the President](#)
- [The Prime Minister's Prize for Science](#)
- [The importance of public outreach in Neuroscience](#)
- [ANS national curriculum initiative](#)
- [The Australian Brain Bee Challenge](#)
- [Society for Neuroscience Chapter](#)
- [Eccles Lecturer named for the Cairns Meeting](#)
- [ACAN 2015 Call for Applications](#)
- [South Australian News](#)
- [ANS Victoria](#)
- [Upcoming Conferences](#)

[www.ans.org.au](http://www.ans.org.au)

## Australasian Neuroscience Society Newsletter



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## Message from the President

Dear Members,  
Current members of the ANS would have received a recent request by e-mail to renew their membership. This reflects the Council's decision to dissociate the payment of ANS membership dues from registration for the annual meeting of ANS. We also have the unusual situation of a joint meeting (With ISN/APS/N) in August 2015 and then the move of our annual scientific meeting to December in 2016.

We strongly encourage you to renew your membership of the Society in what is a critical period of time for medical research and the neurosciences in Australia. You will not need reminding that the overall public funding for health and medical research across Australia and New Zealand is, at best, static after a decade of substantial growth, and that the success rate for the engine room of neuroscience funding in Australia, the NHMRC Project Grant scheme, has dipped below 15%. Hence, this is a period of recent history in which it is important that the membership of our scientific societies provides an important signal to public policy makers and politicians that our disciplines are a robust and fundamental contributor to health and wellbeing in our countries. Essentially, the number of members that ANS represents determines the influence that the Society will have in discussions with government,

potential Sustaining Members and philanthropy. You may be wondering what the Society does with membership dues. One thing I have been impressed with since arriving on the ANS Executive is how leanly the Executive and Council operate, with the majority of income being distributed to the major programs of the ANS, with the balance contributing to a modest corpus of funds to insulate the Society from financial risk. Income is drawn mostly from membership dues and from what profit may be available from our annual scientific meetings. A small amount of income comes from sustaining members, more on that later.

The major areas of activity of ANS include:

- The planning and underwriting of the annual scientific meetings
- Support of students to attend the annual meeting
- Distribution of funds to State-based Council members for local activities
- Support for the Australian Course on Advanced Neurosciences (ACAN)
- Provision of a number of awards for neuroscientists at different stages of career
- Collaborative links with other neuroscience societies, including support for exchange programs
- A quarterly newsletter
- Support of outreach programs, such as the Brain Bee

- Development and maintenance of the Society web site, including provision for advertising positions, news and advocacy feeds, ability to organise and advertise Member events, Member database, etc

Some of the areas that we hope to expand on through 2015 will include support for international exchange programs, an expanded role in advocacy on behalf of Members, greater engagement with Members running other neuroscience meetings, and collaborations with societies and foundations oriented to nervous system diseases to further the case for appropriate levels of research funding. In this regard, we also hope to grow the pool of 'Sustaining Members' who gain some benefit from association with New Zealand and Australian neuroscience. These Sustaining Members may like to exhibit at our annual meeting, but we will also look to grow this supporter base so that we can represent the wider interests of neuroscience research in the public arena.

Neuroscience research has grown dramatically in Australia and New Zealand, and it is a discipline of strong interest to younger scientists. ANS will play a continuing and vital role in supporting neuroscience research and researchers, and will have a leadership role in this field for many years to come. We hope that you will see the merit in continuing to support the Society through renewal of your membership, and that you will encourage colleagues and students to also renew their membership, or perhaps join the Society for the first time.



**James Vickers**

*President, Australasian  
Neuroscience Society*

# The Prime Minister's Prize for Science

Epilepsy is a common, complex and debilitating set of neurological disorders affecting about 4% of the population. Up to a third of patients are not well controlled. Although a genetic link was suspected in some cases, most often the cause was obscure.

Samuel Berkovic and Ingrid Scheffer discovered the first epilepsy gene in 1995 - a mutation in a nicotinic acetylcholine receptor subunit. Together they have been involved in the discovery of many of the known epilepsy genes, having identified 12 of the current 23 genes. Since virtually starting the field, they remain undoubted global leaders in the genetics of epilepsy.

Their remarkable successes are probably due to a combination of meticulous clinical phenotyping of epilepsy syndromes, effort spent in assembling large family trees, and excellent molecular genetics collaborators in Adelaide and Germany.

