

NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2022



FROM THE ACvA LEADERSHIP

Welcome to 2022. The Omicron COVID variant certainly changed what people were expecting their summer holidays to look like but here we are in February with high hopes for the new year. Let's hope there are no major disruptions and a return to some in-person practices.

The first of those will be our upcoming Joint National Cardiovascular Implementation Priorities Roundtable to be held with the Cardiac Society of Australia and New Zealand and the National Heart Foundation of Australia. We're looking forward to the meaningful dialogue and concrete outcomes that occur when people sit down with a common purpose.

The independence of the Australian Research Council (ARC) and its funding process is something we strongly believe in. A thriving research sector needs consistency and transparency in the allocation of funding and to that end, we joined concerned colleagues in the research sector by writing an [open letter of support for the ARC](#) and maintaining the integrity of its independent and expert peer reviewed process.

In other news, we'd like to welcome our newest member organisations; the Australian [Cardiovascular Health and Rehabilitation Association \(ACRA\)](#) and [the University Wollongong](#). It's great to have you on board.

We're also welcoming another Flagship to our structure – Disease Mechanisms. Read on for more about this integral new flagship and how to get involved.

At the same time, we're saying good-bye to VentriClinical's Director, Anthony Murray. Anthony was instrumental in the realisation of a medtech clinical network. We'd like to thank him for his commitment and dedication to the establishment of VentriClinical and wish him all the best in his next role. Watch this space for details of who will pick up on the fantastic legacy Anthony has left in networking our CV medtech space.

ACvA ACTIVITIES



New Disease Mechanisms Flagship

Half of the research workforce represented in our membership describe themselves as Basic Scientists. This percentage is even higher in our EMCR community.

Last year, we formed a Basic Science Advisory Subcommittee to consider how best to improve the ACvA's support for these members. Discussions included proposed

advocacy approaches, our existing flagship structure, and the role of the ACvA Scientific Advisory Board.

We're excited to announce that after consultation with Board Directors, Flagship Directors, and executive representatives from several professional societies the Subcommittee proposed to introduce a 7th flagship, Disease Mechanisms, to the ACvA organisational structure.

We hope Disease Mechanisms, as a name, expresses engagement with Basic Scientists as well as proximity to patients and a closer integration with the broader ACvA community.

We'd like to thank the Basic Science Advisory Subcommittee for this great outcome. Christina Bursill (SAHMRI) and Jamie Vandenberg (VCCRI) co-chaired and members included Judy de Haan (Baker IDI), Ben Freedman (HRI), Richard Harvey (VCCRI), David Howells (University of Tasmania), Nathan Palpant (IMB), Alex Pinto (Baker IDI) Nicola Smith (UNSW), Jibran Wali (University of Sydney) and Morag Young (Baker IDI).

Basic scientists, if you're interested in being part of driving real change in the sector, then keep an eye out for the Disease Mechanisms Flagship Advisory Group EOI coming soon.

The Advisory Group to this Flagship will map existing strengths, recommend strategies to engage with key research priorities, identified through the Clinical Themes initiative and develop a strategic roadmap to support early and mid-career researchers and expand funding opportunities. The Advisory Group will also advise our Board and the Scientific Advisory Board on ongoing initiatives that will strengthen the alignment between basic science and the ACvA's purpose and vision.



Emerging Leader's Committee (ELC)

Our ELC have another busy year planned. Mentorship continues to be identified as fundamental to career progression for EMCRs. That's why we're evaluating our 2021 Mentorship Program and launching our revamped 2022 Program later in the year. Particular areas of focus include growing our bank of mentors and launching our industry mentoring stream.

Planning is well underway for the 2022 CV Champions Program which will focus on career development for EMCRs, supporting our next generation to thrive as they progress through their careers. This year's offerings include peer-based learning and targeted workshops to foster strategic thinking which will create impact and enhance stakeholder engagement. The new program is sure to create networks and opportunities for collaboration.

We're also planning a series of podcasts and look forward to the new stream of communication it will offer the EMCR community.

Finally, we'd like to announce Chris Reid as the ELC Champion on behalf of the ACvA's Board. Working with Chris is a great way to enhance communication between the ACvA's Senior Leadership and the EMCR community and offer support in the implementation of various ELC initiatives.



Industry Insight Webinar Series

Our commitment to capacity building and professional development is an integral offering for our members. Last year, we hosted a hugely popular webinar series with experts and discussion during Friday lunchtimes, held at the end of each month.

This year, we've kept the same format and time but have decided on a theme to unify the series. Our **Industry Insights series** will explore engagement, collaboration and partnerships from the perspective of industry/academia.

We will kick start the webinar series with **Industry Insights for Academia** and explore what makes for strong industry/academic collaboration and how this can drive innovation and the translation of research into areas of patient and market-identified need.

The first webinar will be held on Friday 25th March 12:30 – 1:30pm.

NEWS IN THE SECTOR

ASHRA



We'd like to congratulate Professors Clara Chow and Steve Nicholls for their appointment as Director and Deputy Director of the **Australian Stroke and Heart Research Accelerator (ASHRA)**.

This exciting and unprecedented collaboration unites pre-eminent research leaders from across the cardiovascular research sector with business leaders and industry investors, introducing a new focus on clinical impact and entrepreneurship. Also central to the model is interaction with key stakeholders, industry and the community, so the medical devices, therapeutics, diagnostics and interventions created are aligned with the greatest needs.

Addressing the gap between Australian research findings and their translation into treatments and policies has been an identified priority for the heart disease and stroke research sector and we're looking forward to the collaborations, commercialisation and translation that are to come. The ACvA was pleased to be invited to support this outstanding collaboration, which will see more patients access innovative treatments, more quickly.

NSW CVRN



The twice postponed 2021 [NSW Cardiovascular Research Network \(CVRN\) Awards & Showcase](#) was finally held on 9th February. It was great for so many of us to be released from the screen and enjoy a face-to-face event at the iconic Opera House. The showcase focused on rural and regional health with a keynote speech given by rural-practising cardiologist, Dr John England.

Congratulations to all those who were shortlisted and to **Professor Kerry-Anne Rye**, nominated by our own **Kerry Doyle**, who won the Ministerial Award for Cardiovascular Research Excellence, and **Doctors Melody Ding** and **Jelena Rnjak-Kovacina** who jointly won the Ministerial Award for a Rising Star in Cardiovascular Research. It's always a good time to celebrate great cardiovascular research.

In more NSWCVRN news the **Rising Stars Seminar Series** is a monthly seminar series, starting in March, hosted and presented by NSW CVRN EMCRs. The line-up of speakers and topics will represent the depth and breadth of CVD research in NSW across member organisations.

These seminars will be held as hybrid events on the first Monday of each month over lunch, **starting from 7 March** with Dr Emily Cox and Dr Chris Stanley presenting on 'Reducing arterial stiffness and blood pressure through diet, exercise and a novel molecular target'.

WACRA



The **WACRA Publication Prize** acknowledges the best scientific papers by WA researchers arising from cardiovascular biomedical, clinical or public health research.

The 2021 prize was awarded across three categories: **WA student researcher**, **WA early-career researcher**, and **WA mid-career researcher**. The WACRA is all about honouring achievements in CV research, so congratulations to all finalists and winners!

WA Student Researcher Prize

Finalist - Jamie Bellinge (UWA and RPH)

Winner - Benjamin Parmenter (UWA and RPH)

Benjamin also won the 2021 People's Choice Award across all categories.

Early career researcher Prize

Finalist- Dr Marc Sim (ECU)

Winner - Dr Revathy Carnagarin (UWA and RPH)

Mid-Career Researcher Prize.

Finalist- Dr Catherine Bondonno (ECU)

Finalist - Dr Judith Katzenellenbogen (UWA)

Winner - Dr Joshua Lewis (ECU)

In the spirit of advocacy, last year, WACRA members Dr Catherine Bondonno (ECU) and Dr Yu Suk Choi (UWA) participated in the **2021 ASMR Science Lands in Parliament** event. This event, hosted by The Hon. Roger Cook on 9th November 2021, was a chance to share their work and the aims and mission of WACRA in a one-one-one discussion with the Deputy Premier.

WACRA also wants to recognise the outstanding efforts of two of their members Professors Toby Richards (UWA) and Karen Chapman (UWA and University of Edinburgh) who were shortlisted for the 2021 Mentor Award in ACvA's own inaugural ACvA Excellence in Cardiovascular Research Awards.

UPCOMING EVENTS & TRAINING

The ISHR Australasia ECI committee is hosting a virtual mini-symposium highlighting the research of three ISHR EMCRs on **Friday, 25th February, 10AM-12PM (AEDT) via Zoom**. There will also be an informal roundtable discussion after the talks included in the 2-hour time slot with all audience members and speakers invited for a Q&A.



The graphic features three circular portraits of speakers: Dr. Helena Qin, Dr. Amy Nicks, and Dr. Holly Voges. The text 'ISHR Australasia ECI Mini-Symposium' is centered at the top. Below each portrait is their name and affiliation. A red banner at the bottom contains the date '25th February 2022', a QR code labeled 'Register!', and the time '10AM-12PM AEDT'. The background includes decorative icons of people in a meeting.

ISHR Australasia ECI Mini-Symposium

Dr. Helena Qin
Head, Cardiovascular Pharmacology
Monash Institute of Pharmaceutical
Science, VIC

Dr. Amy Nicks
Post-doctoral scientist,
Victor Chang Cardiac
Research Institute, NSW

Dr. Holly Voges
Post-doctoral scientist,
Murdoch Children's Research
Institute, VIC

Register!

25th February 2022  **10AM-12PM AEDT**

[Science meets Parliament 2022](#) / online / 28 February – 4 March

[RACI NSW Bioactive Discovery and Development \(BDD\) Group Event: Careers in Drug Development](#) / Sydney / 9 March

[Australian Healthcare Week 2022](#) / Sydney / 16 -17 March

[MTAA Regulatory Affairs for Medical Devices Workshop](#) / Sydney / 17 – 18 March

[Cicada Innovations – NSW Health Commercialisation Training Program](#) / Sydney + online / various specialisation course from March – May

[BioForum – Translating Innovations: from lab bench to marketplace](#) / Melbourne + online / 22 March

[Collaborate Innovate Part 2](#) / Canberra / 31 March – 1 April

[AusMedtech 2022](#) / Melbourne / 24 – 26 May

[AusBiotech 2022](#) / Perth / 24 – 28 October

[MTP Connect's REDI Training Development Programs](#) / various locations around Australia + online / multiple dates

[Medical Device Partnering Program \(MDPP\)](#) / Adelaide / ongoing



LET US KNOW

If you or your organisation have events, jobs or training that are relevant to ACvA members which you'd like us to promote in the ACvA's newsletter, let us know. Email nina.cullen@ozheart.org

GRANTS & OPPORTUNITIES



The Australian Functional Genomics Network

AFGN / Australia / ongoing

The AFGN is an MRFF funded initiative that aims to link clinical data for variants of unknown significance with research groups able to perform disease modelling. Funding is provided by AFGN to accelerate classification of disease variants.

MTPConnect Bridge Program

MTPConnect / Australia / 27 February

100 participants are selected annually from across Australia to take part in face-to-face and online training in the various disciplines that contribute to the commercialisation of new medicines.

The MedTech Actuator Accelerator

MedTech / Australia / 6 March

This is an industry-led, venture-backed, 12-month acceleration program, accelerating technology development, builds team capability, and provides a chance to access up to \$200k investment.

The Clinical Translation and Commercialisation - Medtech (CTCM) program

MTPConnect / Australia / 11 March

This supports early clinical development of medical devices with commercial potential where the device's capability has already been validated with research and/or preclinical studies.

Call for Abstracts – CSANZ Annual Scientific Meeting 2022

CSANZ / Australia + New Zealand / 14 March

Applicants who meet the eligibility criteria can submit an abstract for one or more of the Prizes on offer; the **Ralph Reader Prize**, **ASM prizes** and **ISHR prizes**.

Synergy Grants 2022

NHMRC / Australia / 16 March (minimum data)

Synergy Grants support outstanding multidisciplinary teams of investigators to work together to answer major questions that cannot be answered by a single investigator.

NFMRI General Grant Round (Portfolios 2 & 3 only)

NFMRI / Australia / 21 March

This round is for expressions of interest for biomedical research projects across all diseases/conditions that fall within portfolios 2 (collaborative innovation and advancement) and 3 (innovation uptake and transformation).

Ideas Grants 2022

NHMRC / Australia / 6 April (minimum data)

Ideas Grants support innovative research projects addressing a specific question(s).

Heart Foundation Research Funding Programs

Heart Foundation / Australia / April to July

The NHFA has funding programs open in the following areas

- **Postdoctoral fellowship** / 8 April
- **Future leader fellowship** / 29 April
- **Vanguard grants** / 6 May
- **PhD Scholarship** / 6 May
- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander award** /17 June
- **Collaboration and Exchange award** / 22 July
- **Strategic Grants**