

ANNUAL REPORT

November 2009

The Australian Society for Medical Research
ACN 000 599 235 ABN 18 000 599 235
145 Macquarie Street, Sydney 2000

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT 2009

As a consequence of Australia's rapidly changing political and economic landscape, it seems that the HMR community, is faced on a yearly basis with the unsettling and inevitable question; Will NHMRC funding be maintained or cut?

ASMR is vigilant in seeking high level advise of future NHMRC investment, with this year being no exception, and there being a real danger that NHMRC funding may be cut. Having said that, if there is no further increase in NHMRC investment in this up coming election budget, funding will be static, which means in real terms NHMRC funding will decline.

The apparent immediate impacts will be undoubtedly be decreases in NHMRC grant success rates which will impact job security and career opportunities while long range, detrimental impacts will be on our nations' world placement, health and economic returns and loss of momentum of discovery.

The election budget provides a valuable opportunity to engage politicians and articulate the benefits of health and medical research. You too can influence policy by writing letters. Letter writing campaigns have worked in the past and they will work again and that's why ASMR has embarked on a such a campaign to call the stakeholders, researchers, special interest groups and the public to take action.

The request is of the Federal Government to maintain NHMRC budget with a modest increase. ASMR believe this is a responsible and achievable request given the current fiscal constraints of the nation.

The other facet of engagement is to educate and inform our policy makers of the importance of health and medical research has to the health and wealth of the nation but also that our HMR workforce is valuable investment in human capital. Using our best and brightest, better and smarter will not only help underpin the needs of the nation but also and set the nation on a course

for achieving a sustainable, affordable health system all Australian's can enjoy.

The Society urges you to take 3 actions:



Dr Sarah Meachem

- * write a letter
- * meet with your local Member of Parliament and
- * invite them to your organisation to showcase some home grown discoveries

Useful resource material is available from the website (http://www.asmr.org.au/campaign.html). For example, Do you need to confirm who your Member of Parliament is? Need to brush up on your skills in visiting your Member of Parliament (see Tips, Dos & Don'ts). Look at some example letter, get the facts, and use some home grown Aussie examples of research that's making a difference.

In terms of the HMR workforce, it has been an outstanding contributor to the health and wellbeing of Australians and as a sector highly productive, with Access Economics reporting HMR provide 117% on returns, exceeded only by the mining and wholesale sectors.

The international standing and significance of Australia's HMR is unquestioned as shown by the consistently high output of fundamental research and translational outcomes in a cost-efficient manner. Australian HMR contributes 3.05% of the total world HMR R&D from only 1.1% of the expenditure and delivers twice the OECD average on a per capita basis - with a strikingly high international standing by citation and our translational outcomes are impressive in global terms.

President's Report continued

With Dr Elizabeth Blackburn, the first Australian female laureate, being the most recent recipient of a Nobel Prize in medicine and physiology, takes Australia's tally to six. Australia's HMR sector truly does punch way above its weight on the international stage. Surprisingly this is the largely the only quantitative data available on the HMR workforce.

In line with ASMR's responsible approach to request funding increases with amounts clearly justified and aligned with strategic initiatives, health issues and outcomes is crucial. Unsubstantiated funding requests risk diluting efforts to ensure a sustainable and robust HMR into the future.

To this end, ASMR identified the need for quantitative data and future workforce and economic modelling to understand the dynamics of the Australian health and medical research workforce over the next decade and commissioned Deborah Schofield, Associate Professor and Director of Research Northern Rivers University Department of Rural Health (NRUDRH), School of Public Health, Faculty of Medicine, University of Sydney to conduct the study.

The report was launched to a capacity crowd of policy makers at Parliament House in October 2009.

The key findings of the study are;

* A recruitment of human capital is needed to maintain our world class health and medical research workforce over the next decade. The sector must attract 30% more PhD or equivalently qualified researchers with a proportionate increase in support staff.

Specifically 5700 PhD qualified persons would need to graduate and be willing to work in the sector by 2019. Of these 4000 would be replacing retiring personnel, while another 1700 are needed to account for the growth in the Australian population. The associated cost of this has been estimated to be in the order of 810M (2009 dollars) dollars.

* If Australia is to have the most highly educated, best skilled and highly trained HMR sector in the world, the number of qualified researchers (PhD or equivalent) would need to expand 2.5 fold to be on par with knowledge based workforces such as the European workforce.

