

## President's Report

Sitting down to write this month's newsletter article, I reflect back on my 2014 Presidency, and the article I wrote then for the July 2014 ASMR newsletter. The pressing issue at the time was the announcement of the Medical Research Future Fund by then treasurer, Joe Hockey. The MRFF was welcomed by the health and medical research community as a positive signal by government to boost support to the sector. However, several concerns existed at the time, including how the fund would be administered and the priorities of the fund.

Since 2014, there have been several changes in the political landscape, including an election, a new Prime Minister and a new health minister, citizenship crises and 'super' weekends of elections, although the 'super' part is debatable! While there has been progress towards the administration of the MRFF, including the formation of the Australian Medical Research Advisory Board, the setting of the MRFF strategy and priorities and the announcements of several fund disbursements, there remains a significant level of concern amongst the health and medical research community about the MRFF and what it means for the critical work that they do.

As more and more announcements are made relating to MRFF disbursements, more and more health and medical researchers have expressed to me their concerns about what the MRFF actually means for them. In particular, early and mid-career researchers who are building their careers are worried that they are being left behind. The overwhelming perception is that the MRFF disbursements and funding decisions are driven by lobbying and those with access to the office of the health minister. Researchers are concerned by the lack of transparency associated with the fund from the top down. The repeated messaging has been that the MRFF is distinct from the NHMRC, and will support the end stage of research, focussing on clinical trials and research commercialisation. However, this should not exempt the fund from adhering to the principles of scientific rigour and integrity.

Underpinning any research ecosystem must be a robust, open and transparent expert review process to deliver the best outcomes and supports the integrity of scientific endeavour. Science and medical research should not be the bastion of the loudest voices or the



Dr Roger Yazbek

organisations with the deepest pockets that can employ professional lobbyists and develop glossy marketing campaigns to attract tax payer dollars.

At a recent ASMR Board workshop, we crystalized ASMRs strategy to empower research for health and well-being, with a vision for a healthy and equitable Australia. It is this vision which drives us as the unified voice for the entirety of the health and medical research workforce to ensure they are given the best research ecosystem so that they can deliver the best returns for Australia and the world.

The ASMR will continue its advocacy, without fear or favour, for the introduction of a cohesive and sustainable investment model that supports all facets of health and medical research, from the critical research supported by the NHMRC and ARC, or the translational work to be supported by the MRFF and other funds.

Over the past three months I have been fortunate to hold meetings with the office of the Minister for Rural Health, Sport & Regional Communications, Bridget McKenzie, the office of opposition health minister, Catherine King, the office of the opposition leader, Tanya Plibersek, Shadow Minister for Innovation and for Mental Health, Senator Deborah O'Neill, Australian Minister for Science, Jobs and Innovation, Zed Seselja, Minister for Health, Greg Hunt, Minister for Aged Care and Indigenous Health, Ken Wyatt and Labor MP, Terri Butler. These meetings were valuable for delivering the key messages of greater transparency of the MRFF

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Public, Political, Scientific Advocacy

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and boosting investment to the NHMRC to ensure the Australian health and medical research workforce can continue delivering global health outcomes.

As many reading this are already aware, ASMR Medallist, Professor Hope Jahren, took ill early in the ASMR MRW® tour. From everyone at ASMR, we wish Professor Jahren well in her recovery. ASMR Medical Research Week® was a tremendous celebration of health and medical research around Australia. This year we introduced a new concept to the Gala Dinners, asking EMCRs and senior researchers to summarise their research (or research career) in 3 minutes. These research snapshots were an excellent showcase of Australian research, and we will seek to continue this format at future events. I would like to extend my thanks and appreciation to all members of the State committees and ASMR Directors for their hard work in making these events happen. I also want to thank Cath West and Priscilla Diment,

who go above and beyond in the ASMR executive office, in the lead up to, and following ASMR MRW®.

