

President's report

I wish to begin this newsletter article by acknowledging the tragic events in Christchurch, New Zealand on the 15th March. The thoughts of everyone at ASMR are with those affected by this abhorrent and senseless act of violence.

We cannot allow hate, fear, division and violence to fracture and break us. Many of the victims in Christchurch, like so many migrants around the world, were fleeing war and violence in their country of birth, seeking refuge, peace and acceptance in a foreign land, leaving behind homes, possessions and families.

Humankind has made so much progress in such diverse areas as technology, modern medicine, education, food, and even space exploration. These advances are only possible because of the capacity for humans to come together under a common goal of advancing humanity.

As the great Carl Sagan once said, *"we are all made from star stuff"*. At our core, we are all but a collection of atoms that have somehow coalesced into living, breathing beings that can think, feel and create. If the age of the universe is scaled into seconds, then the universe is approximately 444 years old and each

human exists for about 80 seconds. Imagine if we all used that 80 seconds to do something great.

I would like to finish with an excerpt of the speech given by New Zealand Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern immediately after the attack, "we represent diversity, kindness, compassion, a home for those who share our values, refuge for those who need it. And those values, I can assure you, will not, and cannot, be shaken"

Election 2019

As we rapidly approach the 2019 Federal Election, widely anticipated to be held in May, I can assure you that the ASMR will continue to advocate strongly on behalf of our members and the wider health and medical research sector. The ASMR pre-election campaign will focus on two central points:

1. A long term and sustainable investment model for health and medical research that represents 3% of total health expenditure in Australia. An investment model for the health and medical research sector that directly links investment to 3% of total health expenditure will ensure that the health and medical research workforce is always positioned to address the



Dr Roger Yazbek

future health challenges that Australia is facing. This is a model that has been supported by more than 20 years of independent modelling from Deloitte Access Economics, published in reports commissioned by the ASMR, and will deliver significant health and economic returns, whilst providing workforce security.

2. Protecting the integrity of peer review, and ensuring transparency for all research funding decisions, including the disbursements

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The ASMR is also calling for legislative change to the medial research future fund (MRFF) to protect the integrity of peer review and ensure transparency over all disbursement and funding decisions associated with the MRFF. Science and medical research should not be the bastion of the loudest voices or the organisations with the deepest pockets that can employ professional lobbyists and develop glossy marketing campaigns to influence the minister. Health and medical research does not exist to support the pork barrelling efforts of any Government and ASMR will continue to campaign for change.

The ASMR will soon be calling on its members to contact candidates in their local electorates in a pre-election campaign to protect to secure the future health and well-being of Australians. This election represents an opportunity for Australia to position itself at the forefront of knowledge, discovery and innovation, and the ASMR will ensure that politicians from all sides know that it is through

empowering research that we will achieve a *healthy and equitable Australia*.

ASMR Medical Research Week®

ASMR Medical Research Week® and the ASMR Medallist Tour are flagship events of the society, representing an opportunity for the public to acknowledge the work of health and medical researchers. More importantly, it is an opportunity for researchers to engage with members of the non-scientific community (including politicians), informing and educating about how their research will change health care.

I am so pleased to announce that the 2019 ASMR Medallist is renowned science journalist, Dr Elizabeth Finkel.

Dr Finkel began her career as a biochemist, and was a recipient of the ASMR Champion-Ma-Playoust Award in 1981 at the ASMR National Scientific Conference in Canberra. After completing her PhD, Dr Finkel undertook a post-doc at the University of California, San Francisco, before returning to Melbourne,

where she turned to freelance journalism, where she regularly contributed to the American magazine, *Science*, *The Age* and ABC radio's *Science Show*. Dr Finkel is one of the founders of *Cosmos* magazine, and her work for *Cosmos* has been recognised by four Publishers Australia Excellence Awards. She is the author of *Stem Cells: Controversy on the Frontiers of Science*, which won a Queensland Premier's Literary Award in 2005; and of *The Genome Generation*, published in 2012. Dr Finkel has received several awards for her work, and in 2011 she was named the National Press Club's *Higher Education Journalist of the Year*. In 2015, Dr Finkel won the Department of Industry and Science *Eureka Prize for Science Journalism* for her article *A Statin a day* — the first print article to win the award in 11 years.

