



TSANZ

The Transplantation Society of Australia and New Zealand

2023 NEWSLETTER

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42nd Annual Scientific Meeting
June 16 - 18, 2024
Melbourne Convention Centre,
Victoria, Australia

Associated Meetings
FACT Day - June 15
 (Frontiers and Challenges in Organ Transplantation)
Solid Organ Transplant Symposium - June 16
 (Concurrent Liver, Kidney/Pancreas & Cardiothoracic Sessions)

EDITORIAL COMMENT

by Associate Professor Kavitha Muthia

Dear TSANZ Members,

Haere mai tangata whenua.

TSANZ acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and New Zealand and their connections to land, sea, and community. We pay our respect to their elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

Welcome to the 2023 edition of the Society newsletter. This past year has been incredibly fruitful, highlighted by the resounding success of the Annual Scientific Meeting held in Brisbane. The inaugural HLA set the tone for the event, proving to be invaluable for those in attendance. We are

pleased to report a total of 342 registrants and 94 abstracts submitted, underscoring the vibrant engagement of our scientific community.

A special note of gratitude goes to our program convenors, Associate Professor Antiopi Varelias and Dr Chandima Divithotawela, for orchestrating a seamless event. The Postgraduate course, skilfully led by Dr Jennifer Li and Dr Handoo Rhee, alongside the Masterclass organized by Mr. Steven James Hiho and Dr Georgina Irish, received highly positive reviews.

Our heartfelt appreciation extends to the dedicated efforts of Nieves Piaggio, Kim Rawson, Roslyn Davies, and Emily Larkins, as acknowledged by the Board. Their commitment has been instrumental in the Society's achievements.

As we bid farewell to 2023, I extend my best wishes to all members. May the coming year bring forth even more opportunities for us to connect, collaborate, and advance our collective mission of improving transplantation for those in need. Warmest wishes for the year ahead.

Kavitha

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Professor Kate Wyburn
Chair, TSANZ



Dear All,

What an eventful and productive year 2023 has been, with many great meetings and new initiatives. First, I would like to thank outgoing members of TSANZ council, including Professor Helen Pilmore, for her consummate leadership over the last two years, Associate Professor Fiona Mackie, an exceptional Secretary, Associate Professor Phil Clayton and Libby John (TNA Representative). We welcomed new incoming Board members, Associate Professor Kavitha Muthiah as Secretary, Dr Josh Kausman as Treasurer along with Associate Professor Avik Majumdar and Dr Animesh Singla.

One of the more significant changes this year was TSANZ's transition from an Association to a Company Limited by Guarantee, as of the 31st of August. Thanks to much hard work, particularly by council and the administrative team, and a unanimous vote delivered by membership at a special general meeting in May. The council has hence become a Board, we have established a finance committee, and the next steps over the coming months will be for TSANZ to seek registration as a not-for-Profit Charity. These new structures will improve the function and efficiency of TSANZ, benefit members, and strengthen the solid foundations of the Society.

The ASM, held in Brisbane this year, was a huge success, it was wonderful to return to our first fully face-to-face meeting with the highest attendance on record, at over 340 registrants. I would particularly like to thank Dr Lucy Sullivan and Associate Professor Wai Lim as chairs of the Scientific Programme and Education Committee (SPEC), for their consistent hard work, along with program organisers Associate Professor Antiopi Varelias and Dr Chandima Divithotawela, for a fabulous meeting. The Post Graduate Course (PGC) was organised by Dr Jennifer Li and Dr Handoo Rhee, and the Masterclass by Steven Hiho and Dr Georgina Irish, all excellent programmes. The atmosphere, collegiality, and joy in reconnecting with colleagues and friends was striking. In addition, the new initiative and highly successful HLA Day, convened by Dr Lucy Sullivan and Rhonda Holdsworth, with international and local speakers addressing histocompatibility topics,

uniquely brought members of TSANZ together to discuss common challenges. We are grateful to our sponsors for these meeting, and in particular thank our platinum sponsors Astellas and Hansa Biopharma.

In 2024 the ASM will be held in Melbourne from the 16-18th June, it is a busy month for conferences, but we hope to see as many attendees as possible. It will be an innovative program with several changes to the line-up; including a pre-conference day dedicated to Infectious Diseases in Transplantation, held in partnership with the Australian Society of Infectious Diseases (ASID); the PGC has been renamed FACT (Frontiers and Challenges in Organ Transplantation), to reflect the evolution of the program to address frontiers and challenges in transplantation covering basic immunology through to clinical conundrums; and in place of the Masterclass, we have a day dedicated to specific Solid Organ Transplant Symposia (cardiothoracic, liver-intestinal, kidney-pancreas), led by the respective TSANZ advisory committees, providing a forum for high level discussions, updates and debate on broad ranging topics of significant interest to each subspecialty. We hope for an increasingly inclusive ASM, to reflect the interests of all members of the Society.