The 57th ASMR National Scientific meeting will be held at the Elder Hall Music Conservatorium in Adelaide. The theme is 'Inspired Creativity: When Art Meets Science', seeking to enrich scientific thinking with new ways of seeing, understanding, and creating. The stellar program will feature this year's Edwards Orator and Director of HealthHabitat, Professor Paul Torzillo and Firkin Orator and Curator of the Art Science Museum in Singapore, Ms Honor Harger. Program highlights include the introduction of the Synapse award, the Peter Doherty Leading Light Award, Inside the Scientists Studio with Professor Josef Penninger and several opportunities for free abstract presentations. I really look forward to welcoming you all to what will be an exciting and innovative meeting.

**Dr Roger Yazbek**

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## **Building a Strong and Relevant Medical Research Ecosystem**

On the 7th July, 2018, past ASMR President (2000) Rob Ramsay gave an impassioned speech about the need to protect scientific integrity and provide long term, sustainable support for the Australian health and medical research workforce. Below is a full transcript of Professor Ramsay's speech:

Friends of medical research and my friends and colleague medical researchers it is my privilege to have a few moments to extend a discussion of where we currently stand as a community, and where we need to go. I intend to provoke a little and stimulate you into action.

I was contemplating that I have been in the lab or directing my team in the lab for 4 decades. That is, neither qualification alone nor a kind of sentence but at the very least it means I have seen a fair amount of the sector. In addition, at a minimum it gives me a horizon of experience to share a few thoughts about the medical research landscape as we near the end of a fifth of the 21st century. I think about it a lot and I deeply care about this sector. I have been a member of ASMR for a quarter of a century serving in various roles, had a lot of support from the National Health and Medical Research Council, much of it as a fellow and have served as the immediate past-president of NARF that represents fellows of the NHMRC. I am unashamedly conflicted.

My thesis for tonight is that we as a community have lost our way and focus on what has worked best and what is the most important aspect of a strong and

relevant medical research ecosystem.

The NHMRC was founded in 1936. To put that in to perspective the Liberal party was founded in 1944 by Sir Robert Gordon Menzies, the National Party in 1920 and the Labour party in 1901. The NHMRC has served as a non-partisan advisor to all sides of Government from times before the Second World War. It is a national institution with independence and relevance. In the beginning it had buggar-all resources and little influence BUT I would say up until recently it had unquestionable authority to inform the government and above all inform the Australian community on all matters of health. From vaccination, water quality, e-cigarettes and mobile phones the NHMRC has provided evidence based consensus on how legislation might be formed and for our purpose tonight how research funds might be allocated.

The vehicle for this funding is the MREA — the medical research endowment account. It is in the order of \$900 million dollars and has hardly shifted in a decade. The new kid on the block was announced in the 2014 budget by the now ambassador to the USA but then treasurer the Honourable Joe Hockey. I watch budget speeches and in this one I was stoked, delighted and relieved. Once again the coalition government had responded to a dire decline in real terms funding of medical research and the promise was big. The model for the MRFF or medical research future fund was clever and sustainable, built on the template of the future fund championed by previous treasurer Peter Costello in 2006.

It was an innovative investment strategy built upon a corpus of \$20 Billion dollars. The annual returns were hailed as \$1 billion per year although more likely to be around \$680 million more realistically based upon comparable interest rate returns. This plan has nearly reached its zenith and the government has kept its commitment to continue its growing support to reach the \$20 Billion target.

But let us pause for a moment! I would like to put this into perspective.

At the beginning of 2000 we had a big injection of medical research funding to the MREA and then again in 2006, a doubling in fact to the MREA or NHMRC. So each 10 years to keep pace with inflation and the increasing costs of medical research we need a doubling. Just to maintain stasis. Again to repeat, no increase in funding to the MREA since 2009 and by the injection of \$700 Million from the MRFF we are not even square with where funding needs to achieve stasis.

I was in the USA yesterday and two days before the head of the NCI or National Cancer Institute announced increased funding not only for the cancer institute but also the umbrella for much of medical research funding, the NIH. This was at the American Society for Clinical Oncology or ASCO. The numbers are staggering and the bipartisan support from congress impressive and reassuring. ASCO was pleased by the bolus of support for clinical trials and clinical fellowships. BUT basic research was given a very high priority by Dr Norman Sharpless backed by serious dollars. Very importantly the NIH and NCI rely upon peer review, impartial and responsive to evidence based need. The exact principles employed by the NHMRC.