I look forward to travelling around the country with Dr Finkel during ASMR Medical Research Week®, where she will speak at gala dinners around the country from 30th May – 7th June. Details, including ticket information is available on the ASMR website.

Dr Roger Yazbek

Vale Bruce Hancock

The ASMR would like to acknowledge the passing of Bruce Hancock. Bruce, a much loved member of the Bruce Hancock Trio, has been playing at ASMR SA MRW® Gala Dinner for over 10 years. He will be missed.



2019 ASMR Medallist: Dr Elizabeth Finkle

Dr Elizabeth Finkel is an award winning Australian science journalist, with a background in research science. Dr Finkel is not a stranger to the ASMR. In 1982, she was the Champion Playoust Ma Award winner, an award presented for the best

contribution for an original research presentation at the National Scientific Conference by an early career research member. Now, in 2019, ASMR recognises Dr Finkels' impressive contributions to science communication as the ASMR Medallist.

Liberal Party of Australia

Health and Medical Research Statement

Hon Greg Hunt MP, Minister for Health

The Australian Government's support for health and medical research is not just a promise, it's a proven fact.

As one of the four pillars of the Government's Long-Term National Health Plan, health and medical research is one of the best ways forward to deliver better health care for future generations. Through investment in health and medical research the best testing, diagnosis, treatments and technologies can improve the health of all Australians.

We have backed our belief in Australian research with actions. We are making record investments, securing future funding, and forging a new era of research collaboration, clinical trials, and translation into clinical applications and commercial products.

This investment will produce better health for ourselves and our children and power up our medical, biotechnology and pharmaceutical sector — creating jobs, economic growth, and exports.

Already, we have committed \$7 billion for health and medical research over the six years from 2016–17. It includes funding through the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) and the Biomedical Translation Fund (BTF).

The MRFF is, of course, a centrepiece of our policies for medical and health research. The single largest boost in health and medical research funding in Australia's history, it is a capital-preserved endowment fund, which means only the interest on the capital is used.

It will mature at \$20 billion in 2021–22, providing a sustainable, ongoing source of funding for vital medical research.

Its impact is already being felt. More than \$2 billion in disbursements from the MRFF has been announced to date.

Decisions on MRFF funding are made by the Government in line with the Australian Medical Research and Innovation Strategy 2016–2021 and current related Priorities 2018–20. These were developed by the MRFF's independent Australian Medical Research Advisory Board, chaired by Professor Ian Frazer AC. I thank the Australian Society for Medical Research for your engagement with the national consultation process that informed the current MRFF Priorities.

Current investments from the MRFF are focused on four themes: patients, researchers, missions and translation. Together they aim to improve patient care, directly support our world class research talent, harness national research efforts to achieve breakthroughs in key areas, and maximise returns on investment by translating research to clinical practice.

Six significant health research missions have so far received funding from the MRFF:

- the Genomics Health Futures Mission — \$500 million over 10 years to help save or transform the lives of more than 200,000 Australians through research into better testing, diagnosis and treatment;

- the Australian Brain Cancer Mission — over \$100 million worth of coinvestment between the Australian Government and philanthropy to beat brain cancer, double survival rates in 10 years, and improve patients' quality of life;
- the Million Minds Mental Health Research Mission — \$125 million investment to assist a million people who might otherwise not be part of mental health research and clinical trials to access new approaches to diagnosis, treatment and recovery;
- the Dementia, Ageing and Aged Care Research Mission — \$185 million over 10 years, including \$10 million to the Clem Jones Centre for Ageing Dementia Research at the Queensland Brain Institute for research into Alzheimer's disease;
- the Mission for Cardiovascular Health — \$220 million over 10 years, to tackle the nation's two biggest killers, heart disease and stroke, inclusive of a dedicate \$20 million to defeat congenital heart disease; and
- the Indigenous Health Research Fund — \$160 million over 10 years, focussing on ending avoidable blindness, deafness and rheumatic heart disease, which includes an initial \$35 million towards the development of a vaccine to eliminate rheumatic heart disease.

