

Society for
**Reproductive
Biology**

August 2022 edition HIGHLIGHTS

SRB 2022 ANNUAL MEETING

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ARU MEETING REPORT

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INTERVIEW WITH AN ECR

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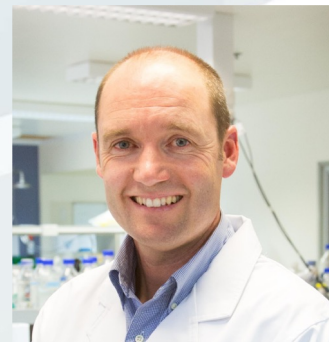


Dear SRB colleagues,

I hope this newsletter finds you well and enjoying a return to something that resembles normal life again. One of the many benefits of the easing of restrictions is that our ASM will be proceeding as an in-person meeting in Christchurch, NZ. Planning for this meeting is now well underway and I am delighted to say that our Program Organising Committee have assembled an exceptional program with a stellar cast of speakers to celebrate our return to face-to-face meetings. I am very much looking forward to welcoming you all to this meeting in November.

All best wishes,

Brett Nixon





SRB Council elections

This year the position of Secretary as well as four Ordinary Council Members are being vacated. Hopefully you will all have seen that the call for nominations has recently closed. The strength of the Society has again been reflected in receiving nine outstanding Ordinary Council member nominations. In the coming days, the names and biographies of the nominees will be circulated to eligible members, who will be asked to please vote for their four preferred nominees. I encourage you all to please take the time to cast your vote. The results of the ballot will be announced at the Annual General Meeting that will be held later this month (see details below). Newly elected Council members will then formally take up their position at the Council meeting held immediately prior to the opening of the annual scientific meeting in November, for a period of three years.

In addition, nominations are also open for a new Early Career Representative (ECR) and a new Student Representative, so start thinking about either nominating yourself for one of these positions or please consider nominating someone you feel would make a great ECR or Student Representative.

SRB Annual General Meeting

This year's Annual General Meeting will again be run as a virtual meeting and will be held on Thursday 25th August 2022 at 1pm AEST (11am WA, 2:30pm SA/NT and 3pm NZST). As has been necessary in recent years, you will need to register in advance for the AGM and an invitation to do so has been sent out to members in recent weeks.

I can't wait to see you all again in person at the annual meeting in Christchurch, New Zealand in November.

Best wishes,

David Sharkey

SRB Secretary

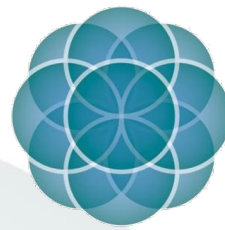




The anticipation of meeting again face-to-face is starting to build, and we really can not wait to see everyone in Christchurch, Nov 13th – 16th. The POC is currently securing our symposia speakers for Christchurch, which will be advertised soon, each with contributions we are sure you will enjoy.

Issues around food security, species conservation and human fertility are front and centre in the minds of people across diverse communities, however the contest for research funding is as tough as ever. The SRB program for 2022 will therefore, be focussed on promoting reproductive research in Australia and New Zealand and how our community is aligning to support these important challenges ahead.

Our symposia will explore how innovation in the reproductive science landscape is connecting with industry and improving quality of life, while building the fundamental science that ultimately drives these outcomes. The key themes will be animal reproduction and conservation, and why reproductive health research is critical; as well as the scientific advances resulting from partnering with engineers and clinicians.



Symposia program titles:

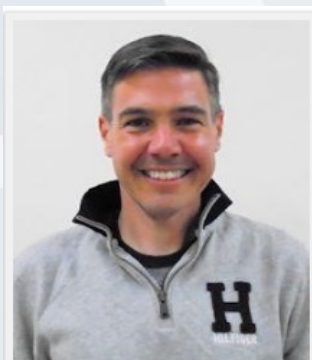
- Indigenous Reproductive Health Forum
- Conservation and exotic species
- Fundamental Reproductive Engineering
- Applied Reproductive Engineering
- Clinically partnered Reproductive Science
- Advancing pregnancy research
- Developmental Biology

Early-bird Registration and abstract submission are now open. We look forward to receiving your submission that will help shape this meeting.