Australia would require about 5,700 additional HMR PhD graduates to be comparable with US levels, about 22,800 to be comparable with German levels and about 38,000 to be comparable with Switzerland.

For all the key figures of the report please visit http://www.asmr.org.au/campaign.html

To sustain and expand the HMR workforce would require the development, design and implementation of:

- a long ranging commitment to long term, sustainable investment guided by informed, innovative and visionary policy reform,
- 2) a viable 'long lasting' career structure which will attract and retain our best, brightest, most productive human capital, and
- expansion of international partnerships and enhance capacity through development of a regional union. For example, Asia-Pacific.

This study is timely and valuable report on planning the HMR Workforce to 2019. The Rudd Government is committed to health care reform and no one can deny that the HMR workforce is a crucial element in the understanding, prevention and cure of disease.

The data provided will undoubtedly be an important tool for government and in our quest to develop new and better policy to meet the future health needs of the nation.

ASMR thanks the affiliate members for their kind support of this study.

On a more informal note, in addition to the campaign and completing the workforce study, this year your board has chartered a 10 year ambitious, plan of scale for HMR sector, initiated the first web-based mentor match up scheme free for ASMR member mid career researchers and continued its core business of fostering career development and advocating HMR by public outreach events of ASMR's Medical Research Week ®.

It has been what I would describe as an extremely productive year, and reproductive, with three of your executive directors having babies. Which just goes

President's Report continued

to show that one can have their cake and eat it too! Research, Advocacy and Family!!!

It has been my pleasure serving you as the President, an appointment I have wholeheartedly loved!

Thank you and best wishes.

Dr Sarah Meachem November 2009

ASMR thanks Major National Sponsors of ASMR Medical Research Week®, 2009





National Award Sponsor



Agenda - Annual General Meeting

Hotel Grand Chancellor, Hobart 16th November 2009, 10:00-11:00am

- Item 1. Welcome and Apologies, Dr Sarah Meachem
- Item 2. Confirmation of Minutes, 19th November, 2008, Dr Sarah Meachem
- Item 3. President's Report, Dr Sarah Meachem
- Item 4. Treasurer's Report, Dr Alison Butt
- Item 5. ASMR Research Fund, Dr Alison Butt
 - i) Announcement of Award Winners 09
 - ii) Award Winner (D) 2008, AMohamedali
 - iii) Award Winner (I) 2008, Dr Louise Dunn

Item 6. Subcommittee Reports -

- a) Research Careers
 - i) Workforce Survey and Mentor Program, Dr Emma Parkinson-Lawrence ii) Continuing Professional Development, Dr Emma Parkinson-Lawrence
- b) Membership, Dr Paul Dawson
- c) Newsletter, A/Prof Andrew J Brown
- d) ASMR MRW Week®, Dr K Andrews
- e) Media, Dr Kristen Nowak
- f) State Reports, Dr Sarah Meachem
- g) NSC 2009, A/Prof Martin Delatycki
- h) AHMRC 2010, Dr Rosemary Keogh
- Item 7. Other Business, Dr Sarah Meachem
- Item 8. Directors and Office Bearers, 2010 Dr Alison Butt

Honorary Secretary, Dr E Parkinson-Lawrence

PAST PRESIDENTS

1961 1962 1963 1964 1965 1966 1967 1968 1969 1970 1971 1972 1973 1974 1975 1976 1977 1978 1979 1980 1981 1982 1983 1984 1985 1986 1987 1988 1989 1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006	BG Firkin AP Skyring RP Shearman G Archer J McRae AWT Edwards MR Playoust PJ Nestel PJ Nestel PA Castaldi JR Turtle TJ Martin WJ O'Sullivan JK Healy JP Chalmers AA Morley NG Ardlie A Basten JW Funder GG Duggin RL Dawkins JK Findlay JA Eisman JA Whitworth BM Hall GC Farrell RL Sutherland JG McDougall NH Hunt JJ Finlay-Jones MJ Field PH Hart WD Tilley CL Clarke S Clark G Mann K Scott S Wesselingh MT Gillespie R Ramsay PD O'Loughlin PR Schofield MA Clay AH Sinclair BA Kingwell L M Khachigian
2003	MA Clay
	LM Khachigian
2007	M Kavallaris
2008	MD Hulett
2009	S J Meachem

