

[New ASSCR Committee for 2015/2016](#)

The ASSCR is now operating under the new society rules that comply with recent changes to legislation covering incorporated associations. Thank you to all members who nominated for and voted in the 2015 election process for the 9-member governance Committee. This new governing Committee consists of the President, Vice-President (President-Elect), Secretary, Treasurer and 5 ordinary Committee members.

The functions of these 4 office bearers and 5 ordinary Committee members are defined in our new rules. Initially these positions will be held for a period of 1 to 2 years, moving to 2 year terms with an expected annual turnover of approximately half the Committee members as described in our new rules.

In addition to helping govern the ASSCR the 5 ordinary Committee members will, under the guidance of the 9-member governing Committee, act as Chairs for our 5 new sub-committees:

1. Membership/Communications/Website/Newsletter Subcommittee
2. Policy and Translation/Ethics/Public Policy/Clinical Translation Subcommittee
3. Conference and Awards Subcommittee
4. Professional Development/Junior Investigators/Member-in-Training Subcommittee
5. Sponsorship/Fundraising/Industry Subcommittee

Results of the 2014 society elections are:

Incoming President: Dr Michael O'Connor

Vice President: Prof Melissa Little

Treasurer: Dr Robyn Meech

Secretary: Dr Michael Morris

Membership Subcommittee Chair: A/Prof Louise Winteringham

Policy Subcommittee Chair: A/Prof Megan Munsie

Conference and Awards Subcommittee Chair: A/Prof Bronwen Connor

Professional Development Subcommittee Chair: Dr Vashe Chandrakanthan

Sponsorship Subcommittee Chair: Dr Heather Main (resigned; Margret Schuller instated as per new ASSCR Rules)

[2014 Joint ASSCR/ISCT-ANZ/SCA Conference](#)

Our 7th Annual Meeting was a joint meeting held together with the International Society for Cell Therapy (Australia and New Zealand Region), with delegates from Stem Cells Australia attending the final day.

The conference was held between November 9 and 11 in Lorne under the broad theme of “Narrowing the Gap Between Stem Cell Science and Cell Therapy”.

The meeting included 7 international and 15 national invited speakers, with keynote presentations delivered by ISCT president Professor Massimo Dominici and former President of the California Institute of Regenerative Medicine, Professor Alan Trounson.

The meeting was highly successful with a total of 344 delegates attending from all 3 societies, including a dedicated session for the junior investigator best oral presentation competition (left-to-right): Vashe Chandrakanthan, Benjamin Cao, Lincon Stamp, Thao Nguyen, Jingang Li, Christian Nefzger.



Continued strong support from the National Stem Cell Foundation of Australia enabled 45 students and 19 early-career researchers to attend through Travel Awards. Support from the Foundation also enabled best poster and presentation prizes to be awarded to:

Oral Presentations (\$500 + certificate)

Ms Thao Nguyen (University of South Australia)

Dr Lincon Stamp (Melbourne University)

Poster Presentations (\$500 + certificate)

Ms Julie-Ann Hulin (Flinders University)

Dr Thierry Jarde (Monash University)

Recognition and sincere thanks for producing such a wonderful conference go to the combined Local Organising Committee:

Chairs

Robert Nordon (ISCT-ANZ)

Jose Polo (ASSCR)

Megan Munsie (SCA)

Committee

Caroline Gargett (Monash University)

David Haylock (Stem Cells Australia)

John Haynes (Monash University)

Ian Lewis (SA Pathology)

Janet Macpherson (Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Sydney)

Robyn Meech (Flinders University)

Michael Morris (University of Sydney)

Megan Munsie (University of Melbourne)

Michael O'Connor (University of Western Sydney)

Margret Schuller (PeproTech)

Dominic Wall (Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre)

ASSCR Submission to the 2015 TGA Consultation on Regulation of Autologous Cell Interventions

On March 2 this year the ASSCR lodged a submission to the public consultation process held by the Therapeutic Goods Administration on regulation of autologous cell interventions.

The submission was developed and approved by all members of the ASSCR Committee, with significant expert and detailed input by the Policy, Ethics and Translation Subcommittee chaired by A/Prof Megan Munsie.

The full report is available to the public via the TGA website; the Executive Summary of the submission included here:

Executive Summary

The Australasian Society for Stem Cell Research (ASSCR) is the primary society for stem cell researchers and related professionals in Australia and New Zealand, with over 300 members. It is widely acknowledged that Australia has an established legacy in stem cell research and clinical translation, and as such, the TGA's stance on autologous therapies runs through the heart of our society's focus.

While some medical practitioners may turn to unproven stem cell procedure for compassionate care of refractory diseases and medical conditions, there are also those who are founding an industry outside of these ideals. Exemption of autologous stem cells from the current TGA regulatory framework has allowed exploitative stem cell clinics to advertise unproven autologous stem cell treatments as safe alternatives to conventional care.

The ASSCR recommends the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) take a firm stance to ensure appropriate clinical translation of stem cell research in Australia by:

- 1) Application of at least proposed regulatory Option 4 or higher.
- 2) Mandatory reporting of outcomes (including adverse events) from autologous cell interventions.
- 3) Requiring use of defined language relating to therapeutic safety, efficacy.
- 4) Providing mechanisms to support emerging autologous cell interventions.
- 5) Providing the TGA the ability to investigate and recommend prosecution for inappropriate claims and/or use of autologous stem cell interventions.

These recommendations are consistent with the position statement from the International Society for Stem Cell Research (ISSCR) on delivery of unproven autologous cell-based interventions, where they "urge medical licensing bodies, legal authorities, patient advocacy organisations, physicians and others to exercise their influence to discourage commercial provision of unproven autologous cell-based interventions outside of clinical trials".

2015 ASSCR Conference and Annual General Meeting

Save the Date

This year's annual meeting will be held from November 8 to 10 at the Crown Plaza, Hunter Valley, NSW.

The meeting will be held jointly with Stem Cells Australia and the NSW Stem Cell Network across all 3 conference days.

We look forward to seeing you there!

