



# Australian Neuroscience Society Newsletter

No. 2

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



## President's Perspective

**NCBMS.** Congratulations to President-Elect **Sarah Dunlop** on being appointed to the National Committee for Biomedical Sciences of the Australian Academy of Science by the Academy's Executive Committee. The Academy has 21 National Committees whose broad aims are to foster a designated branch or theme of natural science in Australia, and to serve as a link between Australian scientists and overseas scientists in the same field. Sarah will join representatives from AuPS, ASBMB, ASCEPT, ASM and individual members from ANU and the University of Sydney.

**Australian Course in Advanced Neuroscience.** One of the pleasures of being ANS President has been the opportunity to interact with students at ACAN over the last three years. I visited Stradbroke Island for a couple of days near the end of this year's course and was particularly pleased to meet the two graduate students from China that ANS and IBRO had sponsored to attend ACAN. The course was magnificently organised as usual, and much credit goes to the Course Director, John Bekkers from JCSMR, as well as to the many faculty from Australia and overseas who teach at ACAN.

**ACAN Benefactors Honoured.** It was my pleasure to present ANS Medallions to **Alan Finkel** and **Elizabeth Finkel** at the mid-year meeting of Council in recognition of both Alan's key role in establishing ACAN and the Finkel Foundation's generosity in endowing the course. Council also took the opportunity to give Alan a dollar coin, being the token payment by ANS for the assets of ACAN Ltd. Andy Lawrence, who had been co-opted to Council for one year to shepherd the ACAN agreement through the accounting minefields, announced that he had secured a ruling from the ATO that tax-deductible gifts to the ANS Research Fund could be used for the purposes of supporting ACAN. ACAN Ltd tried unsuccessfully for some years to secure Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status for the course, so the transfer of ACAN to the Society has had immediate tangible benefits.



29th May 2009: ANS Medallions (and a dollar coin) awarded to Elizabeth & Alan Finkel by David Vaney and Andy Lawrence.

**Monash University Forum.** I was pleased to receive an invitation from **James Bourne** and **Lisa Hutton** to attend an Early Career Researchers Forum hosted by the Monash University Neuroscience and Mental Health Network (MUNMHN). There is

wide agreement that postdocs, both young and not-so-young, are poorly represented in the decision-making processes in academia, whether in universities and institutes, in granting bodies or in professional societies. This issue is of continuing concern to ANS Council but there are no simple solutions or they would have been implemented long ago. Activity at the local level is very important and the lead provided by a number of organisations, including the Postdoctoral Association of the Howard Florey Institute (PAHFI) and the MUNMHN, may provide useful models for other groups of neuroscientists.

**Australian Brain Bee Challenge.** The state/region finals of ABBC were held throughout Australia and New Zealand on 16<sup>th</sup> June and I was delighted to attend the Queensland State Final and give a talk to the students on visual illusions and the visual system. The undoubted success of ABBC depends on the hard work that the state/region coordinators and their committees put into the increasingly complex workings of ABBC. I particularly want to acknowledge the untiring efforts of the ABBC National Chair, **Linda Richards**, and the ABBC National Administrator, **Rhonda Lyons** of the Queensland Brain Institute. ANS will sponsor the 2009 winners of the state/region finals and their guardians to attend the Australian-New Zealand Brain Bee Challenge National Final, to be held at the beginning of the Sydney ANS-AuPS Meeting in January 2010.

**2013 Melbourne Meeting.** Council voted to hold the 2013 ANS Meeting in Melbourne, following on from the 2010 Sydney Meeting, the 2011 Auckland Meeting and the 2012 Gold Coast Meeting. Victorian members of ANS who are interested in serving as the Chair of the Local Organising Committee of the 2013 Melbourne Meeting are invited to contact either myself, the ANS Secretary (Ann Turnley), the President-Elect (Sarah Dunlop), or the Victorian State Rep (Joanne Britto).