Another of the Government's important innovations to bolster the research sector is the Biomedical Translation Fund (BTF).



Hon Greg Hunt MP, Minister for Health

The Government is contributing \$250 million to the BTF, which has been at least matched by private investment. The resulting \$500 million will be used to fast track investment in late-stage medical innovations with commercial potential.

It specifically targets the 'second valley of death' along the research pipeline — the phase in development where research ideas can fail due to lack of funding.

The BTF will create new jobs and develop innovative businesses delivering breakthrough drugs, medical devices and clinical therapies to improve health around the world.

The MRFF works closely with the BTF and also with the NHMRC. The NHMRC remains the nation's leading health expert body, providing research funding, and setting standards and guidelines for health and ethics.

The NHMRC makes grants from its Medical Research Endowment Account. The Government is committed to increasing this account over the forward estimates in line with indexation. Over the four years from 2018–19, this means a total of \$3.4 billion has been committed to the NHMRC. This will provide more than \$800 million a year for competitive, peer-reviewed research grants. The NHMRC last year reviewed the structure of its grants programs to ensure they achieved their aims. Applications for funding under the reformed grant program opened in late 2018, for peer review in 2019 and funding from 2020. NHMRC's grants are approved by the Minister for Health, as required by its legislation. The NHMRC recommends funding based on the outcomes of impartial and independent assessment of grant applications by expert peer reviewers.

Overarching these research funding bodies is the Government's Health and Medical Industry Growth Plan, announced in the 2018 Budget. This plan commits \$1.3 billion over 10 years via a suite of MRFF programs to stimulate the research pipeline from discovery to commercialisation.

The largest is the Genomics Health Futures Mission, which will ensure Australia's global leadership in transformational applied precision medicine.

The Growth Plan will cement Australia's place as a world leader in health and medical research and technology development and inject an estimated \$18 billion into the Australian economy.

Through all of these initiatives, the Government has shown its absolute faith in our health and medical researchers. Our commitment is rock solid, it's for the long term, and it will build a healthier and more prosperous Australia.

Calendar of Events

Australasian Society for Infectious Diseases 2019 Annual Scientific Meeting
May 16-19, 2019,

Darwin Convention Centre

Call for Abstracts opens early October 2018

<https://www.asid.net.au/meetings/asid-annual-scientific-meeting-2019>

2019 ASMR MRW® events

ACT

Wednesday, 5 June Medallist Address to the National Press Club
 Thursday, 6 June New Investigator Forum 2019
 Thursday, 6 June Sundowner Event 2019

New South Wales

Friday, 3 May Trivia night
 Friday, 31 May Annual Scientific Meeting
 Monday, 3 June Scientific meeting — Newcastle
 Tuesday, 4 June Gala Dinner
 Tuesday, 4 June Gala Dinner — Newcastle
 Thursday, 6 June High school careers night — Newcastle
 Friday, 7 June High School Career Day
 Friday, 20 Sept Early Career Development Day

Queensland

Friday, 31 May Gala Dinner

South Australia

Monday, 3 June Gala Dinner
 Wednesday, 5 June Annual Scientific Meeting

Tasmania

Thursday, 30 May Scientific meeting and post-graduate student event
 Thursday, 30 May Gala Dinner

Victoria

Tuesday, May 21 Undergraduate Tertiary Careers Evening
 Tuesday, 21 May Postgraduate Tertiary Careers Evening
 Friday, 31 May Student Research Symposium
 Thursday, 6 June Gala Dinner

Western Australia

Friday, 31 May Quiz night
 Friday, 7 June 2019 Networking event at Science on the Swan
 Friday, 7 June 2019 Gala Dinner

Australian Labor Party Health and Medical Research Position

Hon Catherine King MP

I'm a passionate supporter of medical research. That's because I know that every investment we make in medical research is an ultimately an investment in the health of all Australians. And improving the health of all Australians is core business for Labor — and it will be my main focus if I become Health Minister this year.