To date, SPEC has held 16 Transplant Grand Rounds webinars, kindly sponsored by Astellas, which continue to add excellent clinical and research insights. In 2024, our invigorated Early Career Research committee will be increasingly involved in delivering and tailoring this program.

TSANZ continues to work collectively on several projects and working groups, many with support from and in partnership with the Organ and Tissue Authority (OTA), with who we have a strong relationship and for whose support we are very grateful. Some of these projects include the Enhancement of Clinical Best Practice Guidelines, led by project manager Emily Larkins, the evolving guidelines are proving to be clinically invaluable, and version 1.12 will be published later this month. The Revision of Deceased Donation Kidney Allocation Algorithm, led by Sarah White, has undertaken vast stakeholder engagement, to develop a work plan to deliver significant allocation algorithm overhaul and optimise equity and utility for transplant recipients. Associate Professor Ross Francis, as chair of the virtual Cross Match (VXM) Working Group, has collaboratively worked across many sectors to deliver an exceptionally smooth transition to VXM.

Three other new initiatives to mention are

- i) Adolescent and Young Adult (AYA) Transplant Working Group led by Dr Rachael Harry, developing concepts and care models to improve AYA services.

- ii) the new Tissue Typing Advisory Committee,
- iii) Living Kidney Donation Working group, co-Chaired by Dr Christine Russell and Dr Melanie Wyld, aiming to optimise access and outcomes in living donor transplantation across Australia and New Zealand.

Also of note is the excellent work of the National Indigenous Kidney Transplantation Taskforce (NIKTT), driven by Chairs Professor Stephen McDonald and Professor Jaqui Hughes, along with Kelli Owen and Katie Cundale, for which additional Commonwealth funding has been granted. A report can be viewed at www.niktt.com.au/finalreport, and a special NIKTT Supplement in the Medical Journal of Australia (www.niktt.com.au/supplement).

TSANZ is also involved in efforts to review current legislation around organ donation, in particular to progress the possibility of Normothermic Regional Perfusion, particular for liver transplantation.

None of the above would be possible without the dedication and support provided by Nieves Piaggio, our Executive Officer, who manages the complex and ever-changing landscape within which we operate. I would also like to thank Roslyn Davies, who will sadly be leaving us at the end of the year, for all her amazing work, and we wish her all the very best. Kim Rawson continues to provide us all with exceptional support, managing many projects and committees with exceptional skill and grace.

I would also like to acknowledge the generous guidance and support provided by Associate Professor Nikky Isbel, as President-elect/Deputy Chair, and to thank all TSANZ members, from whom we are keen to hear any suggestions of the ways forward to improve delivery of education and support. TSANZ is motivated to ensure an inclusive and collaborative culture for the benefit of all members and best patient outcomes.

Wishing everyone a safe and happy holiday period.

Kate

SECRETARY'S REPORT

**Associate Professor Kavitha Muthia
Honorary Secretary, TSANZ**



I am honoured to present my inaugural report as the Honorary Secretary of The Transplantation Society of Australia and New Zealand (TSANZ). This past year has marked a period of exceptional productivity for our society, particularly as we undertook the transition to a registered charity. This transformative journey has been expertly guided by our newly appointed Chair, Professor Kate Wyburn, alongside Deputy Chair Associate Professor Nikky Isbel and Treasurer Dr Joshua Kausman. The steadfast support of our

esteemed Council members, including Dr Tanya McWilliams, Mr. Paul Robertson, Dr Lucy Sullivan, Professor Angela Webster, Dr Handoo Rhee, and Associate Professor Bronwyn Levvey, has been invaluable in navigating various challenges.

It is with great pleasure that I extend a warm welcome to Associate Professor Avik Majumdar and Dr Animesh Singla as new members of the Board. We acknowledge the dedication of Past President Helen Pilmore, Associate Professor Fiona Mackie and Associate Professor Phil Clayton as they step down from office

Our Annual Scientific Meeting, hosted in Brisbane, stood as a resounding success, fostering interdisciplinary and inter-specialty relationships within the transplantation community of Australia and New Zealand. Heartfelt gratitude goes to Dr Lucy Sullivan and Associate Professor Wai Lim, and the dedicated members of the Scientific Programme and Education Committee for their exceptional contributions. Looking ahead, we anticipate our next gathering in 2024 at the Melbourne Convention Centre, featuring an additional organ-specific forum designed to further enhance collaboration between disciplines.