*David Vaney*

16<sup>th</sup> July 2009

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## Monash Early Career Researcher Forum

On 5<sup>th</sup> June 2009, the Monash University Neuroscience and Mental Health Network hosted a forum for 40 early career researchers (postgraduate students and post doctoral researchers).

The forum was opened by the Chancellor of Monash University, Dr Alan Finkel. Delegates then attended sessions on grant and fellowship applications, a networking session, career paths, and breakout group discussions on topics of interest indicated during the registration process. The ANS President, David Vaney, spoke to the group about “The Australian Neuroscience Society: what ANS does for you and what you can do for ANS”.

Finally, the ECRs were given the opportunity to brainstorm and report back to the Network’s committee regarding areas in which they feel they would benefit from additional support. This led to the development of ideas such as technique workshops for ECRs in the Network. Subsequently an early career researcher committee has been formed and this committee is already active in organising and promoting a monthly seminar series and a workshop event.

For more information on the Monash University Neuroscience and Mental Health Network, please visit our website <http://www.med.monash.edu.au/nmh/>.



Monash ECR breakout session.

—Photo courtesy of James Bourne

James Bourne & Lisa Hutton, Monash University

## Behavioural Neuroscience Meeting

Melbourne, July 2009

The goal of this meeting was to bring together people who have shared interests in the diverse areas of behavioural neuroscience and to present their research. For this meeting, we invited people working in Victoria with an interest in behavioural – cognitive neuroscience. The themes of the meeting included mechanisms of behaviour, including learning and memory; animal models and behavioural phenotypes of knockout mice; human studies, imaging and transcranial magnetic stimulation; behavioural disorders, pathology, disease and addiction. Keynote Speakers representing these areas included Paul Adlard, Mental Health Research Institute of Victoria; Marie Gibbs, Monash University; Andrew Lawrence, Florey Neuroscience Institutes and Trichur Vidyasagar, University of Melbourne.

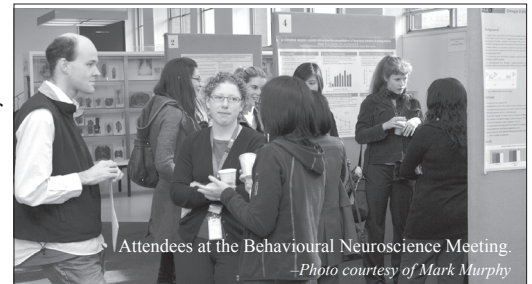
The meeting was held on July 10, 2009 in the Department of Anatomy and Cell Biology, University of Melbourne.

The meeting turned out to be very

successful, with over 130 people attending, and a full and excellent program of 22 talks and 31 posters. This success clearly reflects the strength and interest in behavioural neuroscience in Victoria and it is planned to continue this event in the future. We are interested to know if people/groups in the other states are interested in having an Australia wide meeting on behavioural neuroscience. If so, please contact Mark Murphy ([m.murphy@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:m.murphy@unimelb.edu.au)).

The meeting was sponsored by Florey Neuroscience Institutes and its facilities, Neuro Research Services and the small Animal MRI facility, and the Neurosciences and Behavioural Sciences Domain of the University of Melbourne. I would also like to thank co-organisers Graham Barrett, Siew Yeen Chai, David Crewther, Stephen Kent and Andrew Francis for their input to the success of the meeting.

Mark Murphy, University of Melbourne.



Attendees at the Behavioural Neuroscience Meeting.  
—Photo courtesy of Mark Murphy

## ANS/AuPS 2010 – the 30th Annual Meeting of the Australian Neuroscience Society, in conjunction with the 50th Anniversary Meeting of the Australian Physiological Society

### An invitation from the co-chairs of the conference

We are delighted to invite you to participate in ANS/AuPS 2010, incorporating the Annual Meeting of the Australian Neuroscience Society and the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Meeting of the Australian Physiological Society.