Additional Abstract session titles:

- Male reproduction
- Ovarian and oocyte biology
- Pregnancy and parturition

Again, we look forward to seeing you all in NZ!



POC: Andrew Pask, Geoff de Iuliis and Tu'uhevaha Kaitu'u-Lino



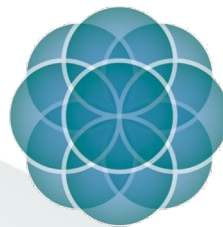
Plenary Lecturers

Founders Medal and Oration: Professor Amander Clark

Professor Clark is Professor and Chair of the Molecular Cell and Developmental Biology Department at UCLA where her research program is focused on deciphering the cell and molecular regulation of primordial germ cell (PGC) development and differentiation in mammals, including non-human primates and humans. Her laboratory's overall goal is to use the fundamental knowledge gained from PGC studies to understand and treat the disease of infertility, and provide answers to help women and their partners understand early pregnancy loss.

President's Lecture: Professor Claire Roberts

Professor Roberts is a Matthew Flinders Professor at Flinders University where she directs the Pregnancy Health and Beyond Laboratory. Prof Roberts has broad expertise spanning basic cellular and molecular mechanisms in placental development and function, cohort and population level analyses to identify mechanisms that underlie prevalence and trends in pregnancy outcomes affecting the short- and long-term health of women and children. She has a particular interest in modifiable risk factors and exposures, including maternal diet, micronutrient status, lifestyle factors, and workplace exposures, for health in pregnancy and beyond.



Call for Life Member Nominations

To all SRB Members,

Do you know of a current member of SRB who has made significant contributions to the discipline of reproductive science and to our Society over a substantial period of time? If yes, please consider nominating them for **Life Membership!** This category of membership is for those members who are retired or about to retire.

Guidelines are available from:

<https://www.srb.org.au/nominations-for-life-membership-and-fellowship>

A nomination form is attached, and nominations will be accepted until Monday Oct 3rd 2022. The application package is to be provided in PDF format as a single document and sent to Shaun Roman (shaunroman2022@gmail.com).

The decision to award Life Membership will be made by Council. Successful candidates will be successful applicants will be announced at the Annual Meeting and profiled via social media in 2023. Life members are profiled on the SRB website: <https://www.srb.org.au/srb-life-members> Life members will also be further recognised and presented to the society at the Conference Dinner during the Annual Meeting in 2022.

For all enquiries, contact:

Shaun Roman (shaunroman2022@gmail.com)

Shaun Roman



2022 ANNUAL MEETING



Society for
**Reproductive
Biology**

ESA-SRB-APEG-NZSE ASM 2022



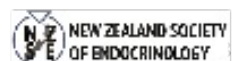
12TH – 16TH NOVEMBER, 2022

Te Pae, Christchurch, New Zealand

Save the date!

www.esa-srb-apeg-nzse.org

Artist: FinDac | Title: Kaitiaki. Photographer: A Walsh





I'm happy to report that we are in the process of renewing the Memorandum of Understanding between SRB and Reproduction, Fertility and Development (RFD). SRB and RFD have a great history together and we're looking forward to continuing the relationship. We're making a few changes with the MoU, including increased opportunities for ECRs so keep your eyes peeled for further developments. Continuing on the note of RFD, nominations for RFD Publication of the Year will be called for in July. You can self-nominate and I'm looking forward to being inundated with applications.

Caitlin Wyrwoll





After a two-year hiatus, the Australia Reproductive Update (ARU) was back in full force with the very apt 'Back to the ARU' set for the theme. It promised to be an exciting and science filled couple of days.

The conference kicked off with an outstanding talk from Professor Mary Wlodek with her talk entitled 'Growing the next generation'. Prof Wlodek talked through her extensive and successful career but really highlighted the importance of building your village and strong mentorship, a concept that highly resonated with the attendees.

This was followed by a series of fantastic talks all focused on reproductive cancers. These talks highlighted the importance of exploiting STAT3 in breast cancer (Dr Ashwini Chand), understanding breast cancer and the relationship with parity (Dr Kara Britt) and examining the role of BRCA1 in ovarian cancer (Dr Olga Kondrashova).