By contrast the MRFF has been captured by research priority by lobby. The health minister has final say and many in the community think this is a bad thing. Let me stress this is not about who is in government but more about how decisions are made and who gets to lobby. Most of us cannot explain how or who reviews grant applications and why new initiatives have very short windows of announcement before application deadline. It is most likely all above board but transparency demands that it is seen to be above board. Short turn arounds favour the aware and prepared, but so does insider trading.

So I will wrap up. I love the concept of the MRFF but it needs to be administered with the transparency of the processes we have all contributed to over the 81 years that the evolving NHMRC has fashioned. These processes are very similar to the NIH. They are not perfect and beyond improvement. But they are trustworthy and serve the interests of the whole nation.

Professor Anne Kelso has been appointed to her second term as NHMRC CEO. I for one think that is a great thing. She is a scientist first and understands the sector very well. I trust her. However, she cannot advocate for the funding that the NHMRC needs. But



never before has basic medical research needed more funding. The focus of the MRFF is not on the pipeline of discovery. You can tell by the current and very recent calls for funding. BUT you can advocate for medical research that is peer-reviewed, based upon evidence of need and cares about basic research.

Both the NHMRC and MRFF are important to the health of Australia. However, the MREA needs a new and immediate injection to arrest the decline in a sector that I love, and a work force that is as committed to their mission as any in the economy.

I trust that the conversation will continue and mostly for the young researchers here the baton is in your hands. You are the future of medical research and you need to engage and recapture it for the future of our first world health system.

# An update on NHMRC's new grant program

## Peer review for the new grant program

At the time of writing my previous update, published in the November 2017 ASMR newsletter (<https://asmr.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/ASMR-Newsletter-November-2017.pdf>), the public consultation on peer review for the new grant program was in full swing. We received 113 submissions in response to the public consultation paper, about half from institutions and peak bodies and half from individuals. It was also extremely helpful to hear from so many of you at the public for a across the country. The informed and insightful input we received has significantly shaped our thinking on peer review for the new grant program.

The consultation process culminated in February 2018 with a one-day workshop at the NHMRC office in Canberra, facilitated by our consultants, Nous Group. The workshop brought together invited members of the health and medical research sector, representing all career stages and broad research areas. Key peak bodies were invited, with the ASMR represented by Dr Joanne Bowen, Dr Daniel Johnstone and Dr Roger Yazbek. The workshop proposed peer review models for Investigator, Synergy and Ideas Grants. These peer review models were based on input from the consultation activities, and sought to address key themes raised by the sector, namely the need for:

- appropriate expertise in peer review
- focus on outcomes and impact
- streamlined processes to facilitate long-term goals, such as shorter review cycles (to allow more than one round per year), and
- more independent assessments per application (to increase rigour and confidence).

The input of the workshop attendees has allowed NHMRC to develop peer review processes for the first round of the new grant program in 2019. I presented these peer review processes, along with the selection criteria and respective weightings, for Investigator, Synergy and Ideas Grants, and the new Clinical Trials and Cohort Studies scheme in a webinar on 26 April 2018. A video and slides are available on the NHMRC website at <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/restructure/background/april-26-2018-webinar>.

I would like to emphasise that 2019 is a starting point. As we observe how researchers respond and we gather data over the first few years of the new grant program, peer review processes will continue to evolve so that we can achieve the long-term goals of:

- streamlining peer review to reduce the burden on the research sector
- improving the confidence of the sector in peer review
- achieving more than one round per year, particularly for Ideas Grants, and
- staggering application open/close dates across schemes.

## Publication of Grant Guidelines

Considerable progress has also been made on the new grant program itself. The funding rules, now known as Grant Guidelines, have been drafted. Part of the review process to ensure the logic and clarity of these guidelines has included consultation with a group of research administrators, representing universities and medical research institutes across Australia.

At the time of writing, the Grant Guidelines have been lodged with the Commonwealth Department of Finance, to begin the Government approval process. We are on track to publish them in the third quarter of 2018.