We must give our world-class researchers the resources and support they need if we want them to achieve that next big breakthrough. There's no telling what that breakthrough might be — but if it saves or improves Australian lives, it will have been worth the money.

It almost goes without saying that Labor will maintain the National Health and Medical Research Council and the Australian Research Council. But Labor is also absolutely committed to the Medical Research Future Fund. I have in the past expressed concerns about the implementation of the MRFF — particularly its governance and funding.

The current Government's funding projections relied of course on the savage health cuts in the 2014 Budget — many of which were opposed by Labor and blocked in the Senate. Unfortunately, the Government is yet to outline a credible alternative pathway to capital of \$20 billion and disbursements of \$1 billion a year. But the MRFF is still making large and important investments — and that will continue under a Shorten Labor Government.

My concerns about MRFF governance are also well known. There is no peer review and no independent

oversight in the enabling legislation at all, which gives the Government of the day enormous discretionary power over spending. But that does not dent my overall commitment to the MRFF.

In my recent National Press Club address I spoke about the need for long-term health system reform. We need to make some big changes to deal with some of the challenges we face, like an ageing population. But equally, Labor will not make change of change's sake. When our opponents have good ideas we intend to build on them, rather than trash them. The MRFF is one such idea.

I've also said before that we should be guided by the Australian Medical Research and Innovation Strategy for 2016 to 2021. I particularly want to endorse the Strategy's objectives to 'embed research evidence in health care policy and in practice improvement' and to 'position the research sector and health system to tackle future challenges'.

As our health care system faces new and growing challenges, the MRFF is an opportunity to drive innovation across prevention, primary care, hospitals and beyond. I don't see health and medical research as a silo or a pillar — I see it as work that should be embedded across our health system.

On that theme: earlier this year I announced Labor will invest \$21 million in a new Health Futures Hub in Melbourne. A partnership between Monash University and Peninsula Health, the Hub will focus on designing and delivering new, better integrated models of care for some of the region's most vulnerable people. Successful models could then be scaled up and rolled out across Australia. The

Hub will focus particularly on improving outcomes in aged care, mental health and addiction — pressing issues both in the local area and across the nation. The project will bring together researchers, clinicians, health system leaders, consumers and students to generate transformative solutions to these problems. I'd love to see more projects like this, in which researchers are working closely with those who actually deliver programs and services on the ground.

We've also already made a range of more specific commitments to research. Just a few weeks ago we announced we will provide a record boost for Type 1 diabetes research by investing \$50 million in clinical trials and supporting our best and brightest researchers in their quest for a cure for Australian children. Last year we announced we will provide \$12 million towards Ovarian Cancer Australia's National Action Plan for Ovarian Cancer Research — potentially preventing 2500 cases of breast cancer and 800 cases of ovarian cancer. We have also announced we will boost research into advanced breast cancer and brain cancer, with a \$20 million investment in the Olivia Newton-John Cancer Research Institute. Just imagine if each of these research efforts bore fruit. Imagine we made major breakthroughs in the fights against juvenile diabetes, ovarian cancer, breast cancer and brain cancer. That would save and improve many thousands of Australian lives.

We will have more to say about medical research as the May election nears. And rest assured that if we are lucky enough to form government after that election our commitment to medical research will be rock solid.



Hon Catherine King MP

Australia Day Honours

The ASMR would like to congratulate all the Prominent Medical Researchers who were recognised for their contribution in this year's Australia Day Honours. In particular, we would like to congratulate current ASMR members who received AO honours.

ASMR Medallist Tour: 21 years on and counting

**Kieran F. Scott PhD.,
ASMR President, 1997**

MRW2019 marks the 21st anniversary of the inaugural ASMR medallist tour, an annual event which remains an important feature of ASMR's advocacy for medical research and its benefits to Australia.