The meeting will be at the Darling Harbour Convention Centre, where the highly successful ANS 2006 meeting was held. It will include a celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first meeting, also held in Sydney, of the Australian Physiological and Pharmacological Society, from which both ANS and AuPS have grown. As co-chairs of the Organising Committee, we believe that this meeting will provide a wonderful opportunity for stimulating interactions between physiologists and neuroscientists.

The scientific program will include symposia and free communications, and plenary lectures to be presented by David Adams, David Attwell, Herbert Herzog and Gilles Laurent. The program will provide ample time and space for poster presentations. Once again there will be a trade display and an Exhibitor Passport Competition, and your chance to win one of the excellent prizes on offer.

The Committee will ensure that this meeting will also be socially enjoyable. In addition to our popular ‘mixer’ on the Sunday evening and the Conference Dinner on Tuesday night, there will be a special event on the Monday evening – a Seminar and Cocktail Party celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of AuPS, to be held at the University of Sydney. Bus transport will be provided to transport you from the Sydney Convention Centre for this special celebration.

The conference venue is adjacent to several conference hotels and within walking distance of the city centre, China Town, the Maritime Museum, the Powerhouse Museum, the Sydney Aquarium, IMAX theatre and a diverse mix of cafes, bars and restaurants. Ferries connect Darling Harbour to Circular Quay, from where you can take a leisurely stroll around The Rocks – the historic heart of Sydney – or sip champagne at the Sydney Opera House. From Circular Quay you can take a ferry to several other attractions, such as Taronga Park Zoo, Manly Beach or Watson’s Bay.

Website:- [www.sallyjayconferences.com.au/sydney2010](http://www.sallyjayconferences.com.au/sydney2010)

We look forward to seeing you in Sydney.

Sam Solomon & Roger Dampney, Co-chairs, ANS/AuPS 2010



# ABBC AND NZBBC ROUND TWO – STATE FINALS REPORT

Over 3,000 students from every State in Australia and two Regions of New Zealand sat the Australian and New Zealand Brain Bee Challenge\* Round One - Quiz, online in their schools, during Brain Awareness Week in March this year, competing to progress to the Round Two - State Finals which took place simultaneously in each State/Region on June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

Around 700 students, an average of almost 100 students from each State or Region, were selected from the 3,000 students to progress to the second round of the competition and travelled to a University in their State's capital city to participate in their Round Two - State Final where they competed in individual and team events, took tours of the host institution's research facilities and participated in activities designed to inspire students to pursue a career in neuroscience.

The winning Teams in each State won a microscope for their school donated by Carl Zeiss Pty Ltd:

Canberra Grammar School, ACT; Baulkham Hills High School, New South Wales; Samuel Marsden Collegiate – Karori, New Zealand NI; Riccarton High School, New Zealand SI, Academies of Science, Mathematics and Technology, Queensland; Australian Science and Mathematics School, South Australia; St Mary's District High School, Tasmania; Donald High School, Victoria; Bunbury Senior High School, Western Australia.

Sponsored by ANS, the following State Final individual winners will be flying to Sydney to compete for the National titles of either the *Australian or New Zealand Champion* in the Round Three - National Final competition to be held at the ANS/AuPS meeting in February.

The following are the State/Region Final winners (with the NT representative to be confirmed) that will compete for the National titles:

ACT: Rohan Curtotti (Canberra Grammar School)

NEW ZEALAND NORTH ISLAND: Kate Burgess

(Samuel Marsden Collegiate – Karori)

NEW ZEALAND SOUTH ISLAND: Tharun Sonti

(Riccarton High School)

NEW SOUTH WALES: Andrew Li

(James Ruse Agricultural High School)

QUEENSLAND: Millie Macdonald

(Cleveland District State High School)

SOUTH AUSTRALIA: Malwinka Wyra

(Australian Science and Mathematics School)

TASMANIA: Zoe Greenfield (St Mary's District High School)

VICTORIA: Celina Chuo (Rowville Secondary College)

WESTERN AUSTRALIA: Uma Jha (Shenton College)

Professor David Vaney, ANS President presents Millie Macdonald (Cleveland District State High School) Queensland State Final individual winner, with her ANS sponsored prize (two return flights to Sydney and accommodation) to compete in the National Final to be held at the ANS/AuPS meeting in February, 2010.