## Change and how to prepare for it

This is a year of many changes at NHMRC. From the end of 2018, NHMRC is rolling out a new grant program, with new schemes, assessment criteria and peer review processes. These will be supported by a new grants management system (Sapphire) and informed by new Grant Guidelines, in a new template, through a new portal (GrantConnect, <https://www.grants.gov.au/>).

It is vital that you prepare for these changes. A good place to start is to ask:

- What am I eligible to apply for in 2019?
- How will the caps on grants applied for and held affect me?
- How does my research fit in with the aims of the new schemes?
- How will I address the new assessment criteria?
- What is my plan for the future?

I urge you to keep up to date on the changes — through the NHMRC website, Tracker and NHMRC's social media pages — and consider how they will affect you and your program of research.

*'Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future.'* John F. Kennedy (<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=9303>)

**Professor Anne Kelso**

**For up-to-date news and information about what is happening with ASMR —**

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# ASMR MRW® Wrap-Up

The ASMR MRW® 2018 was held in the first week of June, with hundreds of participants attending over 25 events held across Canberra, New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Western Australia and Victoria. State and regional committees conducted scientific meetings and networking events for early and mid-career researchers, encouraging and supporting

career and professional development. There were many successful and very popular outreach events, including Trivia nights, Dinner with a Scientist, Science in the Pub, Schools Quiz and student events. These activities would not have been possible without the time and effort of the state and regional committees.

**Dr David Ascher**



Dr. Evelyne Deplazes and Sarah Henn (ASMR WA) at the Goldfield Career Expo in Kalgoorlie.



ASMR MRW® NSW 2018 Trivia champions "Transcripteam" from the Garvan Institute, with the "Smarty Pants Trophy".



ASMR Director Dr Jessica Holien and Hon. Frank MacGuire M.P. at the Vic Gala Dinner.



The hardworking ASMR SA team.



ASMR MRW® SA 2018 "Dinner with a scientist".



Dr Daniel Pellicci, winner of the Commonwealth Medal for NHMRC Fellowships/Medical Research. Presented at the Melbourne Gala Dinner. Pictured with Professor Jamie Rossjohn and Professor Dale Godfrey.

# Inspired Creativity When Art Meets Science

## Firkin Orator

Honour Harger

Executive Director ArtScience Museum,  
Singapore

*Forging new synergies between art and science*



## Edwards Orator

Prof Paul Torzillo

Co-Director Healthhabitat & Clinical Professor,  
University of Sydney

*Transforming health outcomes in remote and  
developing communities through intelligent housing  
design*

## Inside the Scientist's Studio

Prof Joseph Penninger, Scientific Director of the  
Institute of Molecular Biotechnology, Vienna

*Delve into the life and mind of one of the world's  
great scientists*



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**AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH  
NATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE**

**NOVEMBER, 21-23 2018**

**ELDER HALL MUSIC CONSERVATORIUM  
ADELAIDE, SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

# ASMR 2018 NSC

## — Inspired Creativity

Science and art are complementary dualities, with greater potential for innovation as a gestalt. Historically, scientific progress has flourished alongside artistic endeavour. Consider for instance the Renaissance, the literal rebirth of enlightened Classicism, where great minds married artistic experimentation with scientific curiosity to invent new technologies and ways of thinking. Leonardo Da Vinci, the polymathic embodiment of the Renaissance, excelled as both artist and mathematician. His innovations in engineering are the result of seamless integration of his passions. Da Vinci is in good company amongst other hybrid-thinkers; many inventors were accomplished artists before they conceived of their world-changing ideas. Alexander Graham Bell was a pianist before he invented the telephone. Likewise, Samuel Morse was an artist before his telegraph fame. Similarly, many of our modern conveniences owe thanks to their artistic muses. Electronic screens are made possible by the Red-Green-Blue technology born of collaboration between painter-scientists, Ogden Rood and Wilhelm Ostwald, who were inspired by Georges Seurat, a post-impressionist painter and pioneer of Pointillism. Traditional art and crafts are evident also in medicine; lacework informed suturing techniques for surgery, and principles of origami find translation in aortic stenting devices.