Many of the mutations initially identified in these families involved ion channels, although subsequent work has uncovered abnormalities in molecules as diverse as the mTOR pathway that is important in cell growth, or the Glut1 transporter that facilitates glucose entry into neurons.

They have been showered with awards and prizes for their discoveries.

Samuel Berkovic is Laureate Professor at the University of Melbourne, Director of the Epilepsy Research Centre at Austin Health and heads a large

NHMRC program integrating genetic, imaging and physiological studies in epilepsy. He was awarded the Zulch Prize from the Max Planck Society, Germany, 2005, the Bethlehem Griffiths Research Foundation Medal, 2009, the NHMRC Excellence Award for the highest ranked Program Grant, 2010. He was made a Companion of the Order of Australia (AC) in 2014. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, London, in 2007.

Ingrid Scheffer is Chair of Paediatric Neurology Research at The University of Melbourne and Senior Principal Research Fellow at the Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health. She has expanded understanding of epilepsy associated with glucose transporter deficiency, which may predict response to the ketogenic diet. She also discovered that severe epilepsy and encephalopathy, reported to follow vaccination in infants, was in fact due to a sodium channel mutation producing Dravet Syndrome. Interestingly, many patients had de novo mutations.

She received the American Epilepsy Society Research Recognition Award, 2007, the L'Oreal-UNESCO Laureate for Women in Science, 2012, and the GlaxoSmithKline Award for Research Excellence, 2013, the Emil Becker Award for an



outstanding contribution to child neurology, 2013. She was made an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) in 2014.

In a complementary research programs at the Florey, Professor Steven Petrou and his team are using single ion channel recording, in vitro techniques, and genetically modified animals to study the functional effects of the mutations identified in epilepsy patients. Also, complementary are Professor Graeme Jackson, who heads the neuroimaging group at the Florey, with particular application to epilepsy, and Professor Alan Connelly, whose novel functional MR methods focus on diffusion and perfusion MRI and their application to the investigation of epilepsy, stroke, and cognition.

## Caption

Prime Minister's Prizes for Science, Commonwealth Department of Industry

December 2014

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*(The Prime Minister's Prize for Science continued)*

Berkovic and Scheffer are clinical neurologists and clinical researchers. Their work is a striking example of the benefits of research involving both basic molecular and clinical sciences. They have changed our understanding of the causes of epilepsy and are having a major impact on epilepsy research, on strategies for diagnosis and development of new treatments. Finding the exact cause of epilepsy in each patient may open the way for personalised treatment.

Their current directions include mapping monogenic epilepsies in large families and those where clinical genetics will lend itself to rapid identification of the gene locus. They are also performing genome wide associations to identify genes for common epilepsies.

They have been jointly awarded the 2014 Prime Minister's Prize for Science, which comes with \$300,000 prize money.

**Fred  
Mendelsohn**

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## The importance of public outreach in neuroscience

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As scientists we understand and appreciate the privilege of working on problems that excite us the most. Neuroscience is entering a new era of discovery, with large-scale projects such as the US BRAIN Initiative and the European Union Human Brain Project already well underway. These projects provide new technological advances that will catalyse further rapid progress in our understanding of brain function and dysfunction. Australasian neuroscientists are well placed to lead these discoveries with our focus firmly on these targets.

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It may seem that engaging in any other activities could possibly threaten our ability to focus on our research goals. In fact, nothing could be further from the reality. Scientists must be effective communicators, not only in terms of talks and lectures but also in their written contributions to the field. In order to achieve this they must have a deep understanding of their subject area and be able to put this in context within a larger framework or "big picture". This is a skill that can be developed but takes effort and is most effective if the person is very seriously engaged in their research. Scientists who teach undergraduates understand the importance of being able to interest and excite their students about the lecture material; engaging in public outreach is an extension of this type of communication.

Why would we want to spend any of our precious time in public outreach? There are many benefits from being involved. First, it provides an opportunity to dispel myths and inconsistencies in the public's understanding of scientific discoveries, and affords an opportunity to discuss the scientific method. Second, it can provide a deeper insight into our research and its importance in a broader context; a skill that is also important for writing papers and grant applications. Third, it brings direct benefits to our profession. When we gain the trust of the public as an authoritative voice in our area of expertise, we win their support for tax-payer funded research. Governments require the endorsement of their constituents to promote such expenditure, but they are not the best communicators of scientific goals. Therefore, in order to ensure that we have a voice in the future of research funding in Australia and New Zealand it is imperative that we promote and communicate clearly our research to the tax-payers who ultimately pay the bills.