Board Meetings - Attendance by Directors

November 15, 2008

Dr Mark Hulett

Dr Sarah Meachem

Dr Alison Butt

Dr Emma Parkinson-Lawrence

Dr Andrew J Brown Dr Andrew Laslett

Dr Rosemary Keogh

Dr Paul Dawson

A/Prof Martin Delatycki

Prof Fabienne Mackay

Dr Kristen Nowak

Dr Kathy Andrews

March 2, 2009

Dr Sarah Meachem

Dr Emma Parkinson-Lawrence

Dr Andrew J Brown

Dr Paul Dawson

A/Prof Martin Delatycki

Dr Rosemary Keogh

Dr Andrew Laslett

Prof Fabienne Mackay

Dr Kristen Nowak

Dr Alison Butt

Apologies: Dr Kathy Andrews

July 31, 2009 - Executive

Dr Sarah Meachem

Dr Alison Butt

Dr Emma Parkinson-Lawrence

Dr Kristen Nowak (tel)

September 4, 2009 - Executive

Dr SarahMeachem

Dr Emma Parkinson-Lawrence

Dr Kristen Nowak (tel)

Dr A Butt (tel)

September 21, 2009

Dr Sarah Meachem

Dr Emma Parkinson-Lawrence

A/Prof Martin Delatycki

Dr Paul Dawson

Dr Andrew J Brown

Dr Kristen Nowak

Dr Rosemary Keogh

Dr Andrew Laslett

Dr Kathy Andrews

Dr Kristen Nowak (tel)

Apologies: Dr Alison Butt

Prof Fabienne Mackay

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH, HELD AT THE BRISBANE CONVENTION CENTRE, QLD ON NOVEMBER 19, 2008

Item 1. Welcome and Apologies, Dr Mark Hulett

In the presence of the required quorum, Dr Hulett opened the meeting at 12:30pm, welcoming all present and announcing apologies from Associate Professor Martin Delatycki, Dr Moira Clay and Professor Nick Hunt.

Item 2. Confirmation of Minutes, Wednesday 12th November, 2007, Dr Mark Hulett

Dr Sarah Meachem moved that the Minutes of the Meeting of November 12 2007 be accepted as a true and accurate reflection of that Meeting; seconded by Dr Alison Butt.

Item 3. President's Report, Dr Mark Hulett

Dr Hulett advised that it has been a great honour and privilege to represent ASMR as its President this year. 2008 has been a challenging and busy year for the society. ASMR has a wonderfully rich history and a highly respected track record in advocating the value of health and medical research in Australia. In that tradition, "I am confident that ASMR has served its members and the HMR community well this year". We have initiated and continued to build on a number of important projects that have enhanced the profile and progressed the cause of

The next few years represent a pivotal period for the future of Australian HMR. Over the past decade Australia has enjoyed solid economic growth, and support from the Federal Government has been strong with a 5-fold increase in NHMRC funding. The recent global economic slowdown presents many challenges for Australia, and will almost certainly produce budgetary pressures. The HMR sector will not be immune to these pressures, and in light of the impending completion of the current NHMRC funding cycle in 2010/11, we need to ensure that the value of HMR is crystallized in the minds of the public, politicians and policy makers. Now more than ever, we must campaign for the sustained support of HMR, or risk losing the significant investment made to date, and the continued health and economic returns to Australia. To this end, ASMR has been campaigning tirelessly this year and in recent months, has increased its lobbying efforts with a series of meetings in Canberra with key ministers, advisors and staff, ranging from the departments of Health and Aging, to Treasury and Finance. Rest-assured that ASMR will continue the intensive lobbying efforts in the lead up to the next federal budget.

The recent change of federal government presented ASMR and the HMR sector with fresh challenges this year. It was pleasing to see that the planning for the long-term future of health, education, and innovation in Australia was high on the agenda of the Rudd government. The year saw a suite of reviews to address future strategic directions across a number of areas that are likely to impact on how HMR is structured and funded in Australia. These included

the Australia 2020 Summit, The National Innovation Review, The Bradley Review of Higher Education, the Preventative Health Taskforce, and the Inquiry into the Effects of Climate Change on Training and Employment Needs. ASMR has made submissions to many of these reviews and we are awaiting the findings of most. However, the results of the National Innovation Review have recently been made public and have important implications for the HMR sector. Amongst the 72 recommendations to improve Australia's R&D sector were:

- the urgent restoration of public funding levels for research, with the suggested long-term goal that by 2020, Australia should be ranked in the top quartile of OECD countries for expenditure (I should note that in 1993/4 Australia's spending peaked at 0.75% of GDP but by 2007/8 had dropped to 0.55% GDP)
- a transition to the full funding for the cost of research in universities and government research agencies following the recognition that grants often only cover ½ of the costs,
- the prioritisation of public research to a number of areas including health,
- a re-devised series of R&D tax concessions for private business.
- the formation of a National Innovation Council to coordinate and provide strategic leadership for the innovation system,
- and increasing the stipend for Australian Postgraduate Awards to at least \$25k, indexing it to average wages, and extending its duration to 4 years.

Overall, I believe the HMR

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sector should welcome these recommendations. However, a close eye will need to be kept on the Excellence in Research Australia driven funding of University block grants, particularly with regard to determining the balance between basic and applied research and the potential barriers to encouraging external collaborations. A white paper is expected by the end of the year and it will be interesting to see how many of the above listed issues will be tackled in the context of the current economic climate.

This year the NHMRC also underwent an external review of its strategic directions and funding mechanisms, and ASMR along with other stakeholders. had opportunity to contribute to the discussion process. Amongst the many important issues, is that of the future structure and funding levels for the NHMRC fellowship schemes. The total number of fellowships has increased significantly since 2002, and the suggestion has been that the scheme is becoming unsustainable. However, it should be noted that the proportion of NHMRC funding directed towards fellowships has remained fairly constant at around 20 to 22% during this period. Thus the ratio of people versus project funding has essentially not changed over the past 5 years - with the increase in fellowship numbers following proportionally the increase in total funding. Achieving the correct balance between NHMRC funded people and project grant support, as well as clearly defining career structure in the system, is a key issue for the HMR sector

into the future. ASMR is making every effort to work with NHMRC to address this important issue.

You are all no doubt also aware of the concerns about potential changes to the NHMRC Fellowship scheme, and issues of the governance of NHMRC, that have recently been raised by NARF President, Phil Robinson. ASMR is currently formulating an official position from the new board. I will welcome comment from the floor at the end of this report.

The recent economic downturn highlights the need for the HMR sector to secure strategies for long-term sustainable funding. The current funding models in Australia are cyclical and vulnerable to fluctuation. A welldefined sustainable funding platform would ensure that the HMR sector is safeguarded from funding troughs, continue to achieve a high international standard, and deliver the necessary health and economic outcomes for Australia. Last year the ASMR held an important forum "The Future of Medical Research: Sustainable Funding Model", and this year we have been following-up on the outcomes by researching sustainable funding models for the Australian HMR sector. These have included the innovative Framework 7 reforms of the European Union, where R&D investment in science has been committed to reach 3% of GDP by 2010 (with one third of funding from the public sector and two thirds from private sources). Such a model would be attractive for Australia and possibly the Asia-Pacific region. To achieve this goal, the public sector will clearly be required to play a key ongoing funding role, however it will be critical to build better collaborative partnerships with industry and to attract enhanced local and international philanthropic support. The ASMR will be continuing to drive this important initiative forward through focused discussion with government, industry and philanthropic bodies.

The necessity to present a robust-evidence-based case for continued and increased investment in HMR is essential, and is particularly relevant at present with the expected budget pressures. This year ASMR has devoted a significant effort to generating and packaging quantitative data for dissemination on:

- the economic value of investment in HMR
- the perceptions of the HMR workforce on career structure and conditions
- and the implications on careers and research outcomes of the inability to fully fund research in the context of the effect of the monetary gap between host institution salaries and the NHMRC personnel salary packages/fellowships.

Dr Hulett briefly summarise the results of each of these important initiatives.

ASMR launched "Exceptional Returns II: The value of Investing in Australian Health R&D" this year during ASMR Medical Research Week® on June 4 at the National Press Club in Canberra. This ASMR commissioned Access Economics study followed the 2003 landmark report "Exceptional returns I" and estimated the economic value of Australian Investment in HMR R&D following the recent funding increases, and included case studies of 4

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specific examples of well-being returns to Australia in the important areas of diabetes, dementia, cancer, and indigenous health. It is pleasing that the study demonstrates the continued excellent health and economic returns on investment in the Australian HMR sector, and has been well received to date by all stakeholders. The key findings of the report include:

- * Australian Health R&D expenditure between 1992/3 and 2004/5 was estimated to return a net benefit of around \$29.5 billion dollars and for a dollar invested in Australian health R&D, an average of \$2.17 dollars in health benefits is returned, with a minimum of \$0.57 and maximum of \$6.
- * And comparing the returns on investment with other sectors, health R&D out performs the market, manufacturing and agricultural sectors, and is less only than mining and the retail/wholesale trade sectors

The figures are also impressive for the specific case studies - I won't go into detail now but please see the report if you are interested.

The new report also indicates that although the greatest burden of disease remains cancer and cardiovascular disease, non-fatal diseases also play a significant and increasing role in the burden of disease and the years of healthy life lost due to disability. In particular, the projected cost and impact of the chronic diseases of aging is forecast to present a challenging burden and the greatest hope is new R&D breakthroughs. It is clear that Australia has a comparative advantage in health R&D given the levels of discovery, the output and quality of publications, and its demonstrated impressive translational outcomes. In addition to the "good international citizen" arguments, the new report provides strong economic reasons for sustaining and enhancing health R&D investment in Australia.

I encourage all ASMR members to read the full report and to disseminate the key findings at every opportunity to the public and politicians (we have copies of the report here at the AGM and a mountain at the ASMR booth in the trade display, so please collect a copy or two or three). I would like to thank Lynne Pezzullo, Henry Cutler and the Access Economics team for their outstanding work on the report - Maria Kavallaris, Moira Clay, Cath West and the ASMR National Executive for their valuable input, Sir Gus Nossal for helping to launch the report and to sell its key messages around Australia during his ASMR medallist tour, and the many supporters in the HMR provided sector who sponsorship to help fund this important study.

A highly skilled and adaptable workforce has underpinned the success of the Australian HMR sector. Although there has been long-standing anecdotal evidence on a growing dissatisfaction among the Australian HMR workforce in regards to job security and funding opportunities, there is surprisingly very little supporting quantitative data. In May this year the ASMR published a study in the Medical Journal of Australia titled: "Perceptions of Health and Medical Research Careers: The Australian

Society for Medical Research Workforce Survey". This result was the culmination of a significant long-term project that was initiated in 2006 under the Presidency of Levon Khachigian and continued by the 2007 National board headed by Maria Kavallaris. The web-based survey of nearly 400 ASMR members gauged views on career and funding opportunities, salary and quality of working environment. The key findings indicate that employment insecurity and perceived lack of a sustainable career structure are causing considerable anxiety among Australian HMRs. It is vital that we continue to attract and retain our best and brightest researchers, and these perceptions clearly suggest that a review of current people support policies are required. The quantitative data is being used by the ASMR to press for improved policy and career structures for Australian HMRs. As I mentioned, achieving the correct balance between funding for people versus direct research project support is a critical issue for the future, and one of the key objectives of ASMR heading into 2009. I would like to acknowledge our collaborators from the University of Queensland, particularly Paul Boreham and Warren Laffan: and the ASMR team that contributed to this important project; Levon Khachigian, Maria Kavallaris, Sarah Meachem, Cath West (Ms West notes that Mark Hulett is also an acknowledged author), as well as Moira Clay, Phillip Robinson and Prof Judith Whitworth for their helpful advice. Please see the ASMR website for the published Workforce Survey article.

In response to the concerns of

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ASMR members regarding the growing salary gap between host institutions and NHMRC Personnel Salary Packages and Fellowships, the ASMR conducted an online survey in April this year to gather quantitative data on the extent and effect of the monetary gap. The results paint a disturbing picture of the negative effect that the gap is having on the HMR sector. Thanks to Kristen Novak for her great work in driving this project. I would also like to acknowledge the support of the Western Australian Institute for Medical Research with the online survey.

ASMR Medical Research Week® is one of our premier events each year and showcases HMR to the nation. This year ASMR Medical Research Week® was another resounding success, as you will hear in a moment from Kristen Nowak. Briefly, an outstanding series of state and national scientific, public and political outreach events were conducted over the week. All were well attended and successfully promoted the significant benefits of HMR to the nation. Just prior to the week, ASMR also published a 2-page spread in the Australian newspaper highlighting events of the week and the exciting research of some of Australia's leading HMRs. Media monitoring indicated that the HMR message generated from the week of activities reached an impressive 12.5 million people.