The next session focused on pregnancy with excellent talks from leaders in the field about where where current research is currently and where it needs to go. Dr Teresa MacDonald spoke to how fetal growth can be tracked through pregnancy to indicate potential issues in placental function. A particularly striking talk from Prof Graeme Polglase covered the importance of cord clamping and timing, with the negative impacts this can have when not considered. This session finished off with a talk from Dr David Simmons, discussing the benefits and pitfalls of transgenic mice in understanding the placenta.



The final session of the day showcased up and coming Early Career Researchers and students. The topics in this session were exciting and diverse, featuring projects to understand the utility of reproductive organoids as regenerative therapies, the role of oxidative stress in human spermatozoa, and novel on/off switches to control hormone production.

The first day was rounded off by a chance for all the attendees to come together and re-connect. A beautiful dinner at Le Bon Ton gave everyone the opportunity to catch-up, connect with new people and let our hair down after what has been a challenging few years for research. A fantastic end to the first day!



Following on from a fantastic first day, the second day of ARU opened with the exciting session '*From little things, big things grow*' sparking a lively discussion on the future of Assisted Reproductive Technology (A/Prof Kate Stern), the progress and pitfalls in clinical embryology (Dr Tiki Osianlis) and the peculiar nature of some sneaky sperm residing outside the testis (Dr Liza O'Donnell).

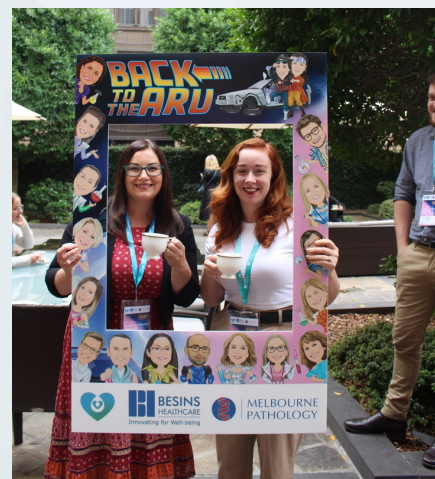
A great feature of ARU is showcasing of the young student and ECR rising stars within our field, presenting fabulous work from perceptions around 'add ons' for Assisted Reproductive Technology, diet impacts on pregnancy, sperm development and male health, to major complications of pregnancy.



The Reproductive Tract Disease session kick off with the inaugural Mercy Perinatal Medallist, Prof Pradeep Tanwar, discussing his group's use of exciting organoid technology to better understand vulvovaginal disease. This work has direct implications on clinical trials as well as attracting industry funding in unique ways (snails and lubricants).

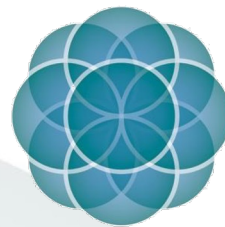
ARU 2022 finished off with three terrific talks around reproductive genetics, utilising model species and innovative technology to better understand male fertility, diagnose regulation of sex development, and treat genetic disorders *in utero*.

Lastly, a huge thank you to the wonderful dynamic duo of Prof Natalie Hannan and Prof Tu'uhevaha Kaitu'u-Lino, for creating this positive, friendly, and fun meeting that covered an incredible breadth of reproductive research happening here in Australia. A must attend meeting for all in 2023!



SRB members enjoying being Back to The ARU

Anne-Louise Gannon and David Skerrett-Bryne



2022 SRB Brian Setchell Visiting Lecturer Award

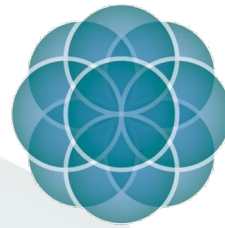
Prof Tu'uhevaha Kaitu'u-Lino was awarded the 2022 SRB Brian Setchell Visiting Lecturer Award (Round 2). Tu'uhe has an invited talk in a plenary session at the International Society for the Study of Hypertension in Pregnancy (ISSHP) which will be held in Montpellier, France in August 2022. She will be speaking on "Ancient and novel biomarkers of preeclampsia".