**Prof. Linda  
Richards**

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*Queensland Brain Institute*

December 2014

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*(The importance of public outreach in neuroscience continued)*

Engaging with the public takes significant effort, but it can pay big dividends in the long run. There are various ways of being involved at a local, national and international level. The annual Brain Awareness Week (<http://www.dana.org/BAW> and <http://www.sfn.org/public-outreach/brain-awareness-week>) is an international campaign that provides tips and resources on how to get started. It can be as simple as holding a public lecture series, or visiting your local school or community groups to talk about your latest research. As part of Brain Awareness Week, ANS scientists run the Australian Brain Bee Challenge (ABBC; [www.abbc.edu.au](http://www.abbc.edu.au)) and the New Zealand Brain Bee Challenge (NZBBC; [nzbbc.ac.nz](http://www.nzbbc.ac.nz)) and ANS members are encouraged to become involved. This is a high school outreach campaign that was initiated in 2006, and the following article pays tribute to those who have made this program possible over the past nine years.

In summary, being able to communicate your science at all levels is a skill that only comes with practice. You may need to take a course in how to interact with the media, another means of public communication that can sometimes be as short as a 10 second sound bite! These experiences can sometimes leave you feeling deflated and feeling that you missed an opportunity to get your message across. We can only learn from these experiences and be better prepared the next time. Take every opportunity to develop your skills and make science advocacy a priority in your career. It can only benefit you in the long term.

## ANS national curriculum initiative

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Most of us will have learned neuroscience as undergraduates, and all of us will have gone on learning as this diverse field has grown and transformed in recent years. But what should a 21st century neuroscience education include, and how should those elements be adapted to the needs of research, clinical and allied health degrees?

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After contacting colleagues at several universities, I proposed to ANS President James Vickers that we consider a national discussion on neuroscience curriculum. Neuroscience education should be informed by a wider perspective than the interests of individuals running courses, and I would like to provide an opportunity for academics to exchange ideas and resources for effective, high quality and engaging neuroscience education. Attracting the very best students to research careers in the neurosciences sets the foundation for future Australasian research success, and establishing a national peer network could help to achieve this aim. I hope we will be able to include input from researchers, clinicians, professional bodies and students in the process.

Another possibility is the notion of an online virtual graduate school in neuroscience, intended to give our research higher degree students a broad grounding in advanced topics. Many of our PhD graduates have excellent research capabilities and very deep knowledge of their field of research, but lack a wider understanding of neuroscience beyond undergraduate level. I feel this could be a valuable and interesting addition to the research higher

degree process, and I am interested in exploring how we might provide specialist teaching from national and international experts to grad students across Australia and New Zealand.

If you are involved with, or interested in, tertiary neuroscience, and would like to be part of this discussion, please contact [Matthew.Kirkcaldie@utas.edu.au](mailto:Matthew.Kirkcaldie@utas.edu.au) or join our online forum at the ANS website at <http://www.ans.org.au/community/group/ans-national-curriculum-initiative> (you will need an ANS login to access this site).

**Matthew  
Kirkcaldie**

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# The Australian Brain Bee Challenge

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In 2006, I established a public outreach program involving high school students called the Australian Brain Bee Challenge (ABBC). The ABBC is affiliated with the International Brain Bee but is run independently. We established our own rules and format for the competition that were centered on providing an opportunity to engage young Australians and New Zealanders in learning about neuroscience and neuroscience research.

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## Prof. Linda Richards

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*Queensland Brain Institute*

Within one year, with the support of ANS and its then president, Prof. Glenda Halliday, the ABBC went national across both Australia and New Zealand and we held the first ever National Final at IBRO 2007 in Melbourne (no other country had ever held a national final). This established the precedent that this program would cross state boundaries to be a truly national effort under the auspices of ANS, with the national final being held annually at the ANS meeting. Under former ANS President, David Vaney, a memorandum of understanding was drawn up to establish and consolidate this national effort. Coming on board in 2007, Prof. Louise Nicholson established the program across New Zealand and has worked hand-in-hand with our team in Brisbane to maintain and grow the competition. Crucial to this national effort has been the dedication and hard work of the state/territory and regional coordinators across Australia and New Zealand. These people are listed below, to acknowledge their efforts in establishing and maintaining the growth of this program in their area.