The tour was established in 1997 with our first medallist planned to tour Australia in association with the 1998 Medical Research Week. As with all ASMR initiatives, this idea had been developing over several years prior to its implementation and was seen as a way to raise, on a national level, the profile of scientists and physicians working in research — to put them in contact with the several audiences that ASMR addresses and in turn to put these audiences in contact with the women and men that make the discoveries. The tour would leverage the existing advocacy mechanisms that ASMR had established over decades to address the general public, through the then print, radio and television media, our own research constituency through ASMR's well-developed network of State branches and policy makers at both Federal and State level through ASMR's direct engagement with them. The tour idea, on all levels, seemed to fit well with ASMR's capabilities and importantly, the broader strategy at that time to significantly raise Federal Government investment in our research, the doubling of the NHMRC budget.

We were fortunate that this timing coincided with the award of the 1996 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine to our own Prof. Peter Doherty for work done in collaboration with Prof. Rolf Zinkernagel at

the John Curtin School at ANU. If you search for "Peter Doherty Nobel Prize" and go to his page on the Nobel Prize website, amongst a lot of very interesting information, you see the citation for the prize reads "for their discoveries concerning the specificity of the cell mediated immune defence.", discoveries that are credited with opening a new field of immunology that has led to new ways of understanding and treating diseases from arthritis to cancer, the impact of which, can only be truly appreciated with the passage of time. From my perspective, the intention was to create a national platform where working scientists and physicians had an opportunity to demonstrate through their achievements the benefits of their work to the broader community. There could have been no better example of this than our newly awarded Nobel Laureate. It was hoped that such a high-profile speaker would not only capture the imagination of the general public, but also provide direct evidence to policy makers of the need for and benefits of a sustained investment into a broad-based research enterprise.

In thinking about its immediate impact on medical research advocacy, the tour was a timely tool in ASMR's strategy to double Government investment in the NHMRC. The success of the 1998 medallist tour resulted in the invitation of Prof. Ralph Bradshaw, a prominent biochemist in the growth factor field in the United States, who from 1977–1978 had been a visiting fellow at the Florey Institute in Melbourne. Importantly in the late '90s, Prof. Bradshaw was a key advocate for the doubling of the NIH budget from 1996 to 2003 ([https://www.nytimes.com/1996/01/16/us/health-research-once-facing-big-budget-cut-](https://www.nytimes.com/1996/01/16/us/health-research-once-facing-big-budget-cut-gets-an-increase.html)



Kieran F. Scott

gets-an-increase.html) from US\$13 billion to US\$26 billion. Prof Bradshaw's medallist tour provided a platform in every state and in Canberra for the case to be made for the benefits of medical research in Australia that ultimately led to the first doubling of the Health and medical research budget from A\$1.49 billion in 2000/2001 to A\$3.09 billion by 2007/2008 (<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/1753-6405.12366>).

The medallist tour has evolved since those early days, as the landscape in which our health and medical research enterprise operates has changed, due in no small part to the sustained efforts of the Society. What was initially envisaged was an opportunity for the active scientific community to stand up and say, "Hey look at what we achieve!" to make the case for sustained investment in what we do. That vision grew in impact almost immediately from those early days. Key evidence of this is that

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from the 2001 medallist tour, the medallist has been invited every year to speak to a National Audience at the National Press Club (https://cdn.npc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/speaker_archives/speakers_2000s.pdf). Importantly, the advocacy championed by ASMR for over sixty years is a role now shared by many. As an example, I'm old enough to remember when Research Australia, formed at the turn of this century, was simply an idea, as was the Australian Association for Medical Research Institutes, both now key organisations representing the interests of health and medical research from their own unique perspectives.

Research is now a "thing" in the annual reports of an increasing number of health districts as it is seen as an essential driver of improved health outcomes. The advent of social media has provided opportunities for the entire community to contribute to the research enterprise in ways that were never even imagined when the tour began; from identifying areas of research need through patient advocacy, to crowd funding research, let alone the communication opportunities these technologies provide for the dissemination of information. In response to all this, the background and experience of ASMR medallists over the years has increased in diversity. So much

so that the recently announced 2019 medallist, Dr Elizabeth Finkel, has had several interlinked careers, first as a scientist working in early models of gene therapy in flies, winning the ASMR's own Champion Ma Playoust award and later as a science journalist, who in accepting the nomination "...was thinking I needed a forum to get the message out: this is where blue sky research leads. Now I have one".

It is clear that this year's ASMR medallist tour promises to send a message that remains as important and as timely as any message that has been delivered by our distinguished medallists over the last 21 years.

Mentoring Program — Looking for a boost?

Between 5 and 12 years post-PhD?

ASMR has developed a web-based Career Mentor Linkage Program where mid career ASMR members have the opportunity to be matched to a career mentor, free of charge.

ASMR's online mentoring program has 29 of Australia's leading researchers ready to help you with one-to-one professional help and advice. The aim of the program is to provide ASMR members with the opportunity to be mentored in career development. The scheme fits well with ASMR's mission to promote and foster suitable career structures for persons engaged in medical research at the professional level.

"I can not speak highly enough of the mentor service provided by ASMR. It is so important for early career researchers to have a person, independent from their existing research group, to be a champion and provide constructive feedback on their approach to their career."
— Associate Professor Joanne Bowen



Associate Professor Joanne Bowen

Take advantage of this free program now!

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

National Early Career Researchers Survey

Challenges faced by early career researchers in the sciences in Australia

Katherine Christian, from Federation University Australia, is conducting a research project exploring challenges faced by ECRs in the sciences in Australia. The purpose of this research is to gather data about work-life experiences for ECRs and it is expected that the results will inform recommendations for changes to the work environment for these researchers in order to increase their job satisfaction and the likelihood of them continuing to work in research in Australia.

This project is being conducted under the supervision of Dr Carolyn Johnstone, Federation University Australia. For more information regarding the study, please contact Dr Johnstone on 03 5327 9585.

If you are interested in participating in the study, please complete the online questionnaire (<https://limesurveys.federation.edu.au/index.php/546388?lang=en>)

2018 ASMR Peter Doherty Leading Light Award Winner Dr Ivan Poon

In humans, billions of cells will die daily via apoptosis (a form of programmed cell death) in various organs as part of normal turnover as well as in pathological settings. During apoptosis, dying cells can disassemble into smaller membrane-bound extracellular vesicles called apoptotic bodies.

The formation of apoptotic bodies has been proposed to aid efficient removal of apoptotic cells, and to carry biomolecules such as protein and RNA to facilitate intercellular communication. Thus, apoptotic cell disassembly is thought to be a key process downstream of apoptotic cell death.

Surprisingly, the mechanism underpinning apoptotic body formation, as well as the role of this process in disease settings is poorly defined. To address this fundamental problem in the field, I have established a laboratory at La Trobe Institute for Molecular Science (LIMS) to:

- i. identify molecular regulators of apoptotic body formation,
- ii. determine the role of apoptotic cell disassembly in physiological and pathological conditions, and
- iii. discover drugs that could manipulate apoptotic body formation and examine the potential of targeting the apoptotic cell disassembly process in disease settings.

In the last 5 years, we have made a number of breakthroughs, including the discovery of a new type of string-like membrane protrusion (coined as apoptopodia, 'feet of death') that is formed exclusively during apoptosis to regulate cell disassembly, and the role of pannexin 1 channels and vesicular trafficking in this novel process.

Furthermore, we have also performed the world-first drug screen to identify drugs that could modulate apoptotic cell disassembly, resulting in clinically relevant knowledge (e.g. off-target effects of certain FDA approved drugs). Notably, the *2018 ASMR Peter Doherty Leading Light Award* was awarded for my work on the discovery of apoptopodia formation during cell death, the molecular machinery that regulates this newly described step of cell death, and how a commonly used antibiotic (trovafloxacin) unexpectedly modulates this process.