The Early Career Research (ECR) Committee established in 2020 continues to grow uniting early career researchers, clinicians, and healthcare professionals in the transplantation field, fostering greater participation and engagement within TSANZ.

Our society has experienced steady growth of 614 members in 2023, reflecting an increase from the previous year. Encouraging participation across all transplantation disciplines remains a key focus as we continue to expand our reach.

I wish to express my sincere appreciation for the hard work and dedication of Nieves Piaggio, Kim Rawson, Roslyn Davies and Emily Larkins as they serve as the very backbone of the society.

As the year draws to a close, my best wishes go out to all for a joyous holiday period, and I look forward with optimism to 2024.

Warm regards,
Kavitha

TREASURER'S REPORT

**Dr Joshua Kausman
Honorary Treasurer, TSANZ**



The current financial position of the society remains stable. As of 31st October 2023, including monies held for OTA and NIKTT projects, net assets are \$2,539,080.

Income from membership for 2022 (\$169,817) was higher than 2021 (\$126,319), as were incomes from the ASM (\$160,477) and sponsorship (\$235,113). However, expenses for the ASM (294,990) were in excess of the 2021 ASM (93,518). Overall, for the calendar year 2022, the society incurred a small loss of \$4,786.

The financial strategy with a balanced portfolio of investment is established and the initial \$1,000,000 is being progressively deployed into socially responsible investment funds. The approach is a cautious one and as such \$405,000 remains in a higher interest term deposit. The total value of the portfolio is currently \$1,017,695. The goals are to:

1. maintain sufficient reserves to support society activities in adverse economic times
2. utilise the profits to support projects to advance the goals of the TSANZ.

Findex Financial and Advisory Services provides 6 monthly reports on the portfolio and an update to the board. With a 20-month plan to gradually reach the target asset allocation, it is expected that over the coming year the medium to long-term investment portfolio will be established.

A Finance Committee to oversee the TSANZ finances and risk management has been established. This committee will be comprised of the following: myself, immediate past treasurer (Associate Professor Nikky Isbel), Board member (Dr Lucy Sullivan) and a Board appointed member with financial expertise (Mr Stuart McLeod). The committee will provide oversight of the overall financial management of TSANZ activities and assets, but also monitor the performance of the investment portfolio and advise on the allocation of available funds for TSANZ strategic projects and initiatives.

Thanks to Nieves Piaggio along with all the TSANZ administrative team and all members of the Board for welcoming me on board and for their advice and encouragement.

ADVISORY COMMITTEES & WORKING GROUPS REPORT

Associate Professor Nikky Isbel
Deputy Chair, TSANZ
Chair, TSANZ Advisory Committees
& Working Groups



It has been a busy year with an incredible amount of work being undertaken by the TSANZ Advisory Committees and Working Groups. Much has been achieved, with the completion of projects such as the TSANZ/ OTA COVID-19 taskforce, the delivery of the NIKKT final report and the

implementation of the virtual cross-match. Exciting new projects have been commenced and work plans for the upcoming year are in place.

The work is expertly supported by the project managers Emily Larkins, Sarah White and Kim Rawson who provide unwavering guidance and we would like to thank them for their dedication and hard work.

We would also like to acknowledge the support and collaboration with the Organ and Tissue Authority (OTA). TSANZ and OTA have an excellent relationship with more than ten years of working together and look forward to ongoing efforts to improve outcomes in the organ donation and transplantation sector.

Thank you to all dedicated contributions of those involved in these organizations, who tirelessly work to advance the field of transplantation in Australia and New Zealand.

Nicole Isbel

Summary of Achievements of the Advisory Committees and Projects 2023

The advisory committees met regularly throughout the year, including both face-to-face and virtually. The committees include the Cardiac Transplant Advisory Committee (CTAC), Lung Transplant Advisory Committee (LTAC), Liver and Intestinal Transplant Advisory Committee (LITAC), Renal Transplant Advisory Committee (RTAC), Donor Surgeons and Donor Coordinators Advisory Committee (DSDC), Paediatric Transplant Advisory Committee (PTAC), Pancreas and Islet Transplant Advisory Committee (PITAC) and the Vascular Composite Allograft Advisory Committee (VCAAC).

CTAC/LTAC, LITAC, and RTAC/PITAC have been invited to assist with the organisation of the Solid Organ Transplant Symposium which will be an addition to the TSANZ Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM) program. These sessions will allow focus on current issues and controversies and facilitate discussion and communication.