SRB awards for 2022

This year, together with our sponsors, we are pleased to be holding the SRB awards in person at the SRB conference in New Zealand. The SRB awards are a highlight of our conference, allowing our ECRs, MCRs and beyond to showcase their work.

This year we have a range of prestigious awards on offer. The Robinson Research Institute Award for Excellence in Reproductive Biology and the Mercy Perinatal Mid-career Women's Health Medal are highly contested awards comprising of a CV component and references. Applicants must be less than 15 years post PhD. The Newcastle Reproduction Emerging Research Leader Award is also a CV based award for applicants 2 – 8 years post PhD. These highly contested awards will be closing soon on the 19th of August so please apply or encourage your team and colleagues to apply.

We also have a variety of awards chosen from abstract. These include the David Healy New Investigator Award, The ANZPRA New Investigator Award, ART LAB Solutions Gametes and Embryo Award, Male Contraceptive Initiative Award and the Centre for Reproductive Health and Hudson Institute of Medical Research Award for Excellence for Best ECR and MCR Posters awards. These awards are also closing soon on the 19th of August.



We are extremely grateful to our generous sponsors for their ongoing support. These include the Robinson Research Institute, Mercy Perinatal, The University of Newcastle, The Richie Centre and Monash University Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, ANZPRA, ART Lab Solutions, the Male Contraceptive Initiative, the Centre for Reproductive Health and the Hudson Institute of Medical Research and RFD.

Make sure you apply for our grants and supervisors, make sure you tap your students ECRs and MCRs on the shoulder to ensure they apply.

Really looking forward to awards sessions in person at our SRB conference this year.

Fiona Brownfoot





Objective

To investigate ways to promote equity, diversity and inclusion of all SRB members and the wider research community, via:

- a. Request to change the currently limited options for gender identification in the registration/abstract submission (etc) processes.
- b. Update the current EDI statement to reflect these changes
- c. Discuss other ways in which to recognise the diverse backgrounds of SRB members/attendees

Activities to report

- We (Brett Nixon, Tu'uhevaha Kaitu'u-Lino, Kylie Dunning & Kelsey Pool) have discussed and sent a request to the council of Currinda to change the gender identification drop-down option (currently male/female/other), with suggestions of an open text-box. It is expected that any changes in response to this will be implemented in 2023.
- The EDI statement is currently under review, to be updated with further changes suggested by the SRB council on 19/05/2022.
- Professor Natalie Hannan was able to join us at the SRB Council meeting on 19th May 2022, as her role as Associate Dean at the University of Melbourne includes the promotion of diversity and inclusion. Natalie had some great points to discuss as to how to broaden inclusion at future SRB meetings, and how this could be done in a considerate way.
- Further options for consideration to improve inclusivity include acknowledgement of preferred pronouns (and display of these pronouns, if preferred by individual), general use of more inclusive language and more open discussions addressing this topic.

Kelsey Pool





Hi SRB ECR members!

We hope you all had a productive first half of 2022! We are looking forward to some overdue catch ups in Christchurch in November, with the return to the SRB in-person meeting. The usual conference highlights will be back this year, including our favourite - the 'Meeting of the Minds'. The meeting will also mark the end of Jess' term as ECR representative on council. If you would like the opportunity to serve on council, there will be a call for ECR representative nominations in the coming months. There will also be a call for volunteers to assist with the annual ECR-led conference review. So, keep an eye on your inboxes!

In other news, the ECR-led review of last year's virtual SRB meeting has just been accepted for publication in *Reproduction, Fertility and Development*. It will be online in the coming weeks (if not by the time this newsletter hits your inboxes).

As always if you want to get in touch, you can email us at:

Jessica.Dunleavy@unimelb.edu.au or Ella.Green@adelaide.edu.au

All the best from your ECR representatives!

Ella Green and Jess Dunleavy





Get to know the emerging stars of Reproduction



Meet *Dr Yasmyn Winstanley* from the Ovarian Cell Biology and Embryology Group at University of Adelaide's Robinson Research Institute.

What has been your most exciting discovery in the lab?