I am extremely honored to be the recipient of this award from ASMR. There are many challenges for mid-career researchers like myself, such as maintaining sufficient funding for the growing lab, mentoring a productive group, and devising new research directions. This award gives me great motivation to continue to make key advances in the field with my amazing team.



Leading Light Award

The ASMR Peter Doherty Leading Light Award seeks to recognise the outstanding work of mid-career researchers (5- to 12-year post-doctoral) in Australia.

Assessment is based on the impact of a single piece of work, including advances in knowledge, improvements in clinical practice or broader policy changes.

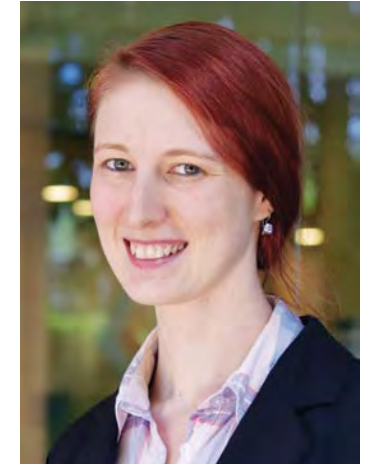
Applications from all fields of health and medical research are encouraged, but applicants must be an ASMR member at the time of application. For more information, see: <https://asmr.org.au/research-awards/>

2018 ASMR Research Award International Award Winner **Dr Nicole Van der Burg**

Only a few, short weeks after submitting my PhD thesis for examination I was on an airplane to spend the next few weeks acting "PostDoc" in a one of the best research laboratories of the world for skin disease research. I was possibly still in shock that I had won the ASMR travel award at this point and promptly forgot to pack all of my Euro's for the trip! None-the-less, I was on my way and ready to show Berlin what Australian researchers could accomplish in just a mere three weeks. The project I was able to begin had been forming in the back of my mind since the first year of my PhD. After a quick 5 hour meeting in Berlin to meet Prof Maurer's lab in 2018, I became determined to make this project happen. We began to skype and email back and forth discussing possible grants and timelines but it wasn't until I arrived in Berlin on the ASMR award that

the project really started to form. While attending weekly meetings with clinicians and researchers alike, I not only confirmed the need for my project idea to succeed but also gained invaluable additional ideas from multiple experts in the field. Unfortunately with a team size over 100 people I didn't manage to meet everyone, however, it didn't take long before I was roping in the clinicians to survey their patients about my new skin sampling device ideas. The preliminary results from this is already impacting the way we are approaching the project. I was also able to jump into the lab and assist two students with their projects and in return learn more about the current (and painful!) skin sampling devices available. To make the most of my time there, I organised a collaboration day with a small company from Sweden who are highly interested in joining myself and the Maurer lab to

get my project off the ground. This led to a drafted IP contract between the research group and the company that is soon to be signed. In addition, by being able to sit next to the senior postdoc whom I am working closely with for my project, we were able to constantly bounce ideas off each other and begin the long process of applying for half a million pounds to support us for the next two years. After returning to Australia, the email trails have been flowing well and everyone is working together much better after meeting one another. I couldn't have asked for a better timed award to make this opportunity happen and I would like to personally thank ASMR for this opportunity to further my research career. Now we wait with bated breath for each funding announcement, but the difference is we are all waiting together.



Dr Nicole Van der Burg

ASMR Research Awards

The awards support a postgraduate student member of the ASMR nearing completion of their studies, or a recently graduated (three 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. Applicants for these awards must have maintained ASMR membership for more than 12 months prior to applying.

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

EBBS & ASMR NSC 2019 FLOWS
Fremantle, November 20-21

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
 Menzies Health Institute Queensland
 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 Foundation
 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

ASMR Associate Members

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 Australian Alzheimer's Research Foundation
 Australian Red Cross Blood Service
 Australian Respiratory Council
 Clifford Craig Foundation Limited
 Cure Cancer Australia

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