

Meeting Report:



The 12th Melbourne Protein Group (MPG) Student Symposium was held on July 11th at La Trobe University.

The MPG was an initiation of the *Lorne Conference on Protein Structure and Function* committee to establish a forum through which students involved in protein-related research in Victoria had the chance to come together to showcase their research. In 2009, the MPG became a special interest group of the Australian Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology and in 2010 became an affiliate of Proteomics and Metabolomics Victoria. MPG's goal is to provide opportunities for young Victorian researchers interested in topics related to all aspects of protein's function, structure and their role in health and disease to present their research data, network with other students, guest speakers, trade delegates.

This year, the 12th annual MPG Student Symposium was located in the new LIMS building at La Trobe University. We were extremely fortunate to have keynote speakers, Dr. Fasseli Coulibaly (Monash University) and Dr Rowena Martin (Australian National University), share with us their research stories and career paths, and also hearing about the career path of Dr Sarah Meacham, former President of the Australian Society of Medical Research (ASMR) in the careers session. There were also oral presentations by six outstanding young researchers and a record 80 poster presentations!

The ATA Scientific Tilley prize for a promising up and coming young protein scientist was awarded to James Rickard, from John Silke's laboratory located at the *Walter & Eliza Hall Institute*. James spoke of his PhD project work that described the molecular basis for how cell death drives the process of inflammation.

In addition to the oral presentations, the 2013 meeting saw 80 student posters presented, all of which were sponsored by Agilent Technologies. After a "2 minute speed-science" poster contest, 4 poster prizes were awarded on the day. The winners included Viviane Richter, (*La Trobe University*); Carmen Klein Herenbrink, (*Monash University*); Briana Davie (*Monash Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences*); Michael Roy (*Walter & Eliza Hall Institute*).

Our career panel this year aimed to show our young scientists other options for their future

endeavors. Dr Sarah Meacham, former President of the Australian Society of Medical Research (ASMR) spoke to the audience about her broad experiences from more than 25 years of research and related experiences. Sarah is a Senior Scientist and leads a group at Prince Henry's Institute of Medical Research in the area of male reproduction, with a special interest in the hormonal control of somatic and germ cell development. Her take home message was that a PhD opens up a number of career paths not linked to bench science, such as policy development and project management. After her presentation, our keynote speakers joined Sarah for a panel Q & A session.

Finally, the MPG organizing committee would like to thank our sponsors who are essential for any successful symposium/conference especially when registration is free for all delegates! The major sponsors included The Lorne Protein Conference and La Trobe University. The Tilley award was sponsored by ATA Scientific and poster prizes were sponsored by Agilent Technologies. In addition the Symposium was very thankful to additional trade support from BioScientific, BMG LabTech, GeneSearch, Merck, Promega, Pall Life Sciences, Qiagen and VLSCI.

Marc Kvanskul, 2013 Chair



Prof Leanne Tilley with the ATA Scientific Tilley Award winner James Rickard

Poster Session at MPG 2013