My most exciting work in the lab has been focussing on pre-implantation embryogenesis, in particular, the role of mitochondria in embryo development and blastocyst formation. I have really enjoyed looking at contexts of maternal ageing and obesity, and how the molecular and epigenetic changes that occur as a result impact embryogenesis and transgenerational health. I also get satisfaction from working up new methodologies for my work and the problem solving that comes along with it.

Why did you choose a career in research?

I have always loved science since I was in school. I didn't finish high school knowing I wanted to be a researcher, but I did a Bachelor of Science for my undergraduate studies and hoped it would take me in the right direction! Getting to experience a lab environment in the final year of my undergrad, made me realise that research is where I am meant to be. I absolutely love getting to be the driving force behind my research and having each day be different from the one before. For me it is really important to have a career where I can contribute towards enhancing people's lives.



Why do you think reproductive science is important?

Reproductive science is of utmost importance as the future of humans and many other species depends on it! Fertility rates continue to decrease, women are waiting longer than ever before to try for their first child leading to many difficulties, and numerous species are on the brink of extinction. Reproductive science is the only way forward to ensure healthy, sustainable populations. Further, reproductive science is important even for people who do not plan to have children as reproductive health can have major impacts on a person's overall wellbeing.

What would you tell budding researchers about a career in science?

The key to enjoying your career in science is to find a topic to work on that you love and are passionate about. All research will encounter difficulties, so working on something you really care about makes all the difference. Equally as important is finding a supportive supervisor, mentor, and colleagues, as the people you surround yourself with are fundamental to your work life enjoyment and career development.

If you could have any superpower, what would it be?

The ability to function without needing sleep!



Hi SRB students!

Exciting news! This year's meeting will be held in New Zealand November 13-16!

What you need to know:

The SRB Student meeting will be held in person this year! We can't wait to see you all there.

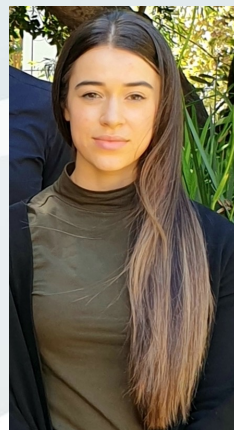
The Student Representative election will be held online again with the newly elected rep announced at the student meeting. Please keep an eye out for this in your emails.

Looking forward to seeing you in Christchurch

Your SRB student reps,
Shenae and Azelle

Contact:

Shenae.Cafe@newcastle.edu.au





Changes in the Communications Team

We welcome Taylor Pini as a co-opted member to assist with public relations/ community engagement and the website!

SRB goes to Science meets Parliament (SmP) in 2022

SmP is an annual event organised by Science and Technology Australia (STA) and brings together members of the STEM sector and policymakers. It includes expert-led professional development in science communication and getting your science 'pitch' right for policymakers and the general public.



Once again, training and meetings with parliamentarians were conducted online, with a live National Press Club address presented by Prof Mark Hutchinson (STA President) in Canberra on the 2nd of March.

This year, the SRB representatives for this event were Dr Kelly Walton and Prof Natalie Hannan. Kelly met with Ms Kate Thwaites MP, Federal member for Jagajaga, and discussed the importance of investment in reproductive biology in improving human and animal reproduction. Kelly also advocated the need for smaller seed or start-up funds (\$50K) for proof-of-concept studies, that would help big reproductive ideas advance towards national funding. Ms Thwaites MP also talked to her passion project in providing better support structures for working parents. Nat met with Hon Mark Butler MP, Shadow Minister for Health and Ageing, and had an engaging conversation regarding the importance of supporting and increasing much needed funds for both fundamental and translational reproductive research. They discussed the fact that there was incredible research occurring in Australia, but in order to innovate and solve the biggest reproductive problems our nation faces, we need proper funding and government support of our research workforce. They also touched on why more scientists do not go into politics and the importance of supporting emerging researchers with both funds and better and inclusive workplaces.



Excitingly, this year a number of SRB council members got the chance to meet with media representatives, science communicators and parliamentarians up-close and personal at the SmP national gala dinners. These were held concurrently in capital cities across Australia on the 2nd June, linked by a live AV feed. SRB representatives attended dinners in Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth and Adelaide where they had the opportunity to speak to the important research SRB is undertaking with state MPs. SmP is an important opportunity to advocate for the importance of research in reproductive biology across clinical/public health, agricultural and environmental sectors.



Survey of Social Media use by SRB Members

Keep an eye out for details of how you can participate in an upcoming survey of social media use. We would like to find out how SRB members engage with social media, particularly in a professional capacity, and how we can help members to get the most out of this important form of science communication. By completing the online survey, you will go into the draw for a chance to **win a 1-year membership for SRB!** Don't miss this one!



Showcasing SRB Research and Members on Social Media

SRB Twitter is continuing to thrive and we have just topped **3600 followers** so this is a great platform for disseminating your work or achievements. We have been continuing to showcase SRB member publications, grant successes, job/PhD opportunities and awards. For example, Moira O'Bryan's SSR award announcement received almost 36,000 *impressions* (i.e. how many times posts were viewed) and 472 total *engagements* (i.e. how many times someone engaged with the post by liking, sharing/re-tweeting or commenting).

Please continue to use @ReproductionSRB when you tweet your papers or events, or forward to Lisa (l.akison@uq.edu.au).

Top Tweet earned 35.9K impressions

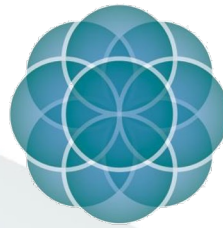
Congratulations to @OBryanMoira from @UniMelb for being awarded the Fuller W. Bazer @SSRepro International Scientist Award. Fitting recognition for her huge contributions to repro research in male fertility 🤓👏👏 pic.twitter.com/ehs34Roscf



↳ 20 🔄 27 ❤️ 215

SRB on Repro Radio

SRB members Taylor Pini, Simon de Graaf and Kelsey Poole are all involved in running an exciting new podcast, Repro Radio, a monthly podcast from April to November all about reproduction (see [Repro Radio Podcast](#) for more info). This targets a broad audience including academics, farmers, vets, students, clinicians, industry members and the general public. SRB has recently sponsored a couple of episodes, including [Seminal plasma](#), [Sperm transport in the female tract](#) and an upcoming episode on *Canine reproduction*. You'll also find other episodes this season featuring SRB members Moira O'Bryan ([Sperm and male fertility](#)), Natalie Hannan (*Pregnancy, the placenta and its complications*) and Kelly Walton (*The endocrinology of reproduction*). Follow the links, or check out Repro Radio on Spotify, Apple Podcasts and Google Podcasts.



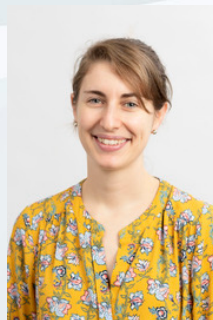
SRB Website Updates

The landing page has been revamped and most other pages brought up-to-date. A new page, called 'Resources for the general public' was created (www.srb.org.au/resources-for-the-general-public) – feel free to send through any relevant material to Taylor (t.pini@uq.edu.au). We are also always looking for new repro-themed, scientific images to feature in the rotating banner images on the website – please send through your high-resolution images for consideration.

SRB Forum on Indigenous Reproductive Health at the Annual Meeting in Christchurch, NZ

Lisa, Taylor and SRB member/POC, Tu'uhevaha Kaitu'u-Lino, are currently planning a session focused on indigenous reproductive health for the first day of the conference. With the conference located in NZ in 2022, this provides an amazing opportunity to bring together Māori, Pasifika, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander researchers working in areas with a focus on reproduction. In addition to hearing about the important issues in reproductive health for indigenous peoples, this session will also feature a panel session to discuss the rewards and challenges of working on aspects of reproductive health in indigenous peoples and communities from both Australia and NZ. This session will be immediately followed by a traditional Māori welcome and the welcome function for the conference.

Lisa Akison, Taylor Pini and Dagmar Wilhelm





Financial Position

The balance sheet as at 30 June 2022 (Q4) is shown below. The financial position of the SRB has improved in the past year, with total equity of \$621,891 as of 30 June 2022 relative to \$566,924 30 June 2021 – increase \$54,967 in 2021-2022 financial year. Reason for this increase in the last financial year is owed to the 2021 conference distribution return (\$26,177), gains in the MLC investments (\$18,758) and membership fees.

SOCIETY FOR REPRODUCTIVE BIOLOGY INC	
Balance Sheet	
As of June 30, 2022	
	Jun 30, 22
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Chequing/Savings	
1150 · NAB Operating Account	215,483.78
1152 · NAB Account - T.J. Robinson Fund	19,737.48
1520 · MLC Masterkey Investment A/c	386,677.65
Total Chequing/Savings	621,898.91
Total Current Assets	621,898.91
TOTAL ASSETS	621,898.91
LIABILITIES	
	0.00
NET ASSETS	621,898.91
EQUITY	
3100 · SeedFunding	
3105 · ESA-SRB	-9,300.00
Total 3100 · SeedFunding	-9,300.00
3600 · Member Funds	376,918.99
3900 · Retained Earnings	198,633.68
Net Income	55,646.24
TOTAL EQUITY	621,898.91

MLC investments

Pleasingly, the MLC investments are tracking well and have generated an additional \$18,758 in the 2021-2022 financial year. Hooray! Kelly also met with GANT financial advisors to undertake a full review of our MLC portfolio, and the society is confident that our investment portfolio will continue to generate equity for the Society.

Thanks to out-going treasurer Jane Girling's efforts, the Society is in a healthy financial position and has recovered very well from the financial insults of the pandemic period. As such, the society is currently considering strategies that would enable distribution of research funds to SRB members. More to follow at the AGM!



Kelly Walton



Membership

Breakdown of financial members as of June 2022

Type of membership	
Life	33
Regular	151
New Zealand	3
Professional	2
Retired	5
Student	73
Overseas (excl NZ)	9
SSR affiliate	3
TOTAL	279

Travel Awards

Look out later this year for your opportunity to apply for the ECR Collaborative Research Travel Award (< 8 years post PhD) and Round 1 of the Brian Setchell Visiting Lecturer Award (8-20 years post-PhD). Applications close on the last working day of October and the 30th of November, respectively.

Kylie Dunning





Meet *Prof Andrew Pask*
from the University of Melbourne.



What is your current position and what does it entail?

Professor of BioSciences and head of the Evo-Devo-Repro and TIGRR research labs.

I have a teaching and research position at the university and do a lot of coordination and teaching into the 1st year biology subjects. I sit on the School executive committee and was the domain leader for molecular cellular and developmental biology which is half of the School of BioSciences. And I run a large research laboratory (~30 current members) which explores multiple aspects of reproductive biology from human disease and the detection and impacts of endocrine disruptors through to marsupial conservation biology and de-extinction science.

Can you talk a little bit about yourself, where are you from? What first attracted you to the world of science? And how did you get to be in your current position?

I was born in the UK, and we emigrated to Australia when I was 10 years old. I was fascinated by marsupials which were everywhere! I couldn't believe (after growing up in outer London) that I could see possums in my backyard and mobs of roos at the end of the street!

At school I was adamantly going to be a chef or a lawyer, but I kept doing really well in my biology and science subjects. I really loved doing experiments in class and exploring the forests around me. At the end of year 12, Biology and Environmental Science were my best subjects, so I enrolled in Biological Science at LaTrobe University. Had some amazing lecturers like Ary Hoffman and Jenny Graves who inspired my love of Genetics. I joined Jenny Graves lab for honours looking at evolution of the marsupial sex chromosomes and my journey in reproduction began!



What impacts has the pandemic had on your daily activities and your research?

I do a lot more in sweatpants now! As we know, Melbourne had the longest lockdowns of any city in the world, and the University of Melbourne took a very strong stance on allowing staff to campus. We were effectively out of the lab for many months on end with only animal maintenance allowed. I have a fairly large lab, so I had to get creative with many different tasks we could do – bioinformatic analyses, literature reviews, experimental planning. Once we got back into the lab it took a long time to get back animal numbers and start researching at normal capacity again. We ended up with 2 years fully disrupted.