ASMR was honoured to have Sir Gus Nossal as the 2008 Medallist, and his nationwide tour was one of the highlights of ASMR Medical Research Week®. Sir Gus is one of Australia's most respected scientists and a great champion of HMR. Covering 7 cities in 9 days, Sir Gus gave inspiring addresses at each of the state dinners and to a national TV audience at the Press Club in Canberra. On behalf of ASMR I would like to extend our sincere thanks to Sir Gus for his outstanding efforts in promoting HMR over the week.

ASMR Medical Research Week® would not be possible without the hard work of our amazing state committees and national board of directors, as well as the support of our members, friends and affiliates. I would especially like to acknowledge each of the State committees and their convenors, national directors Kristen Novak (MRW convenor), Rosemary Keogh (State convenor), Emma Parkinson-Lawrence (Media convenor), ASN events for coordinating the dinner events, and the tireless ASMR executive-office team of Cath West and Priscilla Diment.

The ASMR is dedicated to supporting the careers of HMRs and held a national Professional Development Program in August this year. The program followed the successful inaugural event in 2007 and was aimed at providing much-needed training for mid-career researchers. As Andrew Laslett will detail in a moment, the road show was expanded this year and included for the first time, events in Perth and Adelaide in addition to Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne. I am happy to say that the success of the program means it will now become an ASMR fixture in the future. Thanks to the wonderfully talented Moira Clay for facilitating, Sophie Symeou for leading the work/ life balance workshops, Andrew Laslett for convening and organising the entire event, Sarah Meachem for contribution to the speaker program, ASN Events for logistical support, and all the fantastic researchers who generously gave their time to talk to the participants.

ASMR has also launched a new initiative this year to help further advance the careers of **HMRs** the Career Development Mentor Program. The program has been developed in response to the disturbing statistic highlighted during the professional development program, that over 50% of mid-career researchers do not have a mentor. The program offers ASMR members, 5-12 years postdoctoral an opportunity to be matched with a career development mentor. Guidelines and applications are available on the ASMR website. Thanks to Sarah Meachem and Cath West for getting this important program running this year. I have no doubt that the scheme will become one of ASMR's flagship programs and represents yet another great service available to ASMR members.

In 2002 the ASMR initiated the biennial Australian Health and Medical Research Congress (AHMRC) to promote multidisciplinary interactions and collaborations in HMR. The initiative has been highly successful, and the AHMRC has now grown to become the largest HMR multidisciplinary meeting in Australia. This is the 4th Congress, and the first time it has been held in Brisbane, and I'm sure you'll

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agree that that it has been a great meeting so far - with a truly outstanding scientific program. A huge amount of work has gone into the organization of a meeting of this size. Thanks to the congress convenor Alison Butt, congress program convenor Greg Anderson, the convenor of the ASMR National Scientific Conference, Alejandro Lopez, and their hard-working committees. A big thanks also to the ASN Events team, headed by Dr Maree Overall, for coordinating the Congress - a massive task that ASN perform outstandingly every 2 years.

Each year the ASMR Research Fund Awards are made available for junior researchers to travel to undertake collaborative research. This standard of the applicants this year was again high and it's my pleasure to announce two awards today:

- The first is to Louise Dunn of the Heart Research Institute, who will travel to the Standford University School of Medicine to work with John Cooke, and learn new animal models for the examination of vascular function and endothelial progenitor cell mobilization.
- And the second is to Abidali Mohamedali of the Children's Medical Research Institute at Westmead, who will travel to Melbourne to conduct research into mitochondrial dysfunction in Rett Syndrome in two laboratories, those of David Thorburn at the Murdoch Children's Research Institute, and Mike Ryan at La Trobe University. Dr Hulett extended congratulations and best wishes to the winners.

over the past decade and is now a complex multi-layered organisation and one of the largest societies in Australian HMR. Having the opportunity to represent the society as its President this year has been a great honour. I would just like to close by thanking the many people and organizations that contributed to the running of ASMR this year. Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the ASMR members, affiliate and supporting organizations that make up the fantastic "ASMR family". Thanks to all the past ASMR presidents for providing invaluable support and advice throughout the year, and I would particularly like to acknowledge Rob Ramsey, Levon Khachigian, Maria Kavallaris, Matt Gillespie, Peter O'Loughlin and Moira The ASMR state committees are the backbone of the society - thanks to all the talented convenors and their committees for all the hard work and achievements this year. ASN Events have been of great support over the year with many ASMR functions thanks to Maree Overall and Mike Pickford for their continued professionalism and

We are grateful to The Royal Australasian College of Physicians who generously provides office space for the ASMR Executive Office.

enthusiasm.

Finally, I would like to thank the ASMR board and Executive for their support and unwavering commitment to **ASMR** throughout the year. The President-Elect, Sarah Meachem, has worked tirelessly this year, and I thank her for her help and dedication to the cause. I pass on the Presidency to Sarah with every confidence that ASMR is in great hands. The ASMR

executive office of Cath West and Priscilla Diment provide the heartbeat of the society - they are multi-talented and handle a demanding workload that takes enormous dedication - often beyond the call of normal duty! I would especially like to thank Cath for her guidance, friendship and support throughout the year.

Dr Hulett concluded by thanking all present for their attention, and wished the society and its members all the very best for the future.

Prof Judy Black raised a question from the floor in respect of NHMRC governance and a list of priorities she has viewed which are different to national research priorities. Dr Hulett replied that he has not seen this list but that ASMR supports consultation and transparency in governance of NHMRC particularly on important issues and that the matter of consultation and transparency will be pursued.

Item 4. Treasurer's Report, Dr Sarah Meachem

Dr Sarah Meachem referred to audited Financial the Statements contained within the Annual Report. advised that the Society is solvent and that the figures reflect increased turnover mainly due to the Access Economics Report and other sponsorship income to be expended in 08/09. In essence ASMR is tracking along similar lines to 2007. Dr Emma Parkinson-Lawrence moved that the ASMR audited accounts be accepted: seconded by Dr Alison Butt.

Item 5. ASMR Research Fund, Dr Sarah Meachem Dr Meachem again referred to the audited reports advising

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that the net income for the year after payment of the Awards (\$7,000) to the 2007 winners Adele Lehane and Di Yu, is \$894.00. A/Prof Maria Kavallaris moved that the audited reports be accepted; seconded by A/Prof Rob Ramsay.

i) Research Award Winner, (Domestic) 2007,

Adele Lehane

The ASMR Research Award funded work on the human malarial parasite and the mechanism by which Verapamil causes delayed death. Ms Lehan advised that she spent time in the laboratory of Prof Geoff McFadden at the University of Melbourne working with Dr Dean Goodman. A number of new hypotheses have been formulated and the collaboration is ongoing. Ms Lehane thanked the Society for the Award.

ii) Research Award Winner (International) 2007, Di Yu

Mr Yu thanked the Society for the Award which allowed him to work with A/Prof Chang-Zheng Chen, Department of Microbiology & Immunology, Stanford University School of Medicine. The project "microRNAs as novel therapeutic tools in autoimmunity" is part complete and is to be finalized in 2009.

Item 6. Subcommittee Reports

- a) Research Careers
- i) Workforce Survey and Mentor Program, Dr Sarah Meachem

Dr Meachem reiterated that the Workforce Survey was published in the MJA early in 2008 and is currently available from the ASMR web-site. She referred to the new Career

Development Mentor scheme for mid career researchers. The service is free to ASMR members. At the present time, matching mentors and mentorees is being done manually but it is hoped to move to a web-based system in the coming year. She invited members to explore the information on the ASMR web site.

ii) Continuing Professional Development, Dr Andrew Laslett

Dr Andrew Laslett reported that feedback on the program has been favourable. He encouraged anyone with ideas for themes or topics to contact him. He thanked all those who contributed to the events.

b) Membership, Dr Paul Dawson

Dr Dawson reported that numbers are quite strong with about 1500 members currently. He advised that ASMR will continue to seek improvement in membership numbers particularly in Tasmania.

c) Newsletter, Dr Andrew J Brown

Dr Brown advised that there are three editions per annum, in 2008 these were in April, August and November. He referred to the historical perspectives of the Society in the last two editions provided by Sir Gus Nossal and Prof Peter Castaldi and of his hope that this will continue into 2009. Dr Brown requested input and ideas from the member in respect of the Newsletter.

d) ASMR MRW Week®, Dr Kristen Nowak

Dr Nowak referred to Mark Hulett's summary of events during the week. She thanked national and state sponsors, Dr Rosemary Keogh, Cath West, Priscilla Diment, Maree Overall, Clair Ciantar, Mike Pickford as well as the dedicated state convenors, committees, directors, members and friends.

e) Media, Dr Emma Parkinson-Lawrence

Dr Parkinson-Lawrence reiterated that there were over 200 media hits reaching 12.5M Australians during ASMR MRW® and advised that the AHMRC has attracted immense interest with television, radio, print and internet coverage. Dr Parkinson-Lawrence thanked Cath West, Priscilla Diment, Executive and Directors for their support.

g) NSC 2008, A/Prof J Alejandro Lopez

A/Prof Lopez reported that the ASMR has 212 registrants to the National Scientific Conference and is conducting 9 Symposia within the framework of AHMRC. The AWT Edwards Orator is Prof Fiona Stanley and the Firkin Orator Prof Michael Karin. A/ Prof Lopez thanked his hard working committee, particularly Drs Kathy Andrews and Stuart MacGregor. He expressed the hope that all attending will enjoy the program.

h) AHMRC 2008, Dr Alison Butt

Dr Alison Butt advised that there are 1450 registrants to the AHMRC. She thanked the Board of Directors for their involvement and support as well as Cath West, Priscilla Diment and made a special and personal thank you to Dr Maree Overall and her team. i) NSC 2009, A/Prof Martin Delatycki

In the absence of Associate Professor Martin Delatycki, Dr Kristen Nowak reported that the National Scientific Conference of the Society, "Neurogenetics on the Apple Isle" is to be held in Hobart, November 15 to 17 2009 at

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The Grand Chancellor Hotel.

Item 7. Other Business, Dr Mark Hulett

Dr Hulett called for questions or 'other business' from the floor; there being no questions or business raised, Dr Mark Hulett handed the Meeting to the incoming 2009 Presiden, Dr Sarah Meachem.

Item 8. Directors and Office Bearers, 2009, Dr Sarah Meachem

Dr Meachem presented Dr Mark Hulett with the Past President's badge offering congratulations on his presidency and thanking him for his mentoring throughout the year.

Dr Sarah Meachem announced Portfolios for the ASMR Board of Directors 2009 –

Dr Alison Butt - Presidentelect and Hon Treasurer

Dr Emma Parkinson-Lawrence - Honorary Secretary and Career Development

Dr Kristen Nowak - Executive Director and Media

Dr Rosemary Keogh -AHMRC 2010

Prof Fabienne Mackay Business Development

Dr Andrew Laslett - ASMR MRW, assisted by Dr Kathy Andrews

Dr Andrew Brown - Newsletter Dr Paul Dawson -Membership

A/Professor Martin Delatycki
-Clinical Issues/NSC 2009
Dr Kathy Andrews

Assisting Media and MRW

Dr Meachem advised that she is thrilled and delighted to be taking on the role of President of ASMR in 2008/9. She advised that the Society will

continue the core business of public, political and scientific advocacy, fostering career development, continuing to provide professional training, ASMR Medical Research Week® programs, NSC and AHMRC. With ASMR's eyes to the long-term future we are researching a well evidenced and innovative policy reform document for sustainable funding of HMR in Australia. Our immediate sights are set on the May 09 Federal Budget and the very important 2010 Budget.

There being no further business, Dr Meachem closed the meeting at 1:30pm

Dr Mark Hulett

fral. / Dunbern

Dr Sarah Meachem November 2008

ASMR Research Awards

There are two annual ASMR Research Award -

one specifically to conduct research in an overseas laboratory (\$5,000) and

one specifically to conduct research in an Australian laboratory (\$2,000) outside the recipient's home city.

Applications available early 2010

Award Winners

2000	Miss Raelene Lim
2001	Dr Patricia Mote
2002	Ms Vanessa Murphy
2003	Ms Mary Kavurma
2004	Dr Richard Allen
2005	Dr Gabrielle Todd
2006	Ms El Sutcliffe (D) Elke Hacker (I)
2007	Ms A Lehane (D) Dr Di Yu (I)
2008	A Mohamedali (D) Dr Louise Dunn (I)
2009	Siobhan Schabrun (I) Daniel Johnstone (D)

ASMR urges members to consider donating to the Fund when paying Membership Subscriptions.

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