In 1959, physicist-author Dr. Charles Percy Snow despaired of the growing schism between the sciences and humanities. He championed cross-disciplinary dialogue as a foundation for creative thinking and problem solving. In recent years, we have begun to dismantle the artificial divide between artistic and scientific scholarships. We recognise that the two disciplines share common instincts; of curiosity, experimentation, creativity, and storytelling. There is an understanding now that artists contribute new perspectives that can both expand and focus scientific thinking. Unlike their historical counterparts, contemporary artists are invited to participate in the scientific process of knowledge discovery, rather than simply documenting what is found. In imagining alternate futures and probing ethical quandaries, artists help scientists to situate their work in the cultural milieu and to cultivate new paradigms of thought. Reciprocally, science is a fertile playground for artists to explore new concepts and experiences in understanding the human condition.

This year, the ASMR's National Scientific Conference celebrates this mutual symbiosis between art and

science. Held at the Elder Conservatorium of Music, in the heart of Adelaide's cultural precinct, the NSC is a springboard for various cultural excursions and experiences. Titled "Inspired Creativity: Augmenting Science with the Arts", the 2018 NSC aims to explore how transdisciplinary collaboration can improve the pursuit of scientific discovery and communication, with translation into better health outcomes. We will bring together experts from a diverse range of specialities, including researchers, clinicians, policy makers, educators, and artists. From these varied voices, we hope to enrich scientific thinking with new ways of seeing, understanding, and creating.

Join us as we learn from renowned curator Ms. Honor Harger how art can be used to illuminate abstract concepts in science, and to engage and excite the wider community. We will discover how architecture can be utilised to improve non-medical determinants of health as illustrated by the experiences of Professor Paul Torzillo in the HealthHabitat project — a collaboration with the late Paul Pholeros. From Professor Don Stewart, we will hear how music can improve quality of life for Australians affected by Parkinson's disease and chronic pain. Associate Professor John McGhee will guide us as we explore the frontiers of science communication using Virtual Realities technologies. Finally, Inside the Scientist's Studio, we have the pleasure of hearing Professor Joseph Penninger speak about his life in the Venn diagram of arts and science, and how it influenced his illustrious career as scientist and innovator.

In the spirit of this year's multidisciplinary NSC, all attendees have the opportunity to submit an artwork (via the ASMR website) related to their scientific research or interests — be it poetry, music, 2D or 3D artworks. These aesthetic explorations will be exhibited at the NSC, culminating in the inaugural Synapse Award, which will be announced at the Gala Dinner. This award will be given to the artist whose work most creatively and evocatively communicates an aspect of their scientific passion.

In these politically volatile times, we believe the ASMR 2018 NSC will inspire the Australian scientific community to think laterally, and inclusively, to create solutions to current challenges in healthcare. We invite you to share with us your vision for a healthier future at the nexus of medical science and the arts.

**Dr Kathleen Wang**

### Mentoring Program

**Looking for a career boost?**

**Between 5 and 12 years post-PhD?**

ASMR's online mentoring program has 29 of Australia's leading researchers ready to help you with one-to-one professional help and advice.

Take advantage of this free program now!

<http://www.asmrfiles.org.au/mentorprogram/>

## ASMR International Research Award 2017 Awardee **Dr Erin McGillick**



As the recipient of the 2017 ASMR International Research Award, Dr Erin McGillick travelled to the Netherlands to spend 3 months working with Associate Professor Arjan te Pas and his team at the Leiden University Medical Centre.

With a background in fetal and newborn cardiorespiratory physiology, this trip provided Erin with her first experience of integrating translational research with ongoing clinical work in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). She took part in daily NICU

hand-over routines, joined the doctors on morning rounds and attended deliveries and resuscitations of newborns babies.

Erin worked as part of the team leading a clinical trial focussed on translating pre-clinical findings her laboratory's synchrotron imaging experiments to improve the transition to spontaneous breathing in the delivery room.

This work is aimed at improving clinical management guidelines in the delivery room to better aid the transition from fetal to newborn life and improve respiratory outcomes in premature babies.

During the visit, Erin was invited to present talks based on her research findings to the Department of Obstetrics and Department of Paediatrics. These discussions generated ideas with potential collaborators for future clinical trials based on her current pre-clinical work. Erin visited the Erasmus Medical Centre in Rotterdam to meet with pharmacologist collaborators to discuss details of an upcoming clinical trial protocol she is preparing.

She was also invited to attend the '9th Dresden Symposium on Delivery Room Management, Asphyxia, Hypothermia and Stem Cell Research' in Germany where she met with leading clinicians and researchers in the field.

Erin is extremely grateful to the ASMR for providing this opportunity to gain greater understanding of the translational perspective of her research as she works towards identifying mechanisms and intervention to improve newborn respiratory outcomes in the future.

### ASMR Research Awards

ASMR offers two Research Awards annually. These awards support a postgraduate student member of the ASMR nearing completion of their studies or a recently graduated

(3 years maximum) postdoctoral member to undertake a short period of research in a laboratory outside of Australia (\$5,000) or in a distal laboratory (\$2,000) within Australia.

The award specifically excludes support for conference attendance and travel for an extended period of postdoctoral studies. Applicants for these awards must have been

members of the ASMR for at least 12 months immediately preceding the year in which the Award application is to be considered.

For more information see <https://asmr.org.au/research-awards/>

Applications close 28 September, 2017

## Epidemiology in medical research

The Australasian Epidemiological Association (AEA) is pleased to join the ASMR as a new Affiliate member. The AEA has been in place for over 30 years and has over 600 members, including epidemiologists, biostatisticians, clinicians, and policy-makers. Epidemiology, literally translated from Greek, means 'the study of people'. We use the term epidemiology to mean the study of diseases or other health related events in populations. It is the study of how often diseases occur in different groups of people and why. Epidemiological information is used to plan and evaluate strategies to prevent illness and as a guide to the management of patients in whom disease has already developed.

There are many and varied pathways to becoming an

epidemiologist. They usually undergo undergraduate training in fields such as medicine, biomedical sciences, mathematics/statistics, psychology, or sociology, followed by a postgraduate degree in epidemiology, biostatistics or public health. Similarly, there is also a diverse range of jobs performed by epidemiologists, including being a 'disease detective', working in health promotion, health services, clinical fields, policy development, academia, clinical trials, health economics, global health, environmental health, and in non-profit organisations.

Epidemiologists may work in very different content areas, but underpinning epidemiology is a focus on population health and an understanding of different study designs, methods of exposure measurement

# Vale

## Professor John Coghlan

Professor John Paul Coghlan, a life member of ASMR since 1985, passed away peacefully at Caritas Christi Hospital in Melbourne in the presence of his family on 19 May 2018. There have been, and will be, much more detailed and erudite obituaries than this written about John, but it is appropriate to recall what a stalwart he was of this Society and of Australian medical research more generally.

John never served as a Director of ASMR, believing much more in the influence of the backroom, although he was instrumental through the 1970s and 80's in establishing what was then called the Public Affairs Committee (PAC) and establishing the ASMR way of influencing the political process and cross-party lines of supporting medical research funding.

John, or as he was often called JPC or Coghlan, together with John Chalmers, John Funder and Tony Basten set about ensuring that generations of politicians of all persuasions were presented with the case for supporting Australian medical research and medical research funding. For many years the ASMR Annual Scientific Conference was held in Canberra or Thredbo, so that we could access the politicians and decision makers.

John's support of medical research and young medical researchers was exemplified by his interviewing during NHMRC Grants and other Panels. He could be scathing if investigators tried to obfuscate or overinflate their egos, but he was always supportive of newcomers and young researchers.

John Coghlan's career as a medical researcher and administrator are inspirational, demonstrating that

thinking outside the box, accepting challenges and dedication to an organization are all key elements to success. Starting off as a laboratory technician to Professor RD (Pansy) Wright, in the Physiology Department at Melbourne University, John ultimately became Director of the Howard Florey Institute of Experimental Physiology and Medicine and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) at the University of Melbourne. He was without peer in Australian medical research, pioneering groundbreaking technologies such as double isotope dilution derivative assay of steroid hormones, radioimmunoassay of small peptides, and hybridization histochemistry and leading the way for introduction of the then-new technologies of genetic engineering and bioinformatics.