The National Indigenous Kidney Transplantation Taskforce (NIKTT) provided its [final report](#) to the Department of Health and Aged Care by the due date of 31st August 2023. The Medical Journal of Australia published a special NIKTT [Supplement](#), Advancing accessible kidney transplantation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (Hughes, Cundale, Owen McDonald, August 2023), that describes the work and findings of the NIKTT over the last three years. The NIKTT was successful in applying for a new grant opportunity (through the TSANZ), to allow for bridging funding for the next twelve months. This funding will cover the establishment of a data dashboard through ANZDATA, the second Transplantation Equity conference, support for

Indigenous Reference Groups at transplantation units, and the development of a plan for a consumer peak body. The NIKTT Operations Committee will resume from 1st February 2024.

The TSANZ/Transplant Advisory Group (TAG) Covid-19 Rapid Response Taskforce met 61 times up until the 28th of February 2023, when the group decided that meetings would change from bi-monthly to being held on an ad-hoc basis. The TSANZ would like to express gratitude for all the hard work that this group did during uncertain times and that the guidance, up to date information and education provided was much appreciated.

The Virtual Cross Match (VXM) Working Group, led by Chair Associate Professor Ross Francis met regularly throughout the year doing an extensive amount of work to progress the successful introduction of VXM across all organ allocations. Histocompatibility Guidelines were drafted and are in the process of receiving key stakeholder feedback. The VXM Operations committee, including the Chair, Rhonda Holdsworth and Narelle Watson have been instrumental in the success of this work, for example, OrganMatch implementing an updated process for HLA antibody testing. The working group held its last meeting on the 7th of December 2023. Further discussions will come under the newly formed Tissue Typing Advisory Committee.

The establishment of the Tissue Typing Advisory Committee (TTAC) is underway which will improve communication between labs and act as a national advisory body for genetics and laboratory testing.

The Kidney Allocation Algorithm Working Group, led by Project Manager, Sarah White has undertaken a comprehensive consultation process with key stakeholders looking at the Australian deceased donor kidney allocation algorithm and ways to improve equity and utility in allocation as well as other agreed system objectives. Additional Consultation forums are being scheduled in the new year. The consultations helped form the Kidney Allocation Workplan: 2024-2026. This is a comprehensive piece of work that has been expertly managed and drafted by Sarah and is due to be finalised by mid-February 2024.

The Living Kidney Donation Working Group is a joint ANZSN/TSANZ collaboration. The group is led by Co-Chairs Melanie Wyld and Christine Russell. They held a face-to-face consultative forum in Sydney in October 2023 and a consumer forum in December, to assist with the development of a workplan, including outcomes of the forum. The project aims to optimise access and outcomes in living donor transplantation across Australia and New Zealand. The forum involved attendees splitting into three

groups to discuss the barriers and solutions around living kidney donation.

The Adolescent and Young Adult Transplant Working Group has met monthly since convening in June 2023 and is led by Rachael Harry who is a Hepatologist in the NZ Liver Transplant Unit. The working group has drafted a Research Protocol regarding a cross-sectional survey study and has exciting projects ahead of them in 2024.

The enhancing clinical guidelines project has continued to promote research and clinical best practice with the release of version 1.11 in June and the imminent release of 1.12 in the new year. An established review process now supports the ever-increasing need for content review and updates which is supported through the work of clinical experts within the Guidelines Advisory Panel, TSANZ Advisory Committees, DonateLife services and OTA. Continued clinical engagement across donation and transplantation sectors has also led to further revisions to supporting documents including the National SOP, Organ Allocation, Organ Rotation and Urgent Listing as well as the new release of Surgical Technique for deceased donor abdominal organ retrieval. 2024 sees the completion of the current project scope, and digitalisation from the current pdf format to the release of a newly developed Guidelines webpage and mobile app. This project has made so many gains under the amazing leadership of Clinical Project Manager, Emily Larkins.

CTAC have held additional meetings to discuss the paediatric heart allocation process to include the addition of the Westmead Children's Hospital as well as Auckland City Hospital/Starship Children's Hospital in NZ. Chapter 4 of the TSANZ Guidelines have had a major review that will be included in version 1.12.

DSDC are reviewing the Organ Retrieval Report Forum audit process. The Surgical technique for deceased donor abdominal organ retrieval was updated (from the first release in 2015) and was circulated to members (June 2023).