Establishing such a program requires financial investment. Here, the Queensland Brain Institute and Prof. Perry Bartlett have played an essential role in supporting the program nationally and, together with the Centre for Brain Research in Auckland, have underpinned the financial stability of the program. In addition, universities and research institutes in each state/territory/region have provided significant financial support to the coordinators to run the competition; their commitment and involvement in this program is gratefully acknowledged. We have also obtained significant sponsorship support over the past 9 years from industry partners such as Carl Zeiss Pty Ltd and ADInstruments, as well as philanthropic partners including the Catwalk Trust and the Free Masons in New Zealand. This has provided schools with essential equipment and books, and has given students and teachers with the opportunity to travel to their regional final to participate in a day of scientific discovery through tours and demonstrations.

## Caption

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Teresa tang, 2011 Australian Brain Bee Challenge (ABBC) champion accepts her prize for winning the International Brain Bee (IBB) in 2012.



# The Australian Brain Bee Challenge



## Caption

**Top:** Raining squishy brains over children.

### Australian Champions

2013	Eva Wang (QLD)
2012	Jackson Huang (QLD)
2011	Teresa Tang (QLD)
2010	Ben Thompson (ACT)
2009	Uma Jha (WA)
2008	Jayson Jeganathan (NSW)
2007	Quinn McGennisken (VIC)
2006	Tim Mews (QLD)

### New Zealand Champions

2013	Thomas Chang (NZ-NI)
2012	Jiantao Shen (NZ-NI)
2011	Byung Cheol Cho (NZ-NI)
2010	Rachel Wiltshire (NZ-NI)
2009	Kate Burgess (NZ-NI)
2008	Stephen Mackerath (NZ-NI)
2007	William Zhang (NZ-NI)

*(The Australian Brain Bee Challenge continued)*

We can be very proud of our efforts. Collectively, our 15 national finalists (listed below) in 9 years have won (twice) or been placed in the International Brain Bee 7 times. This has attracted significant attention at an international level for the quality of our competitors and the training that they have received through this competition. This is possible because of the dedication of Prof. Charles Watson, who has coached the 10 finalists who compete in the Australian and New Zealand national finals each year for the past four years. This invaluable experience, and the chance to interact with Charles one-on-one, is cherished by the competitors. Neurosurgeons and neurologists have also given their time to judge our national finalists on the "patient-diagnosis" section of the competition. Most recently Prof. Simon Koblar has been the clinical task-master, and has provided a physician-scientist's perspective on careers to the students. We are grateful to all those who have served as judges, tour guides, score-keepers etc at all the events. At the coming ANS 2015 meeting in Cairns, we have the privilege of hosting the International Brain Bee for the first time ever in the Asia-Pacific region. We are expecting at least 22 countries to be involved and have received substantial support from the International Society for Neurochemistry and ANS. We are grateful to former ANS President, Prof. John Rostas, for his support and help in our successful bid to host the IBB2015 competition. All ANS members are welcome to attend the final of this event on Monday August 24, 2015, at our annual meeting.

Our ABBC and NZBBC student alumni (now more than 30,000 students) have gone on to undertake undergraduate degrees in a wide variety of disciplines. Some have now completed research higher degrees or are working in business. Many state and national winners have completed work experience in labs across Australia and New Zealand. This vital component of the program is what keeps students engaged with science over time. Whatever the future holds for these students, we can be confident that we have made some impact, because they now understand well why neuroscience research is important. They are neuroscience ambassadors, armed with factual information that can help us to educate the wider public and dispel ignorance surrounding mental illness and neurological disease.

Exciting times lie ahead for the ABBC. As of January 1st, 2015, the national headquarters will move to the University of Western Sydney and will be led by Prof. Vaughan Macefield. We have engaged a commercial partner, Education Perfect, to help expand the school base and increase student participation, and to assume some of the workload in administering and promoting round one of the competition.

The many people who have made the ABBC and NZBBC competitions thrive hope to achieve the collective goal of providing a long-term mechanism for impact and change in society through the public outreach of neuroscience, and to achieve a more informed generation of young Australians and New Zealanders. Thank you for your efforts.