Have you gained any valuable lessons from life during the pandemic?

I learnt to be adaptive. I learnt the value of uninterrupted concentration time. I was home schooling a 7-9 year-old at the time and so blocks of time were limited. I learnt how to angle the computer camera so you couldn't tell I was in sweatpants.

You received a lot of money, what is it for?

I have been so incredibly fortunate to get philanthropic support for our Thylacine integrated genetic restoration research lab – TIGRR lab! The aim of TIGRR lab is to develop novel technologies and next-generation tools to support the conservation and restoration of marsupials. This involved developing ART for marsupials, stem cells, gene editing – all the tools needed to take bio-banked materials from threatened and endangered marsupials and restore them to living animals. These tools also underpin our grand-challenge of de-extincting the thylacine.





What are you most excited to do over the next few years?

The funding from TIGRR has enabled me to support some amazing students, ECRs and MCRs in the field, and I really hope that together we can change the face of marsupial science and conservation biology! I'm equally passionate about our work on EDCs which continues to show how incredibly concerning their impacts are to human reproduction.

Do you have any other passions / hobbies aside from science?

I love hiking and snorkelling and try to do them whenever I can. I love cooking and developing refined protocols in the kitchen. My recipe folder looks identical to my protocols folder in the lab – ha! I believe I have optimised the ultimate sticky-date pudding, a legacy I hope to pass on to my friends and family.

What words of inspiration would you like to share with the future generation of scientists?

I have always followed my passion in science. I haven't always made the easy choices, leaving the country twice to relocate overseas for new opportunities and moving to labs early in my career that were completely outside of my comfort zone, but it was all these experiences that enabled me to be in this amazingly fortunate position today. My career path wasn't anything like I had thought it would be – so, embrace the winding pathways, say yes to any opportunity which might build your career and identify good role models and mentors to help guide your decisions.





To all SRB members

We would like to include two sections in upcoming newsletters.

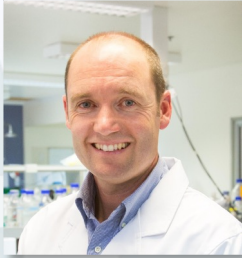
1. New publications by SRB members
2. Conferences that might be of interest to SRB members

We will need your help for both sections. So please get in contact if you have a new publication or know of an interesting conference by emailing Dagmar (dagmar.wilhelm@unimelb.edu.au).

You are also very welcome to email if you want to write an article or have any other ideas for the newsletter.

Dagmar Wilhelm





Prof Brett Nixon
President



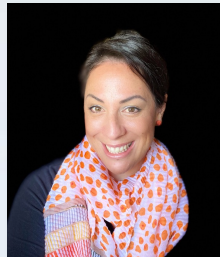
Dr David Sharkey
Secretary



Dr Kelly Walton
Treasurer



Prof Andrew Pask
POC Co-Chair



**Dr Tu'uhevaha
Kaitu'u-Lino**
POC Co-Chair



Dr Geoff De Iuliis
POC Co-Chair



Dr Shaun Roman
Fellows/Life Member/
Plenary Lecturer



Dr Lisa Akison
Communications Secretary



Dr Taylor Pini
Public Relations/Website



A/Prof Dagmar Wilhelm
Newsletter



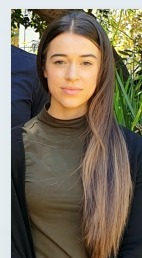
Dr Fiona Brownfoot
Awards/Sponsorship



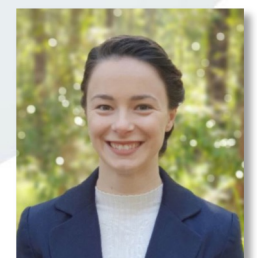
Dr Ella Green
ECR Rep



Dr Jessica Dunleavy
ECR Rep



Azelle Hawdon
Student Rep



Shenae Cafe
Student Rep



Caitlin Wyrwoll
Conference Secretary/
RFD Liaison



Kylie Dunning
Membership Secretary



Dr Kelsey Pool
Equity and Diversity