LITAC has held additional meetings to analyse Michael Fink's Benchmarking Report. The group reached a consensus on split liver transplantation-donor aged 50 years or less for all paediatric centres. Upper age limit for liver donor referrals-There is no limit for all transplant units, except for SA and WA which will remain at 80 years or less.

LTAC is discussing a preferred device and map funding agreement to support a National (& NZ) Programme for a 'cold ischaemic perfusion program'.

PITAC agreed upon donor age and weight criteria across jurisdictions.

PTAC has been involved in the discussions with the Westmead heart transplant unit as well as the updates to the kidney allocation algorithm.

RTAC has agreed upon donor age cut-offs per jurisdiction, to be discussed further at the next meeting following data analysis. Discussions around Functional Warm Ischaemia Time usage and alignment with the current best practice guidelines, with a data analysis undertaken.

VCAAC has formed Uterine Transplant Guideline Development Subgroups (allocation and donor assessment) have been formed to progress Uterine Transplant Guideline development within the TSANZ Clinical Guidelines.

All Advisory Committees met via Zoom and face-to-face during the TSANZ ASM in Brisbane in June 2023.

SPEC REPORT

Associate Professor Wai Lim and Dr Lucy Sullivan Co-Chairs of SPEC

Despite the ongoing threat of COVID-19 infection, the 2023 ASM moved to a face-to-face meeting in Brisbane. The record attendees at the ancillary meetings prior to the ASM reflect the enormous appetite for transplant education. Ensuring gender equity and fostering the next generation of transplant leaders remain two of SPEC's major priorities, and these priorities are reflected in representations on committees and invited speakers in this year's ancillary meetings and ASM.



The SPEC committee members have remained unchanged this year, comprising of six members of diverse background of clinicians, basic researchers, and HLA scientists. The diverse expertise of the group is critical in the conception of multiple education programs and meetings relevant to TSANZ members. Specifically, we would like to acknowledge the ongoing enormous contributions from our four general members in Jeanette Villanueva, Sanda Stankovic, Karen Keung, and Siah Kim.

There has been a change in the leadership structure of the Early Career Research (ECR) subcommittee, with the retirement of the inaugural Chairs in Tracy Ying, Eric Au, and Brenda Rosales. The SPEC and Society are indebted to the leadership shown by the Chairs, adeptly navigating the ECR committee through the turbulent COVID-19 years. Georgina Irish and Samuel Chan have taken over as Chairs of the ECR from September 2023, and will lead a team of 17 members (Laura De Souza, Madeleine Gill, Katharine Hegerty, Donna Hickling, Atharva Kale, Joshua Lee, Saskia Leibowitz, Lachlan McMichael, Aspasia Pefanis, Griffith

Perkins, Amy Prosser, Amir Shamshirian, Olivia Smibert, Eric Son, Karen Waller, Melanie Wyld and Tracey Ying) for the next 2 years (term of Chair). We have no doubt that this dynamic duo will steer the ECR committee to bigger, better and more entertaining things in the years to come.

In a blink of an eye, the 2023 ASM has concluded for another year. With a late burst of late registrations, the total number of registrants for the ASM and ancillary meetings were 342. This year's program started off with a bang as we welcomed 110 delegates to the inaugural HLA Day (convenors Rhonda Holdsworth and our own Lucy Sullivan), and by the end of the day, there is no doubt the delegates understand the importance of HLA not just in organ transplantation, but in every disease process (and maybe even finding your soulmate!). The HLA Day leads into the postgraduate and Masterclass course respectively, with 137 and 125 total registrants for either meeting. We would like to specifically acknowledge the immense efforts of our convenors for the postgraduate meeting (Jennifer Li and Hando Rhee) and Masterclass (Georgina Irish and Steve Hiho), who were instrumental in the design of these fantastic programs. The postgraduate program focused on pre, peri- and post-transplant management issues; whilst the Masterclass program dealt with the more practical considerations and nuances pertaining to organ allocation and the assessment of transplant suitability. In addition, Transplant Australia sponsored an important patient forum that focuses on mental health in transplant recipients, and this forum was expertly led by Ms Linh Pham, Dr Mark Wallace and Emmy O'Neill). The forum was attended by patients and families and the open discussion on the struggles and inadequate support relating to mental health care does highlight a potential deficiency in the care of transplant recipients.

The ASM was superbly convened by Antiopi Varelias and Chandima Divithotawela, with the overall themes of clinical application of cellular therapies, management of highly sensitised patients, immunological and frailty risk assessment pre-transplantation, and advances in xenotransplantation. We like to acknowledge the excellent contributions from our five international speakers in Elaine Reed (UCLA, United States), Geoff Hill (Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center, