



AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY FOR BIOPHYSICS

Website address

<http://www.biophysics.org.au/>

Newsletter 2006/2

ASB News

Welcome to the **second ASB Newsletter for 2006**.

The preparations for the [Annual Meeting of ASB](#) in Sydney are underway (see **Item 1**). I am also very pleased to report that the [ASB Newsletter website](#) has been archived in the Pandora Archive of the National Library (see **Item 2**).

Secretary General of the IUPAB, Professor F.G. Parak has sent an invitation to the biophysical societies around the world to send proposals for the topics and invited speakers for the [IUPAB Conference 2008 in Long Beach](#) (see **Meeting Reports & Other News, Item 1**).

The deadline for nominations for this year's [Eureka Prizes](#) is approaching. Alert your colleagues or consider nominating them for one of the prizes this year. Self-nominations are encouraged (see **Item 9**).

Finally, I wish to thank our Vice-President, A/Prof Brett Hambly and Dr Pierre Moens, our NSW representative, who on behalf of ASB attended this year's "[Science Meets Parliament](#)", for their brief reports on their experience in meeting politicians in Canberra (see **Item 8**).

My best wishes for success to all of you who have submitted grant applications in the 2006 round.

Boris

Boris Martinac

President, Australian Society for Biophysics

1. ASB 2006

The preparations for the **ASB 2006 Meeting in Sydney** are underway. Tentative dates for the Meeting are **Monday December 11 - Wednesday 13, 2006**. If anyone has any objections concerning the chosen dates for the Meeting do not miss the chance to express your opinion. The organizers of the Meeting, Hans Coster and Mary Beilby, have proposed that the conference be held in the **School of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering at the University of Sydney**. There are excellent rooms for lectures, poster presentations and coffee breaks as well as an outdoor courtyard with a BBQ. This venue will be free of charge. The School will be listed as a major sponsor. College accommodation at the Women's College (open to both genders out of term time) is available at present for the tentative dates given above. Other colleges may also be available. Room rates are \$80 single or \$112 double. Breakfast is included. Room rate for rooms with ensuite bathrooms are \$99 single or \$135 (double). Only a limited number of ensuite rooms are available. For dinner there are many restaurants in the vicinity of the university within a couple of minutes walk (down King Street Newtown).

At present, Hans and Mary are putting together a program for the Meeting. If you are planning to participate at the meeting this year, please indicate a topic area that you would like to speak on. The latter would help Hans and Mary in planning sessions and themes. Please send your e-mails directly to Hans at hcoster@usyd.edu.au.

Looking forward to seeing all of you at the ASB Meeting this year in Sydney.

2. ASB Newsletters in Pandora Archive of the National Library

In addition to the archive on our own website, the Executive Council of the Australian Society for Biophysics has recently given permission to archive the ASB Newsletter website <http://www.biophysics.org.au/> in the **Pandora Archive of the National Library**. The National Library of Australia aims to build a comprehensive collection of Australian publications to ensure that Australians have access to their documentary heritage now and in the future. The Library has traditionally collected items in print, but it is also committed to preserving electronic publications of lasting cultural value. **PANDORA**, Australia's Web Archive, was set up by the Library in 1996 to enable the archiving and provision of long-term access to online Australian publications. Since then online publications considered to have national significance have been identified and archived. Additional information about PANDORA can be found on the National Library's server at: <http://pandora.nla.gov.au/index.html>.

3. Notice of Bob Robertson Award

This is a brief announcement that nominations will be called in June for **The Bob Robertson Award of the Australian Society for Biophysics**. If you are thinking of nominating someone this year for the Award please visit the ASB website at <http://www.biophysics.org.au/> for eligibility criteria, application procedure and other details.

4. EABS & BSJ 2006

The preparations for the **5th East Asia Biophysics Symposium (EABS) and the 44th Annual Meeting of the Biophysical Society of Japan** to be held from **November 12 to 16, 2006** at **Okinawa Convention Center**, are well underway. The East Asian Biophysics Symposium (EABS) is held every three years under the auspices of the EABS Steering Committee. It has been providing members of regional biophysics societies of China Beijing, China Taipei, Hong Kong, Japan and Korea with an international forum on a

broad field of pure and applied biophysics to promote scientific progress. This year the Biophysical Society of Japan (BSJ) is the host of the **5th EABS**, which is jointly organized with the **44th Annual Meeting of the BSJ**. A special feature of the **5th EABS in 2006** is that the EABS organizing Committee has decided to expand the geographical area of participating countries to south east Asia, south central Asia and Oceania to make this congress an **International Asia-Oceania Biophysics Forum**, which will thus become a core regional center of the IUPAB. Ray Norton, as the representative of ASB, will join the Steering Committee of representatives of biophysical societies from countries in Asia and Oceania at the **Pre-meeting of EABS & BSJ 2006** held from **April 21 to 23 in Okinawa**.

This year's program will cover a wide range of topics in contemporary biophysics including Single molecule Biophysics, Cellular signal transduction, Biophysics and disease, Drug design and delivery, Systems biology, Modeling complex systems and many more. A session on **"Mechano-sensing"** has been jointly organized by Masahiro Sokabe from the Nagoya School of Medicine and myself. Five talks have already been scheduled for the session. If you are interested in giving a talk or presenting a poster on this or a related subject please contact me at b.martinac@uq.edu.au. There is also Australian involvement in a symposium on **"Function and dynamics of protein systems"** at EABS. The organizers are Masahiro Shirakawa, Ray Norton and Hideo Akutsu. The speaker list has not yet been finalized. If you have suggestions or may be interested to participate please contact Ray Norton at rnorton@wehi.edu.au. Another session is on **"Metal-based sensor proteins"**. The session is being organized by Koichiro Ishimori from the Hokkaido University. Dr Ishimori is particularly interested in contributions from Australian researchers who work on metal-based sensor proteins in the regulation of gene expression, phosphorylation and other biological functions. Some travel funds will be available for young scientists. Details will be known sometime in April. Dr Ishimori may be contacted at koichiro@sci.hokudai.ac.jp.

Members of the ASB are strongly encouraged to consider participating at the **EABS 2006 Meeting** in November. It is an important regional event, which should further contribute to bring the ASB closer to the biophysical societies of our Asian neighbours. For further details on the EABS & JBS please check the website at <http://www.ics-inc.co.jp/eabs2006/index2.html>.

5. IUPAB 2014

A proposal for the **IUPAB in 2014 in Australia** was put forward at the **15th IUPAB Congress 2005 in Montpellier**. The proposal was agreed upon at our 2005 AGM in Canberra. As a Society we have to start preparing soon for promoting Australia as a site for the 2014 meeting.

ASB has thus far received invitations by the **Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre**, **Melbourne Convention + Visitors Bureau**, **Adelaide Convention Centre** as well as by the **Canberra Convention Bureau** to partner with them for a bid to host **IUPAB 2014**.

6. Satellite for IBRO World Congress 2007

The Metals, Membranes and Neuroscience IBRO satellite symposium will be held at **Bio21 at the University of Melbourne on Wednesday July 11th 2007**. It will consist of a series of talks by invited local and overseas speakers on the field and lunchtime and mixer poster sessions. Detailed program will be ready for the next newsletter and it and how to register and submit poster abstracts will appear on the ASB Web site, with links to the IBRO site. Until then for updates contact Cyril Curtain (ccurtain@unimelb.edu.au).

7. Australian Academy of Science News

The [Academy's latest Newsletter](#) (December 2005 - March 2006, [Number 64](#)) is now available online. The following excerpts from the Newsletter give a flavour of the recent news about the Academy and its activities:

- **Dr Jim Peacock, the Academy President**, has been appointed **Australia's new Chief Scientist**. He will provide advice to the Prime Minister and Ministers on science, technology and innovation issues, that currently include stem cell research, genetically modified food, energy and climate change.

- The [Australian Academy of Science](#) has designed a poster to celebrate the **Nobel Prize-winning research** of **Professor Barry Marshall FAA** and **Professor Robin Warren FAA**. A copy of the poster will be sent to every primary and secondary school across the nation. To accompany the poster, the Academy has developed a 'Nobel Australians' website, that celebrates Australian Nobel Prize winners (<http://www.science.org.au/nobel>).

- **Professor Xu Guanhua, Minister of Science and Technology, People's Republic of China**, visited the Academy and gave a public lecture entitled China's science and technology towards the new era. The talk focused on China's recently released National Long and Medium Term Science and Technology Development Plan, which outlines China's strategic science and technology policy for the next 15–20 years. A copy of the Minister's speech is at <http://www.science.org.au/events/16february06.htm>.

To access the Newsletter and for general Academy news see their website at <http://www.science.org.au>. The following are items from the [AAS President's Note of 30 March 2006](#):

- One of the most important events on the Academy's calendar, **Science at the Shine Dome** (which incorporates Annual General Meeting of the Academy), will run from 3-5 May this year. One of the highlights of the three-day event will be on Wednesday 3 May when our new Fellows present 10-minute talks on their research. This year's symposium, 'Science on the way to the hydrogen economy' will be held on [Friday 5 May](#). Expert Australian and international researchers will outline recent progress in the science that must be addressed to achieve a hydrogen economy. Programs and registration details for Science at the Shine Dome are being added to the Academy's website as they are finalised (www.science.org.au/sats2006/index.htm).

- The Department of Education, Science and Training is calling for nominations for the **Prime Minister's Science Prize 2006**. Since 2000, when it replaced the Australia Prize, the Prime Minister's Prize for Science has been awarded or co-awarded to seven scientists, all of whom are Fellows of the Academy. The prize is awarded for an outstanding specific achievement or series of related achievements in any area of science advancing human welfare or benefiting society. It is awarded to an individual or jointly to up to four individuals, and comprises a gold medallion, lapel pin, and a grant of \$300,000.

- Nominations are also called for the **Malcolm McIntosh Prize for Physical Scientist of the Year** and the **Science Minister's Prize for Life Scientist of the Year**. Both are awarded to scientists who are thirty-five years of age or younger, and are designed to honour excellent research and to highlight early-stage career scientists who are producing world-class research.

The closing date for the prizes is **Friday 19 May 2006, 5.00 pm AEST**. Information and nomination forms are available at <https://sciencegrants.dest.gov.au/SciencePrize>.

8. FASTS News



Science meets Parliament 2006 was held on Tuesday 28th of February and Wednesday 1st of March. The ASB was represented by three of our members at the SmP event this year. A/Prof Brett Hambly from the University of Sydney, our Vice-President, Dr Paul Smith from the ANU and Dr Pierre Moens from the University of New England, our NSW State Representative attended the event. Brief reports by Brett Hambly and Pierre Moens follow.

Brett Hambly wrote:

The Federation of Australian Scientific and Technological Societies (FASTS), of which ASB has been a long standing member, has been organizing an annual 2 day event called Science-Meets-Parliament (SmP) for nearly a decade. It transpires that SmP has apparently been extremely successful in raising the profile of scientific research in the minds of Federal politicians, who of course ultimately make the financial decisions that determine research funding. Specifically, FASTS claims that increases in funding and re-organisation, within both ARC and NHMRC, have been substantially influenced over the last few years by the positive impression that has been created within the minds of Cabinet members as a result of SmP. Despite being a small Society, ASB has consistently endeavoured to be represented at SmP, I believe somewhat to our credit, since I noticed that many larger Societies elected not to do so, for whatever reasons.

So what did your ASB representatives (Brett Hambly, Univ Sydney, Pierre Moens Univ New England and Paul Smith, ANU) actually achieve at SmP? I must say that I was sceptical about the usefulness of SmP prior to attending, especially as more important things, such as writing grants, loomed large on the horizon. However, having attended I feel that in fact SmP is extremely important for the continued success of research in this country, whether it be in Universities, in the CSIRO or indeed whether it be in commercial companies as well.

Our first day was spent being briefed about “the process”. How to talk to politicians, what they might want to know, why it was important to engage their enthusiasm, and so on. The importance of the “long term relationship” was stressed – today’s Opposition may be next decade’s government, today’s Backbencher may be next year’s Minister for Health etc. It is essential to get across simple messages, for example, when speaking to a lawyer politician, just simply explaining, preferably with personal examples, that Australia punches above its weight in science in international terms is an important message to make. This in turn hopefully leads to long term attitude change and ultimately appropriate funding. Day two was spent meeting the politicians, at breakfast, lunch and dinner, and in their offices. A Labour politician I spoke with put it very simply – there are essentially no votes in funding science, but politicians still fund it, because functions like SmP keeps the importance of research alive within their collective minds. Altogether ASB representatives spoke with about a dozen politicians between us – all of us felt that we had made some impact, although time will tell!

Pierre Moens wrote:

Science meets Parliament was an interesting experience. During the first day of this two day event, we had the chance to have a brief introduction on lobbying and were told the dos and don’ts. One issue that struck me was the time frame in which politicians are

working. As scientists, most of us are used to think that “long-term” means several years. For politicians, “long-term” means in the next month, “medium-term” means in the next two weeks and “short-term” means in the next hours. They want to see the results of their actions preferably before the next election.

We also had the chance to hear our new Minister for Education, Science and Training, the Honourable Julie Bishop. She gave a nice talk and mentioned that while other countries such as China and India are dramatically increasing their research budgets; Australian scientists need to be more creative!

On the second day, I had the chance to meet with the Speaker of the House; the Honourable David Hawker and later with the Labour Senator for the Northern Territory; Trish Crossin to discuss a selected topic on bringing science into rural Australia. I was quite disappointed with our meeting with the Speaker. He seemed to very diplomatically change the topic of discussion to side issues every time we tried to make our point. Maybe, it was because I was not used to lobbying. However, this feeling was shared by the two other scientists, who were also at the meeting with the Speaker. My meeting with Senator Trish Crossin was much more positive. Although she was mostly interested in topical issues related to her electorate, the meeting was open and lasted an hour. Interesting points were raised during the meeting regarding nuclear waste, weed management and science education (in particular the lack of mathematics as a foundation for science).

My general feeling after the SmP event is that politicians live in a different world than scientists. Although sometimes frustrating and disappointing, these sorts of events give a chance to both worlds to meet each other. It gives us a chance to remind our political leaders that science is important and economically beneficial for the country even if it is not in a time frame compatible with their next election process.

9. Eureka Prizes

The 2006 Australian Museum Eureka Prizes are now open with 10 prizes to reward outstanding Australian research. The prizes include:

- \$10,000 Australian Catholic University Eureka Prize for Research in Ethics
- \$10,000 ATSE Clunies Ross Eureka Prize for Leadership in Business Innovation
- \$10,000 Botanic Gardens Trust Eureka Prize for Biodiversity Research
- \$10,000 British Council Eureka Prize for Innovation and Leadership in Environmental Science
- \$10,000 CSIRO Eureka Prize for Leadership in Science
- \$10,000 Land & Water Australia Eureka Prize for Water Research
- \$10,000 NSW Ministry for Science and Medical Research Jamie Callachor Eureka Prize for Medical Research
- \$10,000 Sherman Eureka Prize for Environmental Research
- \$10,000 University of New South Wales Eureka Prize for Scientific Research
- \$10,000 Voiceless Eureka Prize for Research which Replaces the Use of Animals or Animal Products

Alert your colleagues, science communicators, teachers and students to the opportunities provided by this year's prizes. Self-nominated entries are encouraged. For full details and entry forms go to the Australian Museum website www.amonline.net.au/eureka. **Entries close Friday 5 May 2006.**

10. Tax-exempt Donations Request for the R N Robertson Fellowship

A reminder that donations to the above fellowship fund are tax exempt. For more information contact **Dr Hank Greenway** (<mailto:hank@cyllene.uwa.edu.au>) or see ASB Newsletter 2004/2.

11. Please periodically check our ASB Website for any up-to-date news items (<http://www.biophysics.org.au/>)

In addition for ASB members, if you have any images from your work that could be included, please consult Adelle (<mailto:A.Coster@unsw.edu.au>).

Meeting Reports & Other News

ASB members, from now on please keep me up-to-date with any other news. Your contributions are most welcome!

1. IUPAB 2008

The next **IUPAB Conference in 2008** will take place in **Long Beach, California**. In order to prepare for the congress, the council of IUPAB will meet in September 2006 in Ottawa. At this meeting the invited speakers will be selected and proposed to the Program Committee., Secretary General of the IUPAB, Professor F.G. Parak has invited the representatives of biophysical societies around the world to help the IUPAB council to get an attractive program representing the wide spread topics of biophysics as well as the research in all parts of the world. Please send proposals for the topics as well as proposals for invited speakers **before August 31** to me at b.martinac@uq.edu.au. In proposing speakers you should not limit yourself to Australia. Please nominate scientists who you believe are the best in their fields. The ASB should not miss the chance to have its input into the organization of the Conference.

2. BSJ open-access journal for Biophysics

The Biophysical Society of Japan has launched **Biophysics**, an open-access journal of biophysics, which is accessible to anyone in the world. The journal is published in English to promote biophysical research in the Asian-Pacific area. **Biophysics** is an electronic journal covering a wide range of topics in biophysics, with no limitations in page number, colour figures and movies. Anyone interested in submitting his/her work to the journal can access it at www.biophys.jp/index-e.html.

3. Heineken Prizes

The Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences in Amsterdam has announced this year's laureate of the prestigious Heineken Prizes for Biochemistry and Biophysics 2006. Professor Sir Alec J. Jeffreys, Department of Genetics, University of Leicester, United Kingdom, has been awarded this year's Heineken Prize 'for his discovery of the genetic fingerprint'. This prize is a part of five international scientific Heineken Prizes of USD 150,000 each that awards outstanding international scientists and scholars. The other four scientific prizes are in the fields of Medicine, History, Environmental Sciences and Cognitive Science. The sixth Heineken Prize is for Art (worth EUR 50,000). The Heineken Prizes will be presented on Thursday 28 September 2006 in a special session of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences at the Beurs van Berlage Building in Amsterdam. The Heineken Prizes are awarded every two years. For background information on Heineken Prizes, please visit the following websites at <http://www.knaw.nl/heinekenprizes> and <http://www.heinekenprizes.org>.

