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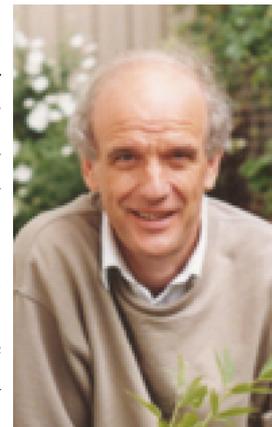
VIC - Yvonne Parsons  
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University of NSW

**From The President**

William Bateson first suggested the word genetics in a letter dated 18th April 1905 to Adam Sedgewick as a title for a new Chair at the University of Cambridge, UK and at the Third Conference on Hybridisation and Plant Breeding in London in 1906 he repeated the idea - "I suggest...the term Genetics, which sufficiently indicates that our labours are devoted to the elucidation of the phenomena of heredity and variation." This latter occasion is generally held to designate the overdue recognition of Mendel's earlier work and to herald the start of the modern discipline of genetics. Therefore we can celebrate a centenary this year, which, depending upon one's viewpoint, could mean our discipline is either old or very young. In any case, the progress that has been made during the 100 years that have elapsed is truly astonishing and the rate of new discovery seems still to be increasing. We are fortunate to live at a time when so many novel ideas can be tested by elegant experiments which could not be contemplated even a decade ago. It is a sobering thought that the methodology used in many earlier experiments was so blunt as to seriously limit the value of the conclusions and I wonder how future scientists will view our current efforts.



Whatever its origins, Genetics is still one of the most clearly defined and fascinating of disciplines, and the specification by Bateson and his colleagues - that we study heredity and variation (albeit in many baroque forms) - is still very appropriate. Genetics brings a new level of understanding and indeed the only secure basis to the old natural sciences and to their modern reincarnations. For this reason, genetics now pervades a great deal of the best biological research, though its practitioners are remarkably underrepresented on the ARC's college of experts.

The global influence of genetics is undoubtedly good for biological science but it makes life difficult for a Genetics Society because the sheer breadth of interest and influence tends to obscure the defining intellectual and practical foundations of the discipline. As part of our effort to champion genetic approaches throughout biological sciences, GSA has shared a number of annual meetings with other, often larger, societies. In my opinion, although we gained a lot from these ventures, we are also suffering a minor identity crisis. Therefore it has been determined that, at least the next two annual meetings of GSA in Sydney in 2007 and in Adelaide in 2008, will not be shared with other societies and will focus on research that has utilised archetypal genetical approaches. Of course meetings that last only a few days cannot attempt to cover the full gamut of genetic advances and must concentrate upon a limited number of areas as focussed symposia. In this way it is hoped to reaffirm the identity of the GSA whilst maintaining the breadth of the discipline in the long term. Of course, wherever possible and appropriate, local organising committees will seek to capitalise on speakers that are participating in cognate events within Australia. For some societies there is a risk in this approach as members, not seeing their own area represented at a particular meeting, may stay away. I am hopeful that this blinkered view will not prevail amongst geneticists who must by definition recognise that advances made in one system will give insights in superficially unrelated areas.

*continued on page 2*

We intend also to invest some of the society's savings to benefit next year's Sydney meeting and to offer travel and registration support to student members. It is hoped that, in keeping with the tradition of our society, all students will be given the opportunity to talk about their work or present a poster. It would be helpful if members will advertise these opportunities to colleagues and students, stressing the low cost of becoming a student member of the GSA, and pointing out the career-enhancing advantages. Not forgetting the chance of winning one of our various prizes for presentation at the conferences, the Catcheside PhD prize and the Smith-White travel award.

By these means, we shall strengthen the society and, more broadly, the entire collegial discipline of Genetics in Australia. This is important because disciplines are threatened in Australian Universities as these institutions seek ways to maintain viable research and teaching with decreased federal funding. I think the pressures to collaborate in "interdisciplinary" research are nonsense if the disciplines themselves are weakened in the process. It strikes me that we have accepted forced collaboration and applied research emphasis with little question, even though no evidence has been forthcoming (there is none!) that research excellence will be improved. One result of management is clear though: scientists now spend a lot of time reporting, setting deadlines and planning, and certainly many more administrators are required to both assess and report, but time at the bench and time to think seem scarcer than ever.

The supposition that research can be managed is one of the things that are eroding disciplines. On looking back at the history of scientific advance it has often wrongly concluded that progress was managed. I certainly was not! Nearly all significant advances came from individuals pursuing things that interested them, often for no particular practical reason. This is not to say that much progress has come from managed projects that decided, say, to put a human being on the moon - but such projects are not research in the same sense. What many universities are doing in the current Australian climate is merely finding ways to react to structures designed by people who are not scientists or educationalists. One clear result of this is that the vital association of teaching and research, which is the only thing that truly defines a good university, is significantly declining.

Genetics thrives on diversity because of the inherent commonality of living organisms but, more and more, we are constrained by management that detracts from our collective ability to teach, research and think. It seems to me that funding arrangements are substantially confining "genetics" to human health and agriculture which are just two applied aspects of our discipline.

For all these reasons, I urge you to attend the Sydney

meeting in 2007 and support Dr Kathy Belov and her team who have already made terrific progress in organising what promises to be an excellent annual conference.

Jeremy Timmis,  
President  
October 2006



**GSA2007**

**54th Genetics Society of AustralAsia  
Annual Conference**

The Organizing Committee of the 54th GSA meeting which will be held at Sydney University 26th to 29th June (see <http://gsa2007.org/>) has put together a spectacular four day meeting. It will start on Tuesday 26th June, 2007, with registration in the afternoon, followed by a mixer and an evening session. A Comparative Genomics meeting which will begin on the Tuesday morning and will overlap with GSA on Tuesday evening and Wednesday. A public forum will be held at the Australian Museum in the evening on Wednesday 27th, on the popular topic "DNA and crime". The conference dinner will be held on Thursday 28th at the Australian Museum (cost \$100 and numbers are limited).

You are invited to attend GSA2007 and the Comparative Genomics Workshop and are encouraged you to submit an abstract before the Easter deadline at <http://gsa2007.org/>. Registration will be \$350 GSA members and \$200 student members plus \$50 to attend the extra Comparative Genomics session. Accommodation will be in local hotels or backpackers.

The mixer will be on 26th at the Grandstand Bar from 3:30 with the opening of the conference by Australia's Chief Scientist Dr Jim Peacock at 6 pm, followed by talks from students up for awards. Plenary speakers include international researchers Win Hide (gene expression information), Stephan Beck (function and evolution of MHC), Marilyn Raymond (cat genetics), Richard Gibbs (genome sequencing), Paul Hebert (DNA Barcoding), Scott Edwards (evolutionary biology) and Dave Burt (chicken genome). Locals include Barry Brook (extinctions), John Mattick (RNA function), Alan Cooper (Ancient DNA), Ruth Hall (mobile DNA in bacteria), Scott O'Neill (Wolbachia genetics), Richard Harvey (developmental biology), and Marilyn Renfree (marsupial genetics).

Presentations are particularly sought in the following areas, Speciation and Phylogeography; Adapta-

tion; Evolutionary Genetics; Phylogeny, Biodiversity & Barcoding; Developmental Genetics; Epigenetics; Population Genetics; Pathogens, Parasites & Symbionts; Environmental Microbes; Plant Genetics; Functional Genomics; Comparative Genomics; Bioinformatics; Ancient and Forensic DNA; RNAi and non-coding DNA; Conservation Genetics; Gene and QTL Mapping

For further information go the website <http://gsa2007.org/> or contact the convenor is Kathy Belov, [kbelov@vetsci.usyd.edu.au](mailto:kbelov@vetsci.usyd.edu.au)

*Contributed by Alan Wilton, University of New South Wales*



**International Congress for Human Genetics and the  
Genetics Society of Australasia Conference  
Brisbane, QLD  
8th – 10th August 2006**

In 2006 the Genetics Society of Australasia (GSA) annual meeting was held in conjunction with the International Congress of Human Genetics Congress (ICHG) and the Human Genetics Society of Australia in Brisbane, 8th – 10th August. During the joint meeting, GSA held its own concurrent sessions on population genetics, genomics, and adaptation with 40 members presenting including 8 postgraduate students. Members caught up with one another at a society mixer on the first evening of the conference over drinks and nibbles. GSA participants benefited from attending ICHG sessions on human evolution, genomics, and disease. The international congress invited a number of diverse plenary speakers. The most notable were Ken Storey of Carleton University, Canada who spoke on freeze tolerance in amphibians and our own Jenny Graves of the ANU, who lectured on Y chromosome evolution. Jane Hughes of Griffith University gave the GSA MJD White address detailing her work on the population genetics of freshwater ecosystem invertebrates. GSA attendees agreed that although the joint meeting was stimulating it was time for the society to hold its own meeting in a venue that would be affordable for student participants.

*Contributed by Beth McGraw, University of Queensland*



### Australian Genome Alliance

In 1929 David Rivett, the Chief Executive Officer of CSIR, the forerunner to CSIRO wrote:

*It will never do for us to hand over our fundamental problems to Britain. We must let our own men try their teeth on them since only in that way can they themselves reach a high level of efficiency. Even if the work could be done more effectively elsewhere, I think it would be wrong policy to hand over the bigger questions to anybody else.*

The days of colonialism in science have largely passed. Australian scientists are disproportionately represented at the cutting edge and do not hang back to apply the fundamental discoveries made in Europe and the USA. David Rivett would be well pleased with our aggressive approach to science, with a possible exception in the field of genomics.

In the last decade the availability of genome sequences has revolutionized basic genetic research in model systems, humans and, increasingly, in a plethora of other organisms. It has provided the tools to address significant issues in agriculture, the environment and human health. While Australians working in this country and overseas have made noteworthy contributions to the genome sequencing efforts, the high costs involved have meant that, as a nation, we have baulked at a heavy involvement.

Contrary to the predictions of many, globally, genome sequencing has steadily increased since the completion of the human project. Improvements in sequencing technologies have reduced costs, extending the reach of this approach to many species of both basic and applied interest.

Australia has invested heavily in research that would be accelerated if genome sequences were available. In some cases the lack of a genome sequence has substantially increased the cost of research. And yet our investment in genome sequencing has been limited. The bold decision by the Victorian State Government to support the tamar wallaby genome project stands out as a defining exception.

Genome sequencing affords the opportunity for us to more fully understand our unique flora and fauna, to combat pests and diseases of our agriculture and to more intelligently manage human health.

Australian scientists stand ready to capitalize on the data that would flow from a range of genome projects but must wait for the funding to be provided. It is my con-

viction that we cannot wait too long. Borrowing from Rivett, it would be wrong for us, due to a lack of vision or action, to hand over the bigger questions, our resources and our competitive advantage to other nations. Hence, the Genetics Society of AustralAsia has endorsed the lobbying efforts mounted by a group of Australian researchers, the Australian Genome Alliance ([www.genomealliance.org.au](http://www.genomealliance.org.au)). Both GSA and the Australian Genome Alliance fully appreciate that current ARC and NHMRC budgets do not have the capacity to fund large scale genome projects. It is critical that the funding of such projects does not occur at the expense of other research. To quote John Mattick, Director of the Institute for Molecular Bioscience at the University of Queensland (from Australian Life Scientist Jan 2005)

It is best to fund [genomics projects] completely separately from the existing research funding agencies – and it's important that any funding designated for genome research doesn't result in a diminishing of general research funding by the NHMRC or ARC.

If Australia is to engage in large scale genomics research it should be managed through a separate agency (Genome Australia) and the total funding pie needs to be enlarged.

Over the last year the Australian Genome Alliance has worked hard to establish an ongoing dialogue on the genomics agenda with the Federal Government. On February 8 a conference on the future of genomics in Australia will be held in Parliament House, Canberra. The impact of the meeting will define the road ahead. However, it does help to remember that in the political process there is more evolution than revolution.

*Contributed by Phil Batterham, University of Melbourne*



### Federal Budget 2006

*Science funding, education, and the most recent federal budget*

**Research.** Medical research was the major beneficiary of the current government's budget released on May 9th, 2006. The NHMRC will receive an increase of \$500 million dollars over the next 4 years to support granting schemes. An additional \$170 million was specifically targeted for 65 new fellowships over the next 9 years for researchers seeking cures to disease. Lastly, \$235 million in funds have been earmarked for infrastructure development of research facilities including the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research, and the Howard Florey Institute, Garvan and Victor Chang Institutes, and the Murdoch Children's Research Institute. No funding increases were announced for the Australian Research

Council.

**Education.** The government will spend \$16.6 billion on education during 2006-2007 (an increase of \$5.8 billion over ten years ago). \$64 million will be dedicated to TAFE and apprenticeship training. Universities will receive an extra \$96 million in capital funds. The Australian National University (\$125), Bond University (\$5), and The University of Wollongong (\$12) are to be the recipients of additional targeted funds. The ceiling on government student loans will be raised for all tertiary programs to \$80,000 and to \$100,000 for the professional degrees dentistry, medicine, and veterinary science. Although these budget numbers represent increases critics point out that funding levels are not keeping pace with those of other OECD countries.

Labor's response. The budget reply by the opposition leader did not address funding for basic research and focused on perceived inadequacies in proposed TAFE schemes.

*Contributed by Beth McGraw, University of Queensland*



### Federation of Australian Scientific and Technological Societies

Report from AGM  
20 November 2006

The Genetics Society of AustralAsia is a member of FASTS, a lobby group which "works to influence science and technology policy for the economic, environmental and social benefit of Australia". FASTS represents 60,000 Australian scientists and technologists through their societies (<http://www.fast.org/>).

Meeting started at 9.30am with the Presidents Report. Points made during the meeting include:  
Productivity Commission Review – FASTS had undertaken submissions to the PCR by encouraging Societies to submit themselves and through a FASTS Discussion paper. The PCR has since been released.

Science & Maths Education – the President suggested that a shift in direction for SME may now occur following the appointment of Julie Bishop at the Federal Govt level and Jim Peacock as the Chief Scientist.

ARC announcements – FASTS had discussed the timing of ARC announcements with the federal Govt and announcements should now be made earlier in future funding rounds.

Australian Bureau of Statistics data – a paper regarding the utility of reporting ABS data has been submitted to

Treasury and the Minister for Science Education and Technology and they have agreed to endeavour to fund a revision of the current data requirements.

Some general discussion regarding RQFs and that it is impossible to evaluate their impact until funding levels are known.

Treasurers report - \$15,000 in deficit this year some due to society subscriptions being lower.

Two workshops were held – the morning session was devoted to determining whether Science Meets Parliament was still a useful undertaking should or perhaps FASTS should adopt a new format. Considerable discussion was held with no clear consensus so the Executive will now meet to discuss further. The afternoon session was devoted to discussing how to stop declining Society memberships with presentations from both the Australian Institute of Physicists and a commercial company that specialises in arresting declining memberships.

Meeting closed at 4.00PM and was followed by a dinner at which Jenny Macklin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Shadow Minister for Education, Training, Science & Research) spoke.

*Contributed by Linda Broadhurst, CSIRO*



### David Guthrie Catcheside FAA, FRS

David Catcheside made major contributions to Genetics in three main areas. These were the analysis of the effects of radiation on chromosome breakage (in the 1930s-40s in Cambridge, UK), the biochemical genetics of micro-organisms (1950s in Cambridge and Adelaide), and the genetic control of recombination (1960s-70s in Birmingham, UK and Canberra).



He realised early that molecular biology could provide answers to basic questions in Genetics, and took up work on *Neurospora crassa* soon after Beadle and Tatum had evidence for the one gene: one enzyme hypothesis. In an extension of this, he was among the first to realise that although lack of complementation defined allelic mutations, some alleles could in fact show complementation because defects in individual polypeptide products could

be partially overcome if they formed multimeric proteins with the defective polypeptide encoded by the other allele.

His later major discovery was that recombination at specific sites in chromosomes of *Neurospora* was repressed by dominant genes elsewhere in the genome. These recombination (rec) genes were responsible for several short regions, and further, some of these regions showed genetic variation in their sensitivity to the rec gene effect (cog regions, short for recognition). The molecular basis of this intricate fine-tuning of recombination rates has been the continuing focus of study of his son, David E. A. Catcheside, at Flinders University in Adelaide.

David Guthrie Catcheside was the first Professor of Genetics in Australia. This was in 1952, when he took up a position at the Waite Agricultural Research Institute at the University of Adelaide. Although he stayed only four years, he helped establish fundamental research programs, and rigorous teaching of Genetics that attracted many to the field, not only during this period but in a continuing stream that persists to today.

He returned to Australia at the ANU in 1964, first as Professor of Genetics in the JCSMR, and then as founding Director of the Research School of Biological Sciences in 1967. He found time to continue his work on rec genes during this busy period, a time that included creating the School and later planning the new building. During this time he served a term as President of the Genetics Society of Australia. He retired in 1972.

David's influence on Genetics has been deep. His books, *Genetics of Micro-organisms* (1951) and *The Genetics of Recombination* (1977) were very influential. More particularly, the many undergraduates, and the 38 graduate students he supervised, have spread his imaginative but sensible and honest approach to scientific discovery in Genetics throughout Australia.

Fincham J R S & John B 1996 David Guthrie Catcheside 1907-1994. *Historical Records of Australian Science* 10, 393-407 (This article is also available online at <http://www.science.org.au/academy/memoirs/catcheside.htm>)

McCann DA & Batterham P 1994 Australian genetics: a brief history. *Genetica* 90, 81-114

*Contributed by David Smyth, Monash University*



### D. G. Catcheside Prize

The D. G. Catcheside Prize has been established to honour the memory of the eminent geneticist Professor David G.

Catcheside (1907-1995) by recognizing the achievements of the top Australian doctoral student in the field of Genetics. The prize is made possible by the generous support of Professor D. G. Catcheside's family (Professor David E. A. Catcheside, Mrs Pamela Catcheside and Mrs Patricia Michell).

The 2006 recipient of the D. G. Catcheside Prize is Dr. Marnei Blewitt

Dr. Blewitt completed her PhD at the University of Sydney, under the supervision of Associate Professor Emma Whitelaw. During the course of her PhD, Dr. Blewitt designed and established a sensitised ENU mutagenesis screen for modifiers of epigenetic reprogramming in the mouse. The epigenetic state of a locus plays a critical role in determining whether or not the gene will be transcribed. Epigenetic reprogramming of



the genome occurs during both primordial germ cell development, and early embryogenesis, in order that the epigenetic marks are cleared and reset between generations. Occasionally, it appears that this epigenetic reprogramming of some genes is incomplete and inheritance of the epigenetic state is observed across generations. Transgenerational epigenetic inheritance such as this, is of particular interest since it alters the way we think about the inheritance of phenotypic traits. However, very little is known about the genes that control epigenetic reprogramming. The screen was designed to identify such genes. Analogous screens for modifiers of position effect variegation in *Drosophila*, carried out more than a decade ago, identified proteins such as HP1 and Su(var)3-9.

The screen has produced 13 mutant lines, consisting of both suppressors and enhancers of variegation, each of which are linked to different chromosomal locations. Six of these were identified in a screen for dominant mutations, four of which Dr. Blewitt went on to study in some detail. All four are semi-dominant and show some degree of homozygous embryonic lethality and the viability of the mutants, in some cases, depends on sex. For example, homozygous females of one of these mutations, die at mid-gestation, and do not appear to undergo normal X-inactivation.

These mutations also effect silencing at an endogenous allele that displays epigenetic inheritance, the Agouti

viable yellow (Avy) allele. The Avy allele is controlled by a retrotransposon. In all cases, the mutations displayed sex-specific effects. That is, each mutation had either a female- or male-specific effect on expression of the Avy allele. This finding, combined with the sex specific lethality described above, suggests that there is a common mechanism between X-inactivation, and transgene and retrotransposon silencing.

Similar effects were reported in the *Drosophila* screen and have never been fully understood. They suggest that the sex chromosomes act as sinks for proteins involved in gene silencing. It has been known for some time that early female mammalian embryos are developmentally retarded when compared with their male counterparts. This difference appears prior to sexual differentiation of the gonads and so cannot be explained by hormonal differences relating to sex. The research from Dr. Blewitt's PhD, raises the possibility that the entire X chromosome could be involved, by sequestering proteins controlling gene expression at autosomal loci. An extension of this idea is that epigenetic differences may play a role in phenotypic differences between the sexes. Dr. Blewitt's results have lead to several new theories relating to the establishment and inheritance of phenotypic traits, which are relevant many areas of genetics. The results were published in PNAS in May 2005 (102(21):7629-34)). Dr. Blewitt is now an NHMRC Peter Doherty Fellow at The Walter and Eliza Hall Institute, Melbourne.



### State, Territory and New Zealand News

#### Queensland

Two new appointments in Genetics at the University of Queensland

The School of Integrative Biology has recently made two new appointments in the area of genetics with several more to follow in the coming year. The goal of the recent hiring initiative has been to increase the school's core mass in researchers exploring the interface between genetics, ecology, and evolution.

Steve Chenoweth - Steve obtained his undergraduate degree from Griffith University in Environmental Science in 1992. He continued his postgraduate study at Griffith, doing his honours and PhD with Professor Jane Hughes. For his doctoral dissertation, Steve studied the comparative molecular population genetics of tropical estuarine fishes. After graduating 1999 Steve moved to the UK and developed his skills as a programmer with Credit Suisse First Boston in London. Missing the freedom of academic research, Steve returned to Australia and joined the laboratory of Mark Blows at UQ. Together they worked on the development of statistical methods for studying the genetic basis of adaptation. Steve was awarded an ARC Postdoctoral Fellowship (APD) in 2003 APD and continued working with Mark until late 2005.

In November 2005 Steve won a five year Australian Research Fellowship (ARF) via the ARC Discovery grant programme. Steve is interested in solving problems in genetics and evolutionary biology. His current research is focused on trying to understand the genetic basis of adaptive phenotypic evolution. Steve is tackling this problem using quantitative genetic analyses, experimental evolution, QTL mapping and studies of gene expression in *Drosophila*.

Cynthia Riginos - Cynthia did her undergraduate work at Haverford and Bryn Mawr Colleges but her favourite semester was spent studying "abroad" at Melbourne Uni. At some point she realized that genetics was not synonymous with *Drosophila* and joined the lab of Michael Nachman at the University of Arizona to look at genetic connectivity in reef fishes. In 2000, Cynthia finished her PhD in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology and moved to Duke University and the lab of Cliff Cunningham, having won a fellowship in Evolutionary Genomics and Molecular Evolution. Her fellowship research investigated the molecular evolution of a gamete recognition gene in mussels. Cynthia's research interests centre on the interplay between gene flow and natural selection, particularly in marine animals. These genetic processes are of great biological interest as they determine how genes, organisms, and populations respond to their ecological surroundings and are also central to the process of speciation. Mussels (genus *Mytilus*) are classic marine invertebrates for studying these sorts of processes and have been Cynthia's primary focus for the last six years. One major ongoing project looks at how the genomic regions of two hybridising species differentially respond to a salinity gradient.

*Beth McGraw*



### Upcoming Conferences

#### **23rd International Conference on Yeast Genetics and Molecular Biology**

Melbourne Exhibition and Convention Centre, 1-6 July, 2007

<http://www.yeast2007.org/>

Yet another of the world's best genetics conferences is coming to Australia! This time it will be the 23rd International Conference on Yeast Genetics and Molecular Biology (ICYGMB). I would argue that yeast is the best model for genetics research and it is certainly a well known contributor to molecular biology. Even the latest Nobel Prize in Chemistry goes to Roger Kornberg is for discoveries made in yeast.

This meeting is held every second year and it will be the

first time it has been held in Australia. It is expected to attract around 1000 yeast researchers from around the globe and is eagerly anticipated by our local researchers, known as The Australian Yeast Group [[www.australianyeastgroup.org](http://www.australianyeastgroup.org)]. The program for the meeting is well advanced and will include Keynote speakers Gerry Fink and Sir Paul Nurse as well as 30 symposia speakers.

Conference themes include:

- Yeasts in brewing, wine and biotechnology
- Protein transport and turnover
- Membrane proteins and lipids
- Other yeast and fungi as model systems
- Cytoskeleton
- Yeasts as pathogens: biology and clinical concerns
- Post-translational modifications and proteomics
- Transcription and control of gene expression
- Chromosomes - structure and inheritance
- Organelle division and inheritance
- Cell signalling
- Yeast models for human disease and ageing
- Bioinformatics and genome-wide studies
- Nuclear structure/ organization

There will be considerable public engagement with the final day devoted to sessions on the contributions of yeast to our lives in the 21st century. Topics will include:

- The supply of insulin produced in yeast to diabetics
- Prevention of liver cancer and hepatitis by yeast-derived vaccines
- New vaccine for cervical cancer
- The role of yeast in cancer research
- Yeast in neurodegenerative disease research
- Yeast in the screening of new drugs
- Yeast in the development of a malaria vaccine
- New therapeutic antibodies for cancers from yeast
- Yeast and contributions to the energy crisis

Please keep informed up updates on our website and register your interest to attend. We look forward to seeing you there.

*Ian Macreadie*

*Conference Chair, on behalf on The Australian Yeast Group*



**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting  
of the Genetics Society of Australasia, Inc  
Monday, 14th August 2006  
Department of Genetics,  
University of Melbourne**

Meeting opened at 1:00 pm,  
Chaired by Prof Jeremy Timmis, Vice-President.

**1. Apologies.**

Coral Warr, David Smyth, Margaret Byrne.

**2. Minutes from 2005 AGM meeting in New Zealand.**

Three minor corrections to the minutes were noted. Motion to accept minutes as true and accurate after amendment moved by Jenny Graves. Seconded Richar Todd. Unanimously approved.

**3. Matters arising**

Tasmanian representative. The vacant position was filled by Dr Rene Vaillancourt on the recommendation of the committee.

**4. Treasurer's Report**

Alex Andrianopoulos tabled the Treasurer's Report prepared by Margaret Byrne.

There was a minor loss for the last financial year. This is primarily because Gsa had no financial stake in the annual conference which was run jointly with MBE in New Zealand. However, this is the third year in a row with deficit. Registration costs for teh annual meeting in 2007 were discussed and it was pointed out the registration in previous years was between \$200-250.

Motion to accept the treasurer's report moved by Jenny Graves. Seconded Richar Todd. Unanimously approved.

**5. Secretary for Sustaining Member's Report**

No report tabled

**7. Secretary's Report**

Catcheside Prize – There were five applicants all deemed excellent by the committee. The prize was awarded to Marnie Blewitt who did his PhD in Emma Whitelaw's lab at the University of Sydney. This continues to be a very successful program for GSA. The Catcheside family have made a generous bequest to teh society to maintain this excellent prize for your geneticists.

Smith White Travel Award - No prize was awarded this year.

Summer Studentships - The committee decided to discontinue the Summer Studentship program.

Motion to accept the secretary's report moved by Jenny Graves. Seconded Richar Todd. Unanimously approved.

**8. Election of Office Bearers**

Election of office bearers for 2006-2007:

Call for nominations to the Committee

All current members were willing to stand with the exception of Jenny Marshall-Graves.

No new nominations were received.

Committee was confirmed by unanimous vote.

Following people elected to the Committee unopposed:

President	Jeremy Timmis
Vice President	Vacant
Secretary	Alex Andrianopoulos
Treasurer	Margaret Byrne
Immediate Past President	Ary Hoffmann
Secretary for Sustaining Members	Phil Batterham
ACT representative	Linda Broadhurst
NSW representative	Jenny Donald
NZ representative	Richard Newcombe
QLD representative	Elizabeth McGraw
SA representative	Jack Da Silva
TAS representative	Rene Vaillancourt
VIC representative	Yvonne Parsons
WA representative	Margaret Byrne

Vice President position remains vacant. The committee was charged with the responsibility to identify a suitable Vice-President.

Jeremy Timmis extended his thanks to Ary Hoffmann for his presidency over the last two years and also to the rest of the committee for their work over the last two years. Moved by Jeremy Timmis. Seconded Richar Todd. Unanimously approved.

**9. General Business**

A. Report on GSA 2006/International Human Genetics Congress, Queensland

Jenny Marshall-Graves reported on behalf of Beth McGraw.

There were 40 GSA registrants at this joint meeting. Attendenace at the GSA symposia was very good and it was noted that many human geneticists attended these sessions. The MJD White address had over 400 attendees.

**B. GSA 2007**

Report from Kathy Below. convenor.

Possible attendance numbers were discussed with respect to booking lecture theatres. Ait 250 seat theatre has been reserved. It was suggested that the orgnising committee book the larger venue and see how long it can be held. An early bird registration rate will be offered. In the event that registrations exceed theatre capacity, the commttee will source a video link.

The committee is organising electronic processing of funds through the university.

It was suggested that the committee discuss trade support with the secretary for sustaining members. Publishers of Genetics textbooks were also mentioned as potential sources of support. The committee plan to provide a number of different sponsorship packages.

**C. Honourary members**

Jeremy Timmis proposed that all past members of the society who have retired should be identified and made

honourary members. There was unanimous support for this proposal. Presently the society has 11 honourary members.

Moved by Jeremy Timmis. Seconded Alex Andrianopoulos. Unanimously accepted.

#### D. Constitutional amendments

Three minor amendments were proposed; one with respect to the new name of the society and the other two with respect to the composition of the committee under the 'CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERSHIP' section. The first amendment was to change (c) to specify the location of the ordinary member and the second the add an early career position.

#### Proposed amendment 1.

Change all instances of 'Genetics Society of Australia' to 'Genetics Society of AustralAsia'.

#### Proposed amendments 2 and 3.

Delete '5 ordinary members' in (c) and replace with 'up to one member from each state, territory or affiliated countries' and add '(d) one early career office bearer' to read as follows:

#### CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERSHIP

11. (1) Subject in the case of the first members of the committee to section 21 of the Act, the committee shall consist of -

- (a) the office-bearers of the Society;
- (b) the immediate past president; and
- (c) up to one member from each state, territory or affiliated countries,
- (d) one early career office bearer

each of whom shall be elected by an annual general meeting of the Society pursuant to rule 12. The president, past president and president elect shall have terms of two (2) years, while all other committee members shall have terms of one (1) year.

Proposed by Alex Andrianopoulos. Seconded Richard Todd. Unanimously accepted

Meeting closed 2.30.



### Contributions to Linkage

Linkage is the Genetics Society of Australia newsletter and all members are encouraged to submit articles for consideration. Please contact the Editors if you wish to contribute.



#### Editors

- Alex Andrianopoulos, University of Melbourne
- Beth McGraw, University of Queensland
- Yvonne Parsons, Latrobe University

