

ANNUAL REPORT 2000



President's Report

Dr Robert Ramsay

As the year 2000 and my time as ASMR President come to their end it is appropriate to reflect upon what has happened to medical research, its funding and profile over this time. It is also an opportunity to thank my board colleagues, supporters and critics who have helped to shape my experience as president.

As president I was fortunate in having a federal health minister who is aware of the direct connection between health and medical research and one who at times took the risks in cabinet and elsewhere to champion our cause. In return we have been by and large supportive of the Minister. That is not to say that robust discussions have not occurred and that more needs to be done. Nevertheless, one very important lesson in our relationship with Dr. Wooldridge has been that he depends upon us to provide a stream of information and interaction with other politicians to allow him to work through the political process. The competing interests in Canberra are enormous and no health minister no matter how supportive can expect success without other ministers being convinced to offer cabinet, and for that matter, backbencher support.

To this end I have spent a number of days in Canberra this year talking to politicians about medical research. Politicians from all sides have been receptive and well informed but the continual reminders from us that medical research matters seems to be essential.

A recent trip to Canberra with our new President Peter O'Loughlin gave me confidence that this dialogue will be handled enthusiastically and expertly next year. The phrase "duck to water" comes to mind when I think of our last meeting with Dr. Brendan Nelson who chairs the parliamentary standing committee on Employment, Education and Work place Relations, where Peter instilled our discussion with facts, argument and enthusiasm.

I set a task for the board this year to connect more effectively with public health researchers and we now have measurable success in this area. Thank you Carol Armour for augmenting this process and Andrew Sinclair for consolidating this connection through the National Scientific Conference. We as medical researchers share the same funding pool as our public health research colleagues so it is only sensible to engage them in our activities.

Recently ASMR has played a role in meetings with the Consumer Health Forum. These meetings have brought new insight into medical research practice and attitudes in Australia from the perspective of consumers and research participants. I firmly believe that this relationship is very constructive and strategically important to the future of medical

President's Report

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research. Furthermore it can help improve the trust of the research process and translation of its discoveries into health outcomes. I hope this dialogue will grow in the future.

This year we have dealt with the challenges of a new partner in medical research advocacy. Although in its infancy Research Australia, which arose out of the Health and Medical Research Strategic Review chaired by Mr. Peter Wills, has made us assess our mission and future direction. We played a role in drafting a business plan for RA and by way of this exercise more accurately defined what ASMR is and should be. We have actively sought and gained affiliation with a number of medical colleges and patient/consumer groups. At the beginning of 2000 we were proud to speak in the interest of a 60,000-person supporter base. At the end of 2000 it is now 113,500. This brings strength and added responsibility driving home the need to communicate every activity with the Australian community. With the financial support of the Department of Health and Aged Care and sponsors this will allow us to communicate with the public at an unprecedented level in 2001. We trust that Research Australia will also support us in this exercise as we continue to define our respective places within the health and medical research environment.

Finally, I would like to thank the ASMR board, the executive and above all Cath West. I am embarrassed to say that she has saved me from many a "courageous action", allowed me to prosecute my responsibilities as president through her hard work and, in collaboration with Lexy Harris, made sure I had a flight, hotel room and appointment at the right time with the right person. Oh to be so organized! Thank you so very much Cath and Lexy.

Just as Australia is a pluralistic society so too is medical research a pluralistic endeavour. Medical Research has many masters, views and politically speaking many competing interests when arguing for funds. It is very, very hard to please everyone particularly when one's constituents are intelligent and critical by nature and training. Nevertheless, I would gauge my time as president as one where support far outweighed criticism.

Now my last words are of love and thanks to my wife and kids who tolerated my early morning disruptions of family life; the missed gymnastic competitions where my daughter stood on the winning podium while I was away and my son reached new developmental milestones in infant terrorism. These are my only regrets during my time of service in ASMR. I wish Peter O'Loughlin as much luck and support as I have enjoyed.