Other Upcoming Events

2006

1. From Stars to Brains: Pathways to Consciousness in the Natural World

A conference organised by Manning Clark House in honour of **Professor Paul Davies**, following the occasion of his 60th birthday will be held at the **Shine Dome, Academy of Science, Canberra, 20-21 June, 2006**. The motto of the conference **'We were meant to be here'** is based on Davies' publications exploring pathways starting from the Big Bang, subatomic particles, atoms and molecules, through to the origin of life and intelligence, realms of human consciousness and spiritual dimensions. This multidisciplinary conference will examine links between astronomy, planetary science, physical principles and information theory relevant to the evolution of biogenic molecules, and the emergence of living systems - culminating in creative artistic and spiritual expressions of human consciousness. For further details please visit the website at: <http://www.manningclark.org.au/events/stars/index.html>.

2. The Structure and Function of Large Molecular Assemblies

The 38th crystallographic course at the Ettore Majorana Centre will be held in Erice, Italy on June 9 to 18, 2006. The purpose and further details of the meeting can be found at <http://www.crystalerice.org/2006.htm>.

3. 17th International Mass Spectrometry Conference

The 17th International Mass Spectrometry Conference will be held at the end of summer 2006 in Prague, Czech Republic. For details please visit <http://www.imsc2006.org/>.

4. 9th International Summer School on Biophysics

9th International Summer School on Biophysics on **SUPRAMOLECULAR STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION** will be held in Rovinj (Red Island) in Croatia, 16 – 28 September 2006. A number of outstanding scientists including several Nobel Laureates will participate at the summer school. For further information please visit <http://www.irb.hr/biophysics>.

5. ComBio 2006

ComBio 2006 is scheduled to take place at the Brisbane Convention Centre in **September 24-28, 2006**. ComBio2006 is a combined conference of the ASBMB, ASPS, AuPS, ANZSCDB, NZSBMB and NZSPP. The Australian Physiological Society (AuPS) joins ComBio for the first time. The programme includes over 60 Symposia with two of them on Education. **Early Registration and Abstract Submission Deadline is 23 June 2006**. Online registration and abstract submission will be available in early May. For further details please visit the website at <http://www.asbmb.org.au/combio2006/>.

6. HPBB 2006

4th International Conference on High Pressure Bioscience and Biotechnology will be held in Tsukuba, Japan in **September 25-29, 2006**.

2007

1. 51st Annual Meeting of the Biophysical Society (USA)

The 2007 Annual Meeting of the US Biophysical Society will be held in Baltimore, Maryland, March 3 – 7. The details of the meetings will become available at the following website: <http://www.biophysics.org/meetings/future.htm>. Professor Frances Separovic, ASB Public Officer is organizing a Membrane Structure and Assembly Subgroup symposium at the Meeting. The symposium, "Breaking the Barrier with Antimicrobial Peptides", will be held in Baltimore on March 3. The invited speakers are: Richard Eband, Huey Haung, Maria Luisa Mangoni, A. Ramamoorthy, Mark Sansom, Yechiel Shai, Anne Ulrich and Michael Zasloff, so it promises to be an exciting afternoon.

2. 3rd International Graduate Summer School: Biophotonics '07

The 3rd International Graduate Summer School Biophotonics '07 is scheduled for June 2007 in Ven, Sweden. The actual dates, topics and lectures are currently being planned. For further details please visit <http://www.biop.dk/biophotonics07/>.

3. International School on Mathematical and Theoretical Crystallography

The International School on Mathematical and Theoretical Crystallography will be held, under the sponsorship of the IUCR, in Havana, Cuba, at the Institute for Materials and Reagents, University of Havana, from the 14 to the 19 of January, 2007. For further details please visit <http://www.cristalografia.net/havana2007/>.

4. 9th International Conference on Biology and Synchrotron Radiation

Following the 8th International conference on Biology and Synchrotron Radiation held in Japan, the next conference in this series will be held in the UK in August 2007. The main event (13th to 16th August, inclusive) will take place at the Manchester International Convention Centre. This will be followed for those with special interests by a visit to Diamond Light Source (on 17th August) at the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory in Oxfordshire. The sessions at Diamond will be primarily oriented towards the instrumentation and technology. For further details please visit <http://www.srs.ac.uk/bsr2007/>.

Notices & Special Reports - National News

Job Vacancies and Notices

We have implemented a Jobs page on the ASB website, which is being looked after very ably by Adelle Coster (<mailto:A.Coster@unsw.edu.au>). Please send notices to her.

Boris Martinac
President, Australian Society for Biophysics,
April, 2006

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