A Memorable Young Scientist Program in Melbourne

Welcome event at Naughtons Hotel Parkville.

We are extremely grateful to have participated in the 2024 Young Scientist Program (YSP). The event, held from 19–22 September 2024, was a remarkable opportunity for early-career researchers to exchange ideas and form lasting networks. After a very warm welcome at Naughtons Hotel in Parkville, we headed to the picturesque Cammeray Waters in the Macedon Ranges for two excellent days filled with scientific camaraderie, knowledge exchange and networking.

The 2024 YSP awardees included PhD students, postdocs and faculty members from Bangladesh, Canada, Chile, China, Germany, India, Indonesia, South Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, South Africa, Switzerland, Thailand, the United Kingdom, the United States and Australia. Australia was well represented in this diverse group of 36 YSP participants, with ten fellows – Allegra Angeloni, Osvaldo Contreras, Jennilee Davidson, Katherine Davies, Alexis Diaz-Vegas, Rebecca San Gil, Yun Shi, Tao Tan, Xuan Ling Hilary Yong, Zijing Zhou.

The program featured two days of scientific sessions, during which YSP fellows gave six-minute presentations of their exciting research in a range of topics from structural biology, proteomics, molecular biology, to cancer biology, clinical genomics and more. These short presentations were divided into five sessions over two days, with tea and lunch breaks in between, providing excellent opportunities for stimulating discussions that fostered vibrant exchanges of ideas. We also had inspiring guest lectures from Professor Joon Kim (Korea University, FAOBMB President) and Distinguished Professor Alexandra Newton (UC San Diego, IUBMB President), respectively, about not only scientific research but also commercialisation efforts and career paths filled with passion. Additionally, we had the pleasure of hearing from Dr Michael Healy (University of Queensland), winner of the IUBMB Whelan Young Investigator Award, who presented his work on the Commander macromolecular complex.

Outside of the scientific sessions, participants had ample time to network in a more informal setting, including free time between 5pm and 7pm, a bushwalk, a lively trivia quiz, challenging board games, table tennis and eight-ball on a billiard table. We also had the privilege of attending a masterclass on science communication by Dr Shane Huntington, who emphasised the importance of crafting effective presentations with clear purpose and audience engagement.

Bushwalk in the Macedon Ranges.

The YSP was an inspiring and enriching event, and we are deeply thankful to the IUBMB, the FAOBMB and other societies of biochemistry and molecular biology, as well as the outstanding organising committee, Gabby Watson, Debnath Ghosal, David Teran, Rhys Grinter and Alisa Glukhova, for making it such a success.

Osvaldo Contreras (Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute and UNSW Sydney) and Yun Shi (Griffith University)

YSP awardees and organising committee members.

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