The Australian and New Zealand winners of the National Final will represent their countries in the International Brain Bee final to be held in North America later in 2010.

The competition will be intense so come and cheer them on at the National Finals to be held during the ANS/AuPS 2010 meeting at the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre.



Western Australia ABBC finalists with the Chief Scientist of WA, Professor Lyn Beazley. *–Photo courtesy of Jenny Rodger*

## NZ Brain Bee Challenge report

The second round of the 2009 Brain Bee Challenge, held on Tuesday 16 June, saw more than 200 students converging in Auckland and Dunedin to test their neuroscience knowledge. It was the third year the competition had been run in New Zealand and the first time it could be offered to schools nationwide. The success of the extended format was immediately apparent with students from Wellington and Christchurch winning both the individual and team challenges.

“We’re delighted that schools from outside the two host cities did so well,” said Brain Bee organiser Associate Professor Louise Nicholson from The University of Auckland. “It was a pleasure to share the event with students from all over the country, and to celebrate their enthusiasm and ability.”

Attendance at the North Island event was high, with 165 students accompanied by supporters filling the University of Auckland venue to capacity. Samuel Marsden Collegiate School in Wellington proved its worth on the day, winning both the individual and team challenges. Student Kate Burgess was awarded first place in the individual competition, and together with Kimberley Low, Emily Hayward, and Avantika Singh, also won the team challenge.

The South Island challenge, held at the Otago Museum, was affected by heavy snow, with half the registered participants unable to attend. The hardy group of 45 students who made it on the day didn't allow the freezing temperatures to dampen their spirits though. Riccarton High School from Christchurch triumphed in both events, with Tharun Sonti winning the individual challenge and, together with Simon Greenwood, Jenny Sahng, and Minyan Voon, also winning the team competition.

“The 2009 Brain Bee Challenge was a great success and we’re already looking forward to next year,” says Professor Nicholson. “The Challenge is a fun event that introduces a very different way of looking at and approaching science. The students who attend are some of the very brightest in the country. It’s an invaluable opportunity to encourage them to consider science, and in particular neuroscience as a career.”

For the full competition results and photographs from the day, visit the New Zealand Brain Bee Challenge website: [www.nzbbc.ac.nz](http://www.nzbbc.ac.nz)

[\*The Australian and New Zealand Brain Bee Challenge is an educational outreach program consisting of three rounds of competition for Year 10 high school students to learn about the brain and other parts of the nervous system, designed to support their continued interest in science and encourage them to consider Neuroscience as a career. (website: [www.abc.edu.au](http://www.abc.edu.au))]

# UPCOMING CONFERENCES . . .

## **International Society for Autonomic Neuroscience: Sydney Sept 1-4 2009**

Autonomic neuroscience is big in Australia - the International Society for Neuroscience (ISAN) was founded here – with Geoff Burnstock as its President and Max Bennett as Vice-President - and held its first meeting in Cairns, Queensland, in 1997. Twelve years later, after holding biennial meetings in London, Calgary, Marseille and Kyoto, and the meeting has returned to Australia. ISAN2009 will be held at the Manly Pacific ([www.manlypacificsydney.com.au](http://www.manlypacificsydney.com.au)), right on Manly Beach, the most popular of Sydney's northern beaches and, for the first time, joins with the European Federation of Autonomic Societies (EFAS).

