



March, 1999

ASMR Executive Directors



*Dr Rob Ramsay
President-elect*



*Dr Judy Halliday
Hon Secretary*



*Dr Peter
O'Loughlin
Hon Treasurer*

President's Report

Last year heralded the start of two year terms for ASMR directors. This change permits continuity in the board and has been particularly useful in generating responses to the Health and Medical Research Strategic Review. The HMRSR has been a focal point for Society activities and I thank the board for their efforts in the preparation of both ASMR submissions. We will be continuing to develop strategies to ensure the implementation of the recommendations.

The Society endeavours to increase public awareness of H&MR with Medical Research Week being our major interface with the general public. I commend Steve Wesselingh for his efforts last year in the management of the organisation of MRW and his responsiveness to the needs of individuals. This successful and expanding public event will continue into the future.

Health and Medical Research Strategic Review. The HMRSR, under the Chairman Peter Wills has comprehensively reviewed our sector and provided a number of key recommendations. During the process of the review, ASMR was recognised

as a peak organisation for consultation and participated in several fruitful meetings with the HMRSR Committee.

The Society is canvassing all political parties for bipartisan support of the recommendations of the HMRSR.



Dr Matt Gillespie

"Timing is a key issue for the implementation of components of the Review".

Timing is a key issue for the implementation of components of the Review. The Review is to be finalised and handed to government at a time which is in close proximity to the 1999 Federal Budget. Commissioned in early 1998, the HMRSR set a five year time frame on many of its recommendations (particularly that of increasing the NHMRC budget). If an increase for the NHMRC is not included in the May 1999 Federal Budget, an inevitable blow out in this time frame will occur.

continued over

Macfarlane Burnet Centenary Symposium

Sir Macfarlane Burnet is best known for his contributions to immunology for which he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Medicine in 1960. The Symposium will be the high point of his centenary year of celebrating his contributions to immunology and virology. The Symposium brings together in Burnet's name many of the most respected people in the global scientific community featuring several nobel laureates. **The Symposium will be held on August 3-5, 1999 at the Grand Hyatt Hotel, Melbourne. Further details and online registration are available at www.burnet.edu.au/centenary or email: mo@asnevents.net.au Phone (03) 5983 2400**

President's Report *(continued)*

Further to one of the HMRSR recommendations, the Federal Government is poised to announce incentives to enhance philanthropy in Australia.

ASMR Medical Research Week. ASMR will run a nationally coordinated MRW in 1999 through the generous sponsorship of AMRAD. One of the highlights of MRW last year were the presentations by Professor Peter Doherty. His public addresses were timely following the announcement of the HMRSR. In keeping with this theme, Professor Ralph Bradshaw, a member of the HMRSR and a strong advocate for H&MR has accepted our invitation to tour during MRW 1999. Ralph will most certainly provide stimulus for dialogue between all parties involved in H&MR. The national poster competition for primary schools will again be conducted. Two new initiatives for the week will be the awarding of the "Image of the Year" and a national journalism prize (for the best H&MR story published in print, radio or television).

Enterprise Bargaining. This is one of the most significant factors resulting in disparities in remuneration scales between host institutions. Current EB agreements range from 0 to 18 %, and many of these agreements have been entered without adequate dialogue between the employer and the employee. ASMR will continue to provide information on EB agreements to permit information flow between researchers at different institutions.

NHMRC. With the advent of the new grant submission / review process and the adoption of "Discipline Panels", ASMR has maintained a highly consultative process with Research Committee.

Competent review of grants is paramount to the success of this new system and ASMR will conduct "Grant Review Fora" - the dates and location of these fora will be announced in membership email.

The proposed Medical Research Investment Fund (MRIF) with County Investment Management Ltd. is still developing. A crucial process for the MRIF is apportioned transfer of intellectual property and the requirement for disclosure documentation. An update of the status of the MRIF can be viewed at www.health.gov.au/nhmrc/research/invest.htm

Workforce Surveys. In this issue of the newsletter is an update of our Brain Drain survey. We have extended this survey to cover Australian doctoral fellows as well as overseas doctoral fellows. We have been the only organisation to gather such information and the results from our original survey have been used by the HMRSR and media. I would encourage your participation and support for this project by making this survey available to fellow researchers or advising us of individuals we should contact.

Homepage. The homepage has been modified in its transition to the national office. I would like to thank Ewen Bell for his efforts during this process. New address: www.asmr.org.au

Australia Day Honors. ASMR is pleased to congratulate members of the Society on their Australia Day Honors for services to medicine, research and education: Professor Suzanne Cory (AC), Professor D Burke (AO), Professor D J Chisholm (AO) and Professor M A Denborough (AM).

Matthew Gillespie,
ASMR President

1999 Board of Directors

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BRAIN DRAIN SURVEY

Dr Moira Clay

The ASMR Board is conducting another Brain Drain survey, based on the original survey carried out by Judy Halliday and Janet Keast in 1995-6. The survey is designed to get information on the “brain drain” in biomedical research, namely the loss of Australian-trained biomedical researchers to other industries within Australia or to research centres in other countries. Much of what is currently known is based on a relatively small amount of anecdotal information and may not accurately reflect the true situation. Furthermore, there is very little hard data available on the decisions made by those entering a career in biomedical research, why more and more Australian researchers are leaving Australia and failing to return in the short or long term and why Australian researchers are choosing to leave careers in biomedical research. We hope that the second Brain Drain Survey will provide a more detailed view of these issues. The results of the Brain Drain survey will be used to identify areas of concern to you, as a member of the Australian research community. We will then be able to focus our advice to government and industry on strategies to improve conditions within the research sector.

STOP PRESS

We would like to send copies of the Brain Drain Survey (International version) to all Australian biomedical researchers working overseas.

If you know of any such researchers, please forward their name and email address ASAP (asmr@world.net). We will forward a copy of the survey to them.

Included in this newsletter is a copy of the Brain Drain Survey for Australian Biomedical Researchers. Please take this opportunity to raise your concerns about job satisfaction, security and career path, as well as indicating to us the areas you would like more information to be made available. Fill out the survey form today - your views and experiences are important and the more responses we get, the greater the strength of the results. We urge you to make copies of the survey and give it to your colleagues and students. The results of the survey will be made available to key figures in research, government and industry and will be published in the ASMR newsletter and on the ASMR homepage. If you would like any more information on the survey, please contact the ASMR office on asmr@world.net.

Dr Moira Clay

SPF ANIMALS FOR QUALITY RESEARCH



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*ASMR
Medical
Research
Week
1999*

*National Lecture
Tour
by
Professor
Ralph Bradshaw*



sponsored by

AMRAD Corp Ltd

Professor Bradshaw is a former President of of the Federation of Americal Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB) and a member of the Australian Health and Medical Research Strategic Review Committee. Currently with the Department of Anatomy & Neurobiology, University of California, Irvine California

The Wills Report

As mentioned in the President's report, the Health and Medical Research Strategic Review (HMRSR) document was released in December 1998 for discussion prior to submission to Government. The HMRSR document represents one of the most comprehensive reviews of medical research in Australia, and includes a series of recommendations for ongoing initiatives to maintain and improve the "health" of our medical research sector. Since it's release, representatives of the ASMR Executive have had discussions with members of the review committee, including the Chairman Mr Peter Wills and Mr Peter Conde from the Secretariat, and meetings with The Hon. Dr. Michael Wooldridge, MP (Minister for Health and Aged Care) and Ms. Jenny Macklin, MP (Shadow Minister for Health). The ASMR has also contacted every federal politician requesting that they view the document and consider it's recommendations. In addition, the ASMR Director's have formed a series of subcommittees to prepare a written submission, and have actively canvassed the Society's members by e.mail to encourage individual responses to the HMRSR Committee.

One of the major issues discussed in the Review is the pressing need for increased funding of the health and medical research sector from both Governmental and non-governmental sources. The Review's recommendations propose a series of funding initiatives encompassed within an action plan that will require coordinated implementation over the next 5 years. Achieving the immediate objectives and maintaining future momentum, however, will require that the Government not only commit to increasing direct funding for health and medical research, but also develop a policy of supporting non-Governmental and philanthropic funding by restructuring capital gains taxation legislation. As "stakeholders" in the future of medical research it is the responsibility of all members to ensure that our elected Government representatives recognise the need to act on this issue immediately. An update on the outcome of the final submission to Government of the HMRSR final report (which is expected to occur in late April) will be included in the next newsletter.

Jason Smythe
Newsletter Editor

Events

6th Biennial Conference - Sydney - 7-10 July 1999

"Individuals & Institutions in the History of Medicine".

Tel. 61 2 9290 3366

Festschrift for Prof Lawrie Powell

on the occasion of his retirement from QIMR. Bancroft Centre, Brisbane, December 3-4. Contact Barbara Leggett, Dept of Gastroenterology, Royal Brisbane Hospital

Party for Children's Hearts

May 30th 1999, Moonee Valley Racecourse.

Heartkids Vic Inc a support group for families who have a child with a congenital heart abnormality - 'raising funds and awareness'.

Contact Alison Byrne on 03 54 8086798 or

AlisonByrne@bigpond.com.au

*National Scientific Conference
The Australian Society for Medical Research
The Fairmont Resort, Leura, NSW*

Make sure you've marked in your diaries the upcoming 38th National Scientific Conference of The Australian Society of Medical Research. The Conference will be held in the picturesque setting of the Blue Mountains from November 27-29, 1999, and will feature an exciting Scientific Program whose theme is "Cutting Edge Technologies in Medical Research". The Conference includes state-of-play symposia in a wide range of disciplines including "Genetics", "The Fungus, Fly and the Worm", "Protein and Carbohydrate Structure", "Macromolecular Interaction Analysis" "State-of-the-Art Therapeutics" and "State-of-the-Art Imaging".

Confirmed international and local participants presently include:

David Botstein (Stanford)
Ed Rubin (UCLA)
David Bowtell (Peter MacCallum Cancer Institute)
Ismail Kola (Monash)
Martin Lackmann (Ludwig Institute)
Richard Harvey (Victor Chang)
Christopher Parish (ANU)
Mark Fullen (RPA)
Domenic Leong (Liverpool Hospital)
Mark von Itzstein (Monash)
Colin Ward (CSIRO)
Rohan Baker (ANU)

The Conference will also feature, for the first time, presentations by senior fellows supported by the Sylvia and Charles Viertel Charitable Foundation. As in previous years, the NARF (National Association of Research Fellows) Symposium is also included in the Program.

The meeting will be held at The Fairmont Resort, however, additional rooms have been secured for participants of the meeting at the nearby Ibis-Leura Gardens Resort. Delegates



“ learn about the newest developments in medical research while experiencing the natural wonders of the Jamison Valley in late Spring.”

should take this opportunity to learn about the newest developments in medical research while experiencing the natural wonders of the Jamison Valley in late Spring. Bushwalks, bike-rides, swimming, tennis and golf are among the activities available.

Information on Abstracts and details of Registration/Accommodation will be announced shortly. Please take note that the **ABSTRACT DEADLINE** and **EARLY REGISTRATION DEADLINE** is September 1, 1999. We look forward to your participation in the conference.

For additional information, please contact the
Convenor,
Dr Levon Khachigian,
Tel. (02) 9385 2537; Fax. (02) 9385 1389;
Email. L.Khachigian@unsw.edu.au.

New South Wales

1999 promises to be a busy year in NSW as we prepare to host Medical Research Week in June and the 38th National Scientific Conference in November. A number of enthusiastic committees have been formed to organise our local MRW activities. The State Scientific Meeting will take place on the Monday of the Medical Research Week. This meeting will once again be a showcase for younger scientists with almost all talks being restricted to students or new postdocs. The Medical Research Week Dinner will make a welcome return this year on the Wednesday evening of MRW. The Careers day for high school students will once again be run on Thursday at the State Library. This event attracts several hundred senior high school students each year and provides information on medical research careers. The efforts of the ASMR to promote medical research during MRW are assisted by the MRW programs organised by the Garvan Institute of Medical Research and the Royal North Shore Hospital. The ASMR welcomes Ms Penny Martin (Royal North Shore Hospital) and Ms Kerrie Mitchell (Garvan Institute of Medical Research) onto the organising committee for MRW99. The greater co-ordination of our efforts should ensure the continuing success of MRW and increase the profile of medical research in NSW.

Kathryn Quinn

Queensland

Preparations for MRW'99 are well underway and the state committee is already organising the three major Qld events for MRW. The AMRAD-ASMR Medical Research Week Expo. As in previous years this will be a free public expo designed to highlight the local medical research efforts and their value to the general community. Any research groups that would like to participate should contact Dr Nigel McMillan (nmcmillan@medicine.pa.uq.edu.au). The Expo will run over two days, Sunday May 30 and Monday May 31. Details about the exhibitors, public lectures and venue will be circulated soon. The AMP Queensland Biomedical Research Awards. These awards have been sponsored by AMP QLD since 1988 and are recognised as prestigious awards. This year both pre and post doctoral categories will offer \$2000 to the winners and \$500 to the other two finalists in each category. The call for submission of abstracts for the awards will go out soon. We encourage all ASMR members to submit applications and to encourage their colleagues to enter as well. Contact Dr Marcello Rosa (m.rosa@vthrc.uq.edu.au) for more details.

ASMR Medical Research Week dinner. This year we will be holding the dinner on Friday June 4 and are very pleased to have Prof Ralph Bradshaw as our after dinner speaker. Contact Dr Lindsay Jordan (jordan@plpk.uq.edu.au) for more information.

We look forward to seeing you at the MRW events
Judy Halliday.

South Australia

Preparations are in train for the 1999 ASMR Medical Research Week in South Australia. We have begun discussions with advisors to the State Minister for Human Services and also the Florey Foundation, with the aim of working together in the preparation for Medical Research Week to raise the profile of medical research and address the critical issues

affecting medical researchers here in SA. This year's Medical Research Week Dinner (Tuesday June 1) will be at the Radisson Playford on North Terrace. The Scientific Meeting (Friday June 4) is to be held at the fantastic venue of the Bradman Room at the Adelaide Cricket Ground! The keynote speaker will be Professor Rob Sutherland (Garvan Institute).

The first ASMR "State of the Art" Workshop will be on March 30. The Workshop will be held in conjunction with the Australian Society for Immunology and will feature Professor Derek Hart from Brisbane, who will present his ground breaking research on dendritic cells.

Moira Clay

Western Australia

Presently, there is a noticeable lack of morale in the research community in West Australia, because of the continuing concerns about research funding. Despite the turnaround achieved in last years budget with respect to the projected fall in NHMRC funding and the positive outcomes which might be delivered from the Wills Review, many investigators remain cynical of better things to come. There also seems to be increasing activity with established researchers in West Australia seeking positions abroad, or finding complimentary or in some cases alternate career paths. It will be interesting to note if a trend to this effect appears in the brain drain survey within the next few years. On the brighter side, we have a new and younger looking local organising committee, who have taken on the increasing burden of Medical Research Week activities in 1999. Each year the event seems to be growing, with increasing momentum and consequently commitment. This years local chair is Ms. Mohinder Sarna. For details of events in West Australia, please call Mohinder on 92240332, or by email: mindas@cyllene.uwa.edu.au

John Mamo

Victoria

The State Government has released its final report into Medical and Public Health Research in Victoria. Copies of its recommendations can be obtained from the Department of Human Services. In general the outcomes are very positive and reflect a constructive relationship between the Vic government and the medical research community. With a state election expected this year we are hopeful that rumoured increases in support by the Government will be announced soon. The AMRAD-ASMR Medical Research Week EXPO is to be conducted in two venues (Melbourne Central and Southland Shopping Centre), to permit greater public exposure. As in previous years, Secondary and Tertiary School Lectures will be conducted with a greater emphasis to expose H&MR to secondary school students. Public Lectures and a "gene ethics debate" for secondary Schools will also feature in the composition of ASMR-MRW. A Research, Investment & Commercialisation for Health forum, 1999 (RICH 1999) will be held on June 3 at the Sofitel Hotel . This forum will be composed of plenary lectures and a hypothetical, and occurs immediately prior to the MRW dinner, which should facilitate further networking opportunities. The dinner will be held at the Grand Hyatt on Thursday June 3. Bookings for the dinner, RICH 1999 or information about the week can be obtained from Mike Pickford (asn@surf.metro.net.au, tel: 0359-832-400).