During my own career as a medical researcher I had the honour of being able to call John Coghlan variously my supervisor, my scientific inspiration, my boss, my mentor and my friend. He was many of these things also to two generations of Australian researchers. He was an enormously generous man, and he was known to 'hold court' at many a bar during ASMR Conferences, a court at which all were welcome.

To John's wife Marelyn, also an internationally-renowned researcher in her own right, and his family we thank you for sharing your husband, father and grandfather with so many of us over such a long time. He will be missed.

**Professor John McDougall**



and data analysis, and critical appraisal techniques. Socio-demographics, the environment, lifestyle, and infectious disease are factors that have had a long history of study and application in the field of epidemiology. In the more modern era, epidemiology has expanded to include methods related to molecular and genetic data, large linked administrative datasets, risk prediction, and technological and medical advances. Various methods can be used to carry out epidemiological investigations: surveillance and descriptive studies to study distribution; analytical studies to study determinants, and intervention

studies to evaluate new ways of diagnosing, preventing or managing disease, and to improve health systems.

A key skill of epidemiologists is the ability to lead and contribute to multi-disciplinary teams and to work within and outside the health sector (e.g. transport, climate change) to impact health. To this end, we look forward to active engagement with the ASMR membership and developing new collaborations with other affiliate members, to support the health and medical research workforce and ultimately improve the health of all Australians.

# What did the ASMR Leading Light Award Mean to Me?



Mid-career is a scary concept. I don't feel like I'm mid-way through anything and am really only just getting started. Once you start your own laboratory though, things start to change. All of a sudden there are bills, and people's salaries, and the science to worry about. For myself, it also meant that babies were thrown into the mix of the daily juggle. Yet, in contrast to my early career days, there are very few awards for a mid-career scientist to acknowledge that they are on the right track. The Leading Light Award provided me with the extra confidence that I needed, during a time in my career that often feels like total chaos, to keep moving forward. We all need to keep up our momentum, and acknowledgment from your scientific colleagues is the best motivation.

**Dr Tracy Putoczki**

## ASMR Peter Doherty Leading Light Award — Call for Applications

The ASMR invites all mid-career researchers to apply for the **2018 ASMR Peter Doherty Leading Light Award** (<https://asmr.org.au/research-awards/>). This award seeks to recognise the outstanding work of Australian mid-career researchers (5 to 12 years post-PhD). Assessment is based on the impact of a single outstanding publication in any field of health and medical research within the past 5 years. Applications consist of a first or last author publication, a statement of research impact, and a 2-page curriculum vitae. The winner will present a 10 minute seminar at the ASMR National Scientific Conference and receive a cash prize.

### Important dates:

*Applications open: 30th July*

*Applications close: 28th September*

*Winner announced: 26th October*

*Presentation of award and seminar: 23rd November*

**PETER DOHERTY** leading light award

# 2018 PETER DOHERTY LEADING LIGHT AWARD.

Recognising outstanding research in Australia over the past 5 years.

Named in recognition of Nobel Laureate, Professor Peter Doherty, whose scientific achievements and commitment to science advocacy continues to inspire the research community, this award celebrates the achievements of mid-career researchers (5-12 years post-doctoral).

The award is to be presented at the ASMR National Scientific Conference, Inspired Creativity, 21-23 November 2018.

For judging criteria and submission details please go to [www.asmr.org.au/research-awards](http://www.asmr.org.au/research-awards)

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Sub-executive

**Simone Jaenisch**

— Press Liaison, NSC 2018

**Dr Farzaneh Kordbackek**

— Membership

**Dr Brent Neumann**

— Professional Development

**Dr Kathleen Wang**

— NSC 2018, Professional Development

### Executive Office

**Catherine West**

— Senior Executive and  
Chief Financial Officer

**Priscilla Diment**

— Administrative Assistant

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## ASMR State Branch Convenors