The four plenary lectures - to be presented by Darwin Berg (USA), Hugo Critchley (UK), Max Hinz (Germany) and Elspeth McLachlan (Australia) - and the 54 invited symposium speakers will cover the entire range of autonomic neuroscience, from development of the autonomic nervous system to the autonomic disturbances of spinal cord injury and Parkinson's Disease. The full list of symposia, and the scientific program for this four-day meeting, is available on the conference website: [www.iceaustralia.com/isan2009](http://www.iceaustralia.com/isan2009). In addition, there will be two satellite meetings and a workshop on the weekend following the conference, details for which can also be obtained from the website. All in all, an excellent meeting – one in which all Australian neuroscientists should feel proud. If you haven't registered yet, you had better be quick - registration closes on August 18!

*Vaughan Macefield*

## **Brain Sciences UNSW Symposium**

**31 August 2009, Galleries rooms, The Scientia, UNSW, Kensington, Sydney.**

The theme for this year's Symposium is "The Emotional Brain". The Symposium will include presentations from invited speakers from overseas, interstate and from other institutions in Sydney. Please see <http://www.brainsciences.unsw.edu.au/BrainSciWeb.nsf/page/UpcomingEvents> or contact Karen Kool [kmkool@unsw.edu.au](mailto:kmkool@unsw.edu.au) by June 12th.

## **AWCBR 2009 27th International Australasian Winter Conference on Brain Research**

**Copthorne Resort Hotel, Queenstown, New Zealand, 27 Aug-2 Sept, 2009**

Description: To promote interaction between academic & clinical brain research disciplines including anatomy, biochemistry, kinesiology, neural modelling, neurology, molecular biology, pharmacology, physiology, and psychology. Intensive morning, late afternoon and evening sessions with free time mid-day for interactions and activities. Contact: Prof. Cliff Abraham e-mail: [awcbr@psy.otago.ac.nz](mailto:awcbr@psy.otago.ac.nz). Registration: <http://www.awcbr.org>

## **Frontiers in Spinal Cord Research Conference Queensland Brain Institute**

The University of Queensland, Brisbane. 7-8 September 2009. This will bring together world experts in the field of spinal cord injury and repair research. Recently, great advances have been made in the science of spinal cord repair and, increasingly, such advances are finding their way from the laboratory to the clinic. This promising aspect will be a key focus of the conference. For further information see <http://www.qbi.uq.edu.au/index.html?page=27038#spinal> or contact Alison van Niekerk [a.vanniekerk@uq.edu.au](mailto:a.vanniekerk@uq.edu.au)

## **9th International Congress of the Polish Neuroscience Society**

**Warsaw, 9-12 September 2009.**

For further information on the meeting please visit: [www.ptbun.org.pl](http://www.ptbun.org.pl)

## **The 32nd annual meeting of Japan Neuroscience Society (JNSS)**

**Nagoya Congress Center, in Nagoya, Japan  
September 16-18, 2009.**

This is the largest neuroscience meeting in Japan (about 3,500 participants) covering a broad range of areas: molecular, cellular, systems, behavioral and computational neuroscience, and neurochemistry including both basic and clinical studies. For more information, see meeting website: <http://www.jnss.org/neurosci2009>

## **48th Annual National Scientific Conference of The Australian Society for Medical Research: "Neurogenetics on the Apple Isle"**

**The Grand Chancellor Hotel, Hobart, November 15-17 2009**

The program covers diverse topics such as epilepsy, neuromuscular diseases, motor neurone disease, schizophrenia, stroke, Huntington's disease, ataxia, multiple sclerosis, neuropathies, brain development, mental retardation, Parkinson's disease, bipolar disorder, neurofibromatosis and muscular dystrophy. Abstract submission and online bookings are now open at : <http://www.asmr-nsc.org.au>. Submissions for Oral selection will close **Friday August 14th 2009**. Submissions for Poster-Only selection will close **Friday September 25th 2009**. For further information please contact Associate Professor Martin Delatycki, Conference Convener: [martin.delatycki@ghsv.org.au](mailto:martin.delatycki@ghsv.org.au)

## **3rd Protein Misfolding and Neurological Disorders Meeting**

**Port Douglas, Queensland, Australia, 3rd - 6th November 2009**

The meeting will cover all aspects of protein misfolding, ranging from the biochemical and biophysical through to cellular, animal and clinical studies. On-line registration and abstract submission is available on the conference home page (<http://www.proteinmisfolding.org>).

## **The 1st Congress of Asia-Pacific Society for Alcohol and Addiction Research (APSAAR 2009)**

**Seoul, Korea, November 12-14, 2009.**

See website for more details ([www.apsaar2009.org](http://www.apsaar2009.org)) or contact the 1st APSAAR Congress Secretariat at [admin@apsaar2009.org](mailto:admin@apsaar2009.org).

## **Australasian Association for Chemosensory Science 11th Annual Meeting**

**Heron Island QLD, 2-6 December 2009.**

The website for the society is [www.aacss.org](http://www.aacss.org).

## **Molecular Pharmacology of Amino Acid Transmitters: From Cryptic to Contemporary Drug Targets**

**November 28th & 29th, 2009 University of Sydney**

This event will honour the contributions to Australian and international pharmacology by Professor Graham Johnston AM. Graham's work has been instrumental in taking amino acid pharmacology from its infancy to a scenario where it is now a major area of activity for the international pharmaceutical industry. Two distinguished international neuropharmacologists, David Lodge (University of Bristol, ex-Eli Lilly) and Bjarke Ebert (Lundbeck, Denmark), will speak on the neuropharmacology of L-glutamate and GABA, respectively. Various local scientists will make contributions covering relevant areas of neuroscience, pharmacology, drug development and medicinal chemistry. Information will be available shortly at [www.ascept.org](http://www.ascept.org) or contact Phil Beart (03-8344-1955, [philip.beart@floreys.edu.au](mailto:philip.beart@floreys.edu.au)) or Mary Collins (02-9351-8584, [maryc@pharm.usyd.edu.au](mailto:maryc@pharm.usyd.edu.au)).

## **Eighth World Congress on Brain Injury, Washington, DC**

**March 10-14, 2010.** Abstract deadline: October 12, 2009. For further information go to [www.internationalbrain.org](http://www.internationalbrain.org)

## **9th Biennial Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Society for Neurochemistry (APSN 2010)**

**Phuket, Thailand October 18-20, 2010**



## AUSTRALIAN COURSE IN ADVANCED NEUROSCIENCE (ACAN) 2009

ACAN is a 3-week residential course for PhD students, postdocs and junior faculty, designed to provide advanced theoretical and practical training in cellular neurophysiology. Since its inception in 2005, ACAN has been held annually at the University of Queensland's Moreton Bay Research Station, North Stradbroke Island, near Brisbane. This year ACAN was held from 19th April to 9th May. The course was again an outstanding success.

As in previous years, the course was attended by 12 students and more than 20 high-profile course lecturers and demonstrators from around the world. New this year was the attendance of 2 students from China, who were supported by Fellowships provided by the ANS and the International Brain Research Organization (IBRO). More information about the course can be found at <http://acan.jcs.anu.edu.au>.

Next year's ACAN will run from 11 April to 1 May 2010. The call for applications will go out in early November 2009.



ACAN Class of 2009

*Front (L-R): Andrew Garrett, Sepi Keshavarzi, Helen Gooch, Wenqin (Emmy) Hu, Jaime Foong.  
Back (L-R): Michael Williams, David Tsai, Jennie Cederholm, Yefei (Lizzy) Li, Benjamin Lau, Jan Schulz, Derik Steyn.*

### ANS website and newsletter

The ANS website is on-line at <http://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 Ann Turnley (email [turnley@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:turnley@unimelb.edu.au), phone 03 8344 3981). 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

October 2009 Newsletter: 28<sup>th</sup> September 2009  
December 2009: 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2009

### 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.

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Sally Jay Conferences can be contacted by the following means:-

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