Thank You

*Robert George Ramsay
ASMR President, 2000.*

Directors and Office Bearers 2000

Dr Robert Ramsay, President
Dr Peter O'Loughlin, President-elect
Dr Moira Clay, Honorary Secretary
Dr Bruce Lyons, Honorary Treasurer
Professor Peter Schofield, Director, Public Affairs
Professor Carol Armour
Associate Professor Lyn Griffiths
Dr Bronwyn Kingwell
Dr Cassandra Lawson
Dr Andrew Sinclair
Dr Jason Smythe (resigned prior to end-of-term)
Executive Officer - Catherine West

Board Meetings 2000

Schedule of Attendance by Directors

November 26, 1999

Present: Dr Matthew Gillespie (Chair), Dr Rob Ramsay, Dr Peter O'Loughlin, Dr Judy Halliday, Dr Bruce Lyons, Dr Moira Clay, Dr Peter Schofield, Dr Carol Armour, Dr John Mamo, Dr Jason Smythe, Dr Cassandra Lawson, Dr Lyn Griffiths, Dr Bronwyn Kingwell, Dr Andrew Sinclair

March 10, 2000

Present: Dr Rob Ramsay (Chair), Dr Peter O'Loughlin, Dr Moira Clay, Dr Bruce Lyons, Dr Peter Schofield, Dr Cassie Lawson, Dr Bronwyn Kingwell, Dr Andrew Sinclair, Dr Carol Armour, Dr Lyn Griffiths.

Apologies: Dr Jason Smythe

July 21, 2000

Present: Dr Rob Ramsay (Chair), Dr Peter O'Loughlin, Dr Moira Clay, Dr Bruce Lyons, Dr Peter Schofield.

September 15, 2000

Present: Dr Rob Ramsay (Chair), Dr Peter O'Loughlin, Dr Moira Clay, Dr Bruce Lyons, Dr Peter Schofield, Dr Lyn Griffiths, Dr Cassie Lawson, Dr Andrew Sinclair, Dr Bronwyn Kingwell.

Apologies: Professor Carol Armour, Dr Jason Smythe

Past Presidents

1961	BG Firkin
1962	AP Skyring
1963	RP Shearman
1964	G Archer
1965	J McRae
1966	AWT Edwards
1967	MR Ployost
1968	PJ Nestel
1969	PJ Nestel
1970	PA Castaldi
1971	JR Turtle
1972	WJ O'Sullivan
1973	TJ Martin
1974	JK Healy
1975	JP Chalmers
1976	AA Morley
1977	NG Ardlie
1978	A Basten
1979	JW Funder
1980	GG Duggin
1981	RL Dawkins
1982	JK Findlay
1983	JA Eisman
1984	JA Whitworth
1985	BM Hall
1986	GC Farrell
1987	RL Sutherland
1988	JG McDougall
1989	NH Hunt
1990	JJ Finlay-Jones
1991	MJ Field
1992	PH Hart
1993	WD Tilley
1994	CL Clarke
1995	S Clark
1996	G Mann
1997	K Scott
1998	S Wesselingh
1999	MT Gillespie
2000	R Ramsay

ASMR Annual General Meeting

Monday 27th November, 2000

12:15 to 1:15pm

Hotel Sofitel, Melbourne Victoria

AGENDA

- Item 1.** Welcome and Apologies - Dr Robert Ramsay
- Item 2.** Confirmation of Minutes, AGM of 28th November 1999 - Dr Robert Ramsay
- Item 3.** President's Report - Dr Robert Ramsay
- Item 4.** Treasurer's Report - Dr Bruce Lyons
- Item 5.** ASMR Research Fund - Dr Bruce Lyons
- Item 6.** Subcommittee Reports
- a) Research Careers - Dr Moira Clay
 - b) Membership - Dr Carol Armour
 - c) Newsletter - Dr Lyn Griffiths
 - d) ASMR Medical Research Week - Dr Moira Clay
 - e) State Report - Dr Robert Ramsay
 - f) National Scientific Conference 2000 - Dr Andrew Sinclair
 - g) National Scientific Conference 2001 - Dr Lyn Griffiths
 - h) Health and Medical Research Congress - Dr Bronwyn Kingwell
- Item 7.** General Business
- Item 8.** Directors and Office Bearers, 2001 - Dr Peter O'Loughlin

Dr Moira Clay - Honorary Secretary

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH HELD AT THE FAIRMONT RESORT, LEURA, NEW SOUTH WALES ON SUNDAY 28TH NOVEMBER 1999, COMMENCING 4pm

Item 1 - Welcome and Apologies

Dr Matthew Gillespie, ASMR President 1999, opened the meeting at 4pm and welcomed all present. Apologies were tabled from Professor John Funder, Dr J McDougal and Mrs Ruth Lilian.

Item 2 - Confirmation of Minutes of the AGM of November 14, 1998

Dr Gillespie requested confirmation of the Minutes. Dr Judy Halliday moved that the Minutes of the Meeting of November 14, 1998 be accepted as a true and accurate reflection of that meeting; seconded by Dr Peter O'Loughlin.