**Dr Farzaneh Kordbacheh**

— Australian Capital Territory Convenor

**Dr Ryan Davis**

— New South Wales Co-Convenors

**Dr Kelly Avery-Kiejda**

— Newcastle Sub Committee Convenor

**Dr Lena von Schuckmann**

— Queensland Convenor

**Annabel Sorby-Adams**

— South Australian Convenor

**Dr Phillipa Taberlay**

and **Dr Brad Sutherland**

— Tasmanian Co-Convenors

**Ms Sharnel Clatworthy**

and **Dr Premila Paiva**

— Victorian Co-Convenors

**Dr Kevin Keane**

— West Australian Convenor

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## ASMR Affiliate Members

ANZAC Research Institute  
Australasian College for Emergency Medicine  
Australasian College of Dermatologists  
Australasian Epidemiological Association  
Australasian Faculty of Occupational and  
Environmental Medicine  
Australasian Gene and Cell Therapy Society  
Australasian Neuroscience Society Inc.  
Australasian Sleep Association  
Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology  
and Allergy  
Australasian Society for HIV Medicine Inc  
Australasian Society for Immunology  
Australasian Society for Infectious Diseases  
Australasian Society of Clinical and  
Experimental Pharmacologists and  
Toxicologists  
Australasian Virology Society  
Australian and New Zealand Association of  
Neurologists  
Australian and New Zealand Bone & Mineral  
Society  
Australian and New Zealand College of  
Anaesthetists  
Australian and New Zealand Obesity Society  
Australian and New Zealand Orthopaedic  
Research Society  
Australian and New Zealand Society for Blood  
Transfusion  
Australian and New Zealand Society of  
Nephrology  
Australian Atherosclerosis Society  
Australian College of Nursing  
Australian Diabetes Society  
Australian Medical Students' Association Ltd  
Australian Physiological Society  
Australian Rheumatology Association  
Australian Society for Biochemistry and  
Molecular Biology Inc  
Australian Society for Parasitology  
Australian Vascular Biology Society  
Baker Heart & Diabetes Institute  
Bionics Institute of Australia  
Brain and Psychological Sciences Research  
Group  
Burnet Institute  
Cardiac Society of Australia and New Zealand  
Children's Cancer Institute Australia  
Children's Medical Research Institute  
Deeble Institute for Health Policy Research  
Ear Science Institute Australia  
Endocrine Society of Australia  
Griffith Institute for Drug Discovery (GRIDD)  
Fertility Society of Australia  
Haematology Society of Australia and New  
Zealand  
High Blood Pressure Research Council of  
Australia  
Human Genetics Society of Australasia

Hudson Institute of Medical Research  
Illawarra Health and Medical Research Institute  
Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation  
Institute of Mind & Behavioural Sciences  
Kolling Institute of Medical Research  
Lions Eye Institute Limited  
Mater Research Institute  
National Association of Research Fellows  
Nutrition Society of Australia Inc.  
Ophthalmic Research Institute of Australia  
Paramedics Australasia  
Perinatal Society of Australia and New Zealand  
Queensland Eye Institute & Prevent Blindness  
Foundation  
Menzies Health Institute Queensland  
Royal ANZ College of Obstetricians and  
Gynaecologists  
Royal Australasian College of Surgeons  
Royal Australian and New Zealand College of  
Radiologists  
Royal Australian and New Zealand College of  
Psychiatrists  
Royal Australasian College of Physicians  
Royal Australian College of General  
Practitioners  
Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia  
Society for Free Radical Research (Australasia)  
Society for Reproductive Biology  
Society of Mental Health Research  
Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand  
Transplantation Society of Australia and New  
Zealand  
University of Queensland —Diamantina  
Institute  
Westmead Millennium Institute for Medical  
Research

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## ASMR Associate Members

Arthritis Australia  
Australian Alzheimer's Research Foundation  
Australian Red Cross Blood Service  
Australian Respiratory Council  
Clifford Craig Foundation Limited  
Cure Cancer Australia  
Foundation for High Blood Pressure Research  
Haemophilia Foundation of Australia  
Heart Foundation of Australia  
Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation  
Lupus Association of NSW  
MS Research Australia  
Muscular Dystrophy Association Inc  
Scleroderma Association of NSW Inc  
Queensland Government  
William Angliss Charitable Fund

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## ASMR Supporting Members

CSL Limited  
Research Australia