Matthew Gillespie

NEW MEMBERS - October 13 1998 to Feb 22 1999

Life Member

Professor Peter Doherty

NSW

Dr Eugene Baranov

Mr Peter Burrows

Dr Margaret Haughton

Dr Orin Chisholm

Miss Jenny Vu

Victoria

Mr Tom Karagiannis

Dr Clare Scott

A/Prof Stephen Locarnini

Assoc Prof Seong-Seng Tan

Professor Robert

Williamson

Dr Helen Burgess

Assoc Prof Antony Goodwin

Dr Heather Young

Dr Colin Anderson

A/Professor Chris Pantelis

Dr Tony Verberne

Dr Margaret E E Jones

Queensland

Mr Teong Chuah

Mr Morris Makobongo

SA

Mr Miles De Blasio

Mr Shane Porter

WA

Dr Swatti Baidur-Hudson

Dr Peregrin Timar

Dr Katherine Hannan

Dr Ross Hannan

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NEW www.asmr.org.au

ASMR's new Home Page address is www.asmr.org.au

Affiliate Member Organisations

Association of Australian Medical Research Institutes

Australasian Association of Clinical Biochemists

Australasian Menopause Society

Australasian Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology

Australasian Society for Free Radical Research

Australasian Society for HIV Med Inc

Australasian Society for Immunology

Australasian Society for Infectious Diseases

Australasian Society for Psychiatric Research

Australasian Society for the Study of Hypertension in Pregnancy

Australasian Society of Blood Transfusion

Australasian Society of Clinical & Experimental

Pharmacologists and Toxicologists

Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology & Allergy

Australian & New Zealand Bone & Mineral Society

Australian & New Zealand Society for Cell & Developmental Biology Inc

Australian & New Zealand Society of Nephrology

Australian Association of Neurologists

Australian Atherosclerosis Society

Australian Diabetes Society

Australian Neuroscience Society Inc

Australian Physiological & Pharmacological Society

Australian Rheumatology Association

Australian Society for Reproductive Biology

Australian Society for the Study of Obesity

Cardiac Society of Australia & New Zealand

Clinical Oncological Society of Australia

Endocrine Society of Australia

Fertility Society of Australia

Gastroenterological Society of Australia

Haematology Society of Australia & New Zealand

High Blood Pressure Research Council of Australia

Human Genetics Society of Australasia

National Association of Research Fellows

Paediatric Research Society of Australia & New Zealand

Perinatal Society of ANZ

Thoracic Society of Australia & New Zealand

Transplantation Society of Australia & New Zealand

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National Heart Foundation of Australia

Nml. Multiple Sclerosis Society

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Comm Hlth & Anti-Tuberculosis Assoc

Australian Cystic Fibrosis Association

Haemophilia Foundation of Australia

Juvenile Diabetes Foundation of Australia

Foundation for High Blood Pressure Research

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National Scientific Conference Hobart 1998

Dr Bruce Lyons, Convenor

**The 37th National Scientific Conference of the ASMR held in Hobart
(November 22 to 25 1998) for the first time since 1984.**

Conference Snapshot

The Three Presidents



from left

Rob Ramsay (elect)

Steve Wesselingh (past)

Matt Gillespie (current)

Tobacco Giant



Sir Richard Doll

While not as large as recent NSC's held in mainland cities, the tyranny of distance was no impediment to the 200 delegates who attended. The proceedings got off to a slightly damp start (some would say torrential!) but of course Tasmania is renowned for having more weather than most other parts of the country! Still, it was added incentive for delegates to attend the many interesting sessions scheduled over the conference, and within a day or two, the weather had returned to the expected spring brilliance.

The conference was officially opened on Sunday with an address by the Governor of Tasmania, Sir Guy Green, adding a touch of pomp and circumstance. However, his comments were far from superficial, and he displayed a depth of knowledge of current issues in the funding of medical research that would put many of our politicians to shame.

The NSC was fortunate in attracting many distinguished national and international speakers, amongst them Professor Suzanne Cory (WEHI), Professor Giorgio Trinchieri (Wistar Institute, Philadelphia). A major highlight was an address by the renowned British epidemiologist, Sir Richard Doll, whose pioneering work in the post World War II era revealed the

link between smoking and lung cancer.

The quality of submitted abstracts was again extremely high, and as is part of the ASMR's brief, there were a number of prizes awarded for outstanding presentations and posters. I would like to thank Eli Lilly, AMRAD and the University of Tasmania Research Committee for generously funding these. The lure of Tasmania appeared overwhelming for student ASMR members. As a result, over 30 student travel subsidies were awarded. This had the unfortunate effect of lowering the value of the subsidies in comparison to previous years.

The social program proved to be very popular, especially the kind invite by the Governor of Tasmania, Sir Guy Green, for all delegates to attend a cocktail reception at Government House, a magnificent example of early colonial architecture.

I would like to thank all the sponsors of the 37th NSC, and a special thanks to the organising committee; James Vickers, Jenny Penschow, Dace Shugg, Malcolm Riley, Peter Kitchener, Mark Cozens and Kathleen Doherty.

Bruce Lyons, *Convenor*

1999 NATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE

The 38th NSC of the Australian Society for Medical Research will be held at The Fairmont Resort, Leura, Blue Mountains (NSW) from November 27-29, 1999. The theme is "Cutting Edge Technologies in Medical Research". Abstract deadline September 1, 1999. Convenor, Dr Levon Khachigian, ph:(02-9385 2527), fax (02-93851389), or email (L.Khachigian@unsw.edu.au).