# The Australian Brain Bee Challenge Coordinators

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## **Australian State and Region Coordinators 2006 – Current**

### **ACT**

Professor Greg Stuart  
*Eccles Institute of Neuroscience, Australian  
National University*

Dr Clarke Raymond  
*The John Curtin School of Medical Research,  
The Australian National University*

Dr Keely Bumsted O'Brien  
*School of Biology, Australian National University*

### **NSW**

Professor Vaughan Macefield  
*School of Medicine, University of Western Sydney*

### **NT**

Professor Elizabeth Coulson  
*The Queensland Brain Institute,  
The University of Queensland*

### **QLD**

Professor Linda Richards  
*The Queensland Brain Institute, The School of  
Biomedical Sciences, The University of Queensland*

Associate Professor Bruno van Swinderen  
*The Queensland Brain Institute,  
The University of Queensland*

### **SA**

Associate Professor Damien Keating  
*Human Physiology, Flinders University*

Dr Femke Buisman-Pijlman  
*University of Adelaide, Department  
of Pharmacology*

Dr Gabrielle Todd  
*School of Pharmacy and Medical Sciences,  
University of South Australia*

Professor Paul Thomas  
*School of Molecular and Biomedical Science,  
The University of Adelaide*

### **TAS**

Dr Matthew Kirkcaldie  
*School of Medicine, The University of Tasmania*

Dr Rob Gasperini  
*Menzies Institute for Medical Research,  
University of Tasmania*

Dr Lisa Foa  
*School of Medicine, The University of Tasmania*

### **VIC**

Dr Jee Hyun Kim  
*The Florey Institute of Neuroscience and  
Mental Health*

Professor Heather Young  
*Department of Anatomy and Cell Biology,  
University of Melbourne*

Dr Juliet Taylor  
*Bruce Lefroy Centre for Genetic Health Research,  
Murdoch Childrens Research Institute*

Dr Peter Crouch  
*The Department of Pathology and Centre for  
Neuroscience, The University of Melbourne*

### **WA**

Associate Professor Jenny Rodger  
*School of Animal Biology, The University of  
Western Australia*

## **New Zealand Region Coordinators 2006 – Current**

### **New Zealand North Island**

Professor Louise Nicholson  
*Department of Anatomy with Radiology and  
the Centre for Brain Research, Faculty of Medical  
and Health Sciences, University of Auckland*

Associate Professor Maurice Curtis  
*Department of Anatomy with Radiology and the  
Centre for Brain Research, Faculty of Medical and  
Health Sciences, University of Auckland*

### **New Zealand South Island**

Dr Ruth Napper  
*Brain Health Research Centre, University of Otago*

Dr Stephen Bunn  
*Centre for Neuroendocrinology, University of Otago*

Associate Professor Greg Anson  
*Brain Health and Repair Research Centre,  
University of Otago*



## Society for Neuroscience Chapter

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On the subject of activities supported by the ANS, we were pleased to provide sponsorship to the Australian reception at the 2014 SFN Meeting. This reception was held at the Australian Embassy and organised by Associate Professor Peter Crack and the Victorian Chapter of the SFN, with support from the Queensland and NSW Chapters. The evening was hosted by the Australian Ambassador to the United States of America, the Hon Kim Beazley, AC.

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### Caption

**(L-R):** Michael Schwager (Minister Counsellor (Education, Science and Technology) Australian Embassy), The Hon. Kim Beazley AC, Associate Professor Peter Crack, Professor James Vickers



The event was attended by over 200 people, including many Australians and New Zealanders visiting the US for the meeting, a number of ANZ expats living in America, as well as numerous American colleagues. In the formal part of the evening, the Ambassador spoke on the importance of science as an industry in Australia as well as the vital cultural and reputational dimension of such research for a country's profile internationally. Ambassador Beazley also volunteered the resources of the Embassy for promoting Australian science to the US. Professor Moses Chao, the recent President of SFN, spoke on his recent trip to Adelaide for the ANS meeting, and on the growing reputation of Australian neuroscience. I made some comments on the contribution of the US to building neuroscience research in Australia and New Zealand, mainly through the support of generations of postdoctoral fellows, and I also sought to entice our US colleagues to visit and collaborate with Australasian research labs, perhaps also to consider seeking longer stays for sabbaticals as well as employment in our universities and institutes.

It was a tremendously entertaining evening, with more than the usual glamour typically associated with a SFN reception, and the Embassy staff made us all feel very welcome. Our various US friends and colleagues were very impressed that we had the support of the Australian government in hosting this reception. We would like to express our gratitude to Peter Crack and his colleagues for organising such a terrific event.

## Eccles Lecturer named for the Cairns Meeting

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Professor Robert Vink (University of South Australia) has been named as the Eccles Lecturer for the joint meeting of ISN, APSN and ANS in Cairns August 23-28, 2015.

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### John Rostas

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*Chair of the Local  
Organising Committee*

The Eccles Lecture is a special public plenary lecture, within the scientific program of the meeting. It was established as a partnership between ANS and the Neurosurgical Society of Australasia (NSA) and the Eccles Lecturer is required to give lectures at the annual meetings of both ANS and NSA in the same year.

The Lectureship was named in honour of Sir John Eccles, the first Australian to be awarded a Nobel Prize in neuroscience. The topic of the lecture is intended to be something that crosses the boundary between basic neuroscience and clinical neurology/neurosurgery. Professor Vink's topic at the Cairns meeting will be: "Increased intracranial pressure after acute CNS injury: a basic scientist's perspective of a clinical problem."

### **Important deadlines for the 25th ISN-APSN Biennial Meeting organized in conjunction with ANS, Cairns, Australia, August 23-27, 2015:**

- December, 2014 – Abstract Submission NOW open
- February 15, 2015 – Travel grants application deadline
- March 2, 2015 – Abstract Submission Deadline
- March 12, 2015 – Abstract & Travel Awards Acceptance Notifications
- May 12, 2015 – Early Bird Registration Deadline
- **New:** Preliminary Program is now available online
- **New:** Satellite Meetings list is now available online



# ACAN 2015 Call for Applications



Applications are now open for the Australian Course in Advanced Neuroscience (ACAN), which will be held from 12 April to 2 May 2015 at the Moreton Bay Research Station, North Stradbroke Island, Queensland.

ACAN is one of the world's best courses for young scientists wanting to learn the theory and practice of cellular neuroscience. After completing ACAN, students will be experienced in patch clamping, calcium imaging, brain-slice preparation and electrophysiological data analysis, and will have gained a solid understanding of ion channels, neuronal excitability, synaptic plasticity, confocal and multi-photon microscopy, computational neuroscience, and many other topics.

The course is also a lot of fun, with an exciting and informal atmosphere. Many ACAN students develop close friendships and collaborations during the course.

A special member of faculty at ACAN 2015 will be Charles F. ('Chuck') Stevens, who will give a Hot Topics talk entitled "Two quite different ways the brain represents information". Chuck is a legendary figure in neuroscience, famous for his work on ion channels, synaptic transmission and theories about the brain. ACAN 2015 will be the perfect opportunity to interact informally with him and benefit from his insight and experience.

Other prominent ACAN 2015 faculty include Paul Slesinger (Mt Sinai School of Medicine, New York, USA), who works on potassium channels, Matthew Larkum (Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany), who studies dendritic integration, and George Augustine (Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine, Singapore), who is an expert on optical methods in neuroscience.

Twelve students will be selected to attend ACAN 2015. The application deadline is Monday 22 Dec 2014. For full details about the course, including the program, please visit: <http://www.ans.org.au/acan>

## In order to apply for ACAN 2015, you must:

- be a currently-enrolled PhD student, or
- be a postdoctoral fellow or junior faculty, preferably no more than 5 years after completing your PhD
- preferably be a full-time resident of Australia or New Zealand (but you do not need to be a citizen or permanent resident of those countries). A small number of applicants from other countries may also be accepted.

## In your application you must include:

- a completed application form (obtained from the website)
- your CV
- a detailed cover letter that clearly states how you will apply the skills taught in the course
- a reference from your supervisor, including a confirmation that funds are available to allow you to attend the course

The fee for ACAN 2015 is A\$4500, which covers all meals, accommodation, laboratory supplies and teaching materials.

Scholarships from the Neurological Foundation of New Zealand are available for NZ citizens/permanent residents.

Remember: The deadline is Monday 22 Dec 2014.

I look forward to receiving your application.

**John Bekkers**

*Director, ACAN*

## South Australian News

Stuart Brierley  
and Rainer  
Haberberger

### Centre for Neuroscience Collaborators Day 2014

Thank you to all the ANS Members who attended the Flinders University Centre for Neuroscience Collaborators Day this year. Despite conflicting with two other local research events, the day saw almost 100 local and interstate neuroscientists and students, converge on the Flinders Medical Centre for a day of neuroscience talks and poster presentations.

This year's event was the fourth Collaborators Day for the Centre and was held on Friday, 26th September 2014. The aim of the day is to provide local neuroscience researchers with the opportunity to present data, to engage in new collaborations and access high quality presentations from leaders in different areas of neuroscience.

The growing momentum of the day saw this year's theme split into 3 areas, to meet the needs of the increasing diversity of attendees. The areas were the "Autonomic Nervous System", "Diseases of the Brain" and "Stroke". Invited speakers from the Universities of Melbourne, Adelaide, Monash, Macquarie, Flinders and the South Australian Health & Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI) gave talks showcasing their current investigations.

A record number of poster presenters, saw our poster area extended and filled to capacity. The growing student involvement is a great success for us and we look forward to encouraging further participation from our next generation of researchers.

We would like to thank the ANS for its continued support and sponsorship of the event. We would also like to acknowledge the continued generosity of our other sponsors; Flinders University and the South Australian Neuroscience Institute (SANI).

Full details on the day, as well as recordings of some of our guest speakers, are available online: [www.flinders.edu.au/neuroscience/collabday.htm](http://www.flinders.edu.au/neuroscience/collabday.htm)

### Caption

**Top:** Poster presenters during one of the two poster sessions.

**Bottom:** Flinders Medical Centre lecture theatre during the Autonomic Nervous System session.



## **School Outreach Program, Brain Awareness Week 16 - 20th March 2015.**

In collaboration with ANS-Victoria, The Florey Institute organizes a "THINK ABOUT IT" School Outreach Program during International Brain Awareness Week. This program has successfully run since 2009 and involves a talk from a visiting neuroscientist to Year 10-12 students. The Program has gained momentum over the years and we now have over 25 schools involved.

The Program requires the support of neuroscientists who are willing to share their research and experiences. Talks are normally 30 minutes and can be about brain function, new technologies or a career as a scientist/medical researcher. We aim to send two people per school and encourage students and senior researchers to participate. It is a rewarding experience for the speaker and schools greatly appreciate the chance to meet a real-life neuroscientist! We also provide support material and information sessions to prepare participants for their talks.

What can you do? If you are interested in speaking, or require more information, please email [schooloutreach@florey.edu.au](mailto:schooloutreach@florey.edu.au). If you have connections to a secondary school, feel free to pass on those details. It is great when we can send speakers to a school they are familiar with. Thanks in advance for your participation.

# THINK ABOUT IT

## Florey School Outreach Program

International Brain Awareness Week (March 16-20th, 2015) was initiated to advance public knowledge on the progress and benefits of brain research.

Since 2009, The Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health has offered a School Outreach Program where neuroscientists visit the school and talk to Yr 10-12 students. These talks can focus on the functions of the brain (fitting in with curriculum topics), new technologies in research or a career as a scientist/medical researcher.

**Are you interested in a neuroscientist visiting your school during Brain Awareness Week 2015?**

**To book or for further information, please contact [schooloutreach@florey.edu.au](mailto:schooloutreach@florey.edu.au)**

# Upcoming Conferences



**Workshop on Autism spectrum disorder**

a satellite meeting to **Cortical Connections**  
[www.qbi.uq.edu.au/cortical-connections-2015](http://www.qbi.uq.edu.au/cortical-connections-2015)

**18th of March, 2015**  
**Lady Cilento Children's Hospital**  
**Brisbane, Australia**

*Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a developmental disability that affects people throughout their lives.*

*At present, we do not understand the cause of this disorder, but this workshop will highlight some of the significant research advances being made.*

*The speakers will present their data on genetics and magnetic resonance imaging to understand the cause of ASD as well as how this might influence better diagnostic testing and subtyping of individuals with ASD.*

*The talks will be directed toward health workers and physicians working with ASD individuals as well as families.*

Program of events	
12:45–1:00pm	Opening of workshop and overview <b>Prof. Linda Richards</b> Queensland Brain Institute
1:00–1:30pm	<b>Prof. Elliott Sherr</b> University of California, San Francisco
1:30–2:00pm	<b>Prof. Ingrid Scheffer</b> The University of Melbourne, Florey Neurosciences Institute, Murdoch Children's Research Institute, Austin Health
2:00–2:30pm	<b>Prof. Jozef Gecz</b> University of Adelaide
2:30–3:00pm	<b>Prof. Andrew Whitehouse</b> The Telethon Institute, Perth, Autism Collaborative Research Centre
3:00–3:30pm	Afternoon tea break
3:30–4:00pm	<b>Dr Lynn Paul</b> Caltech, Los Angeles
4:00–4:30pm	<b>Prof. Sylvia Roger</b> The University of Queensland, Autism Collaborative Research Centre



**Cortical Connections 2015**

**19th and 20th of March, 2015**  
**Queensland Brain Institute**  
**Brisbane, Australia**

Register at [www.qbi.uq.edu.au/cortical-connections-2015](http://www.qbi.uq.edu.au/cortical-connections-2015)

*In order for the human brain to function, it must be wired correctly during brain development. How this occurs is one of the fundamental questions of neuroscience.*

*Over two days this conference brings together international leaders in the field of normal and abnormal wiring of the cerebral cortex, and how this impacts cognitive function. A special focus will be on the development and cognitive function of the corpus callosum and the genetic basis of how callosal malformations arise and how this impacts cognition.*

Speakers

<b>Roberto Lent</b> Federal University of Rio de Janeiro	<b>Jozef Gecz</b> University of Adelaide	<b>Fernanda Tovar-Moll</b> Federal University of Rio de Janeiro
<b>Richard Leventer</b> Murdoch Childrens Research Institute, Melbourne	<b>Kathryn North</b> Murdoch Childrens Research Institute, Melbourne	<b>Tianzi Jiang</b> Queensland Brain Institute, The University of Queensland, Brisbane
<b>Stephen Williams</b> Queensland Brain Institute, The University of Queensland, Brisbane	<b>Ingrid Scheffer</b> The University of Melbourne, The Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health, Murdoch Childrens Research Institute, Melbourne	<b>Lynn Paul</b> Caltech, Los Angeles
<b>Linda Richards</b> Queensland Brain Institute, The University of Queensland, Brisbane	<b>Tania Attié-Bitach</b> Hospital Necker-Enfants Malades & Université Paris Descartes, Paris	<b>Vicki Anderson</b> Murdoch Childrens Research Institute, Melbourne
<b>Elliott Sherr</b> University of California, San Francisco	<b>George McGillivray</b> Murdoch Childrens Research Institute, Melbourne	<b>Gail Robertson</b> The University of Queensland
	<b>Paul Lockhart</b> Murdoch Childrens Research Institute, Melbourne	

# Upcoming Conferences



## **Sydney Glia Meeting – Understanding the Function of Glia in the Healthy and Diseased CNS, August 19-22, 2015**

*Novotel Manly Beach Hotel*

The Sydney Glia Meeting will be held in conjunction with - and as a satellite conference of - the 25th Biennial Conference of the ISN in 2015. The Sydney Glia Meeting will cover various facets of the neurobiology of glia in health and disease by leading national and international researchers. Participation of predoctoral and postdoctoral students is strongly encouraged and a limited number of travel awards will be available.

For further information about the program and the meeting, see the website (<http://sydneygliameeting.com/>) or contact Iain Campbell ([iain.campbell@sydney.edu.au](mailto:iain.campbell@sydney.edu.au))

\* Registration opens January 2015.  
Stay tuned for updates.

Website: [www.neuroscienceacademy.org.in](http://www.neuroscienceacademy.org.in)

## **The Gordon Research Seminar on Calcium Signalling, June 6-7, 2015**

*Sunday River Resort, Newry, ME, USA*

This is a unique forum for graduate students, post-docs, and other scientists with comparable levels of experience and education to present and exchange new data and cutting edge ideas. The focus of the 2015 meeting is to highlight the latest developments in Calcium Signalling and to stimulate participants to identify the most relevant questions that need to be answered in the near future. Topics of discussion in scientific sessions include structure and function of calcium signaling molecules and components, and advances in understanding calcium signaling and the associated changes in physiology and disease. The meeting will feature a keynote presentation by Professor Diane Lipscombe, PhD (Department of Neuroscience, Brown University), as well as a manuscript writing/career development session, presented by Dr. Elizabeth Adler (Executive Editor, *Journal of General Physiology*) and Lorna MacEachern (Director of Postdoctoral Career Services, Yale University).

Website: <http://www.grc.org/programs.aspx?id=14633>

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 3 April 2015.

## **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.

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