Item 3 - President's Report

Highlighting the major events of the year, Dr Gillespie reported first ASMR's involvement with the HMRSR. He advised that the Society had paved the way for the Review with visits to Jenny Macklin, Michael Wooldridge and an intense letter writing campaign over several months, targeting all federal politicians. A meeting with Peter Costello prior to the Federal Budget was crucial in securing the commitment to doubling of

NHMRC funding over the next five years. ASMR was the only organisation to speak to the Treasurer at this time and briefed him on many aspects of HMR. Dr Gillespie went on to thank Richard Larkins (Chair, NHMRC) and Warwick Anderson (Chair, Research Committee) for their assistance throughout the process and urged the membership to write to their MP's and Michael Wooldridge, thanking them for their efforts on behalf of HMR and encouraging them to continue and expand their support.

Turning to other aspects of the Society, Dr Gillespie spoke of the expansion of ASMR Medical Research Week, changes to the format of the NSC and the need for the Society to better publicise its achievements and activities to its own constituency, to government, the corporate sector and to the general public.

The Society, Dr Gillespie said, has acted with restraint and diplomacy in order to achieve its goals. Last year, Steve Wesselingh was urged to dismantle the granting process and slam the

politicians. It was the view of the Board of Directors that such a line of action would be counter productive.

Dr Gillespie spoke of the growing professionalism of ASMR and the need to pay attention to the public image of the Society. He illustrated recent publications and events including:

- Medical Research Week Brochures and Expositions
- Platform Document
- Positioning Document
- MRW Lecture tours by Prof. Peter Doherty and Prof. Ralph Bradshaw

The communications network is working. Dr Gillespie noted that, of the 1700 responses quoted by the HMRSR, 1200 were generated by ASMR's information network around the country.

Dr Gillespie thanked Cath West and Lexy Harris for their contributions, the Royal Australasian College of Physicians for their continuing support of ASMR and Professor Jack Martin for his accommodation of the needs of a President of ASMR. In concluding his report Dr Gillespie thanked the Directors and Executive

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for their productive assistance throughout the year.

Dr Rob Ramsay, thanked Dr Gillespie for his untiring efforts on behalf of the Society.

Item 4 - Treasurer's Report

Dr Peter O'Loughlin referred to the Financial Statements contained within the Annual Report and the operating surplus of \$4,600. Expenditure items remained fairly static. Dr O'Loughlin explained that the 'secretarial services' item appears to have increased substantially from the previous year; this is because a large portion of this expense last year was transferred to the expense item 'Budget Campaign'. The total equity as shown on the Balance Sheet, Dr O'Loughlin said, is reasonably healthy. Moving on to the State Branch reports, Dr O'Loughlin made the point that the states have a turnover of about \$300,000 per annum.

Item 5 - ASMR Research Fund

Dr Peter O'Loughlin advised that the ASMR Research Fund has been largely inactive for some

time. It currently attracts around \$3000 per annum in donations and has assets of \$31,115. The newly inaugurated ASMR Research Award of \$1000 is for a researcher to go to a distant laboratory to enhance research expertise. There were no applicants for the Award this year and it is to be advertised earlier in the year next year. It is hoped the Award will promote the ASMR Research Fund and make it grow more rapidly. The annual growth of the fund is greater than the Award.

Item 6 - Sub-committee Reports

a) Research Careers - Dr Jason Smythe

Dr Smythe reported on Enterprise Bargaining and stated that the position of the Society has been to provide information to the membership and that this is an ongoing commitment. Information from universities is reasonably easy to obtain; information from institutes is more difficult. The Committee tried unsuccessfully to obtain details of agreements through AAMRI. Individual letters were sent to members at institutes and their responses summarised in the Newsletter. Dr

Smythe thanked fellow committee members, Dr Moira Clay and Dr Peter Schofield.

b) Workplace Survey - Dr Moira Clay

Dr Clay reported on the results of the Workplace Survey which will help focus ASMR's input to government. Increased funding and the HMRSR have provided a boost but there is not the incentive required to entice our young researchers to return to Australia after post-docs.

c) Membership - Dr Carol Armour

Dr Armour reported that the membership base is stable with the usual expansion which occurs in association with MRW. Some members have chosen not to renew; Dr Armour urged those present to talk to their colleagues and encourage them to support ASMR by resubscribing. Dr Armour expressed the hope that many more members would become actively involved. Dr Rob Ramsay asked the meeting to consider the impact of each member recruiting one extra person. An expanded membership will assist in driving the activities of ASMR.

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d) Newsletter - Dr Jason Smythe

Dr Smythe reported there were three Newsletters in 1999 with the October edition being a particularly useful source of information. Dr Smythe thanked Cath West for her excellent contribution and asked the members to contact him about content. Dr Doug Brooks commented that the Newsletter is becoming a powerful tool for the Society.

e) ASMR Medical Research Week - Dr Moira Clay/Dr Rob Ramsay

Dr Rob Ramsay advised that he and Dr Clay had the job of overseeing Medical Research Week with a lot of help from other people. ASMR MRW created many opportunities for the Society in networking among other researchers and politicians; the kinds of activities occurring in MRW breaks down barriers. Committees throughout Australia conducted professional events and the Society is grateful to them. The national speaker tours, featuring in the past two years Peter Doherty and Ralph Bradshaw have been extremely successful and will be followed by Dame Bridget Ogilvie in

Y2000. The success of the week depends on the activities of the committees. Dr Gillespie reported that 'ASMR Medical Research Week' has been trade marked.

f) State Reports - Dr Matthew Gillespie

Dr Gillespie advised that the state reports are in fact encapsulated by the ASMR Medical Research Week Report. Career lectures, schools days, seminars, scientific meetings, occasional lectures, symposiums, dinners, workshops and exhibitions are the activities occurring in the states. He thanked again the committees involved.

g) National Scientific Conference 1999 - Dr Levon Khachigian

Dr Khachigian said the organisation of the meeting had been a labour of love. He thanked the LOC, Mick Gould and Cath West for their support. Dr Khachigian pointed out that the conference differs somewhat from previous years but still maintains the ASMR tradition of student participation, young investigator awards and travel subsidies. Delegates number about 240 with substantial corporate support. Dr Khachigian advised there would be a

profit for the Society and again thanked the Local Organising Committee.

h) National Scientific Conference 2000 - Dr Andrew Sinclair

Dr Sinclair addressed the meeting advising that the 39th NSC will have a theme of "Benchtop to Bedside". The conference is to be held in Melbourne at the Sofitel, November 26-28 Y2000. It is hoped there will be a greater involvement of clinicians and the public health sector. Dr Sinclair concluded by advising that information will soon be available on the Website. Dr Prue Hart requested the AWT Edwards Oration is not held as a concurrent session.

i) Health and Medical Research Congress - Dr Peter O'Loughlin.

Dr O'Loughlin advised that the Society is moving forward on the FASEB style congress. Eight affiliated societies have expressed an interest and nominated a representative for the organising committee. The meeting will be held in Melbourne in the Y2002. The Convenor is Dr Bronwyn Kingwell; Dr Wayne Phillips will represent ASMR on the committee.

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Item 7 - General Business

Dr Rob Ramsay advised that Dr John Mamo was unable to be at the meeting and called on Dr Cassandra Lawson to extend the thanks of the Society to the Director from Western Australia and hand to him the Past Director badge of ASMR. Dr Ramsay thanked Dr Mamo for his efforts, particularly in building up MRW in Western Australia. In acknowledging the contribution by Dr Judy Halliday over a number of years, Dr Ramsay expressed his thanks for her energy and wise counsel and handed to her the Past Director badge of ASMR.

Item 8 - Office Bearers 2000

Dr Rob Ramsay announced the Board of Directors and Office Bearers for Y2000 :

Dr Peter O'Loughlin
President-elect

Dr Moira Clay
Honorary Secretary

Dr Bruce Lyons
Honorary Treasurer

Dr Peter Schofield
Director, Public Affairs
Dr Andrew Sinclair
Convenor, NSC Y2000

Dr Bronwyn Kingwell
Convenor, ASMR HMR
Congress

Dr Lyn Griffiths
Convenor, NSC 2001

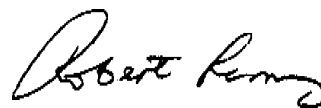
Dr Carol Armour
Co-convenor, Membership - special interest,
Public Health

Dr Cassandra Lawson
Co-convenor, Membership

Dr Jason Smythe
Newsletter, Research
Careers

In closing, Dr Ramsay acknowledged the expertise Cath West brings to the Society and expressed

his thanks for her efforts. He thanked again Dr Matthew Gillespie for his outstanding contribution and exhorted those present to do all they can to expand the membership base of the Society. There being no further business, Dr Ramsay closed the meeting at 5pm.



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Dr Rob Ramsay



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Dr Matthew Gillespie

November 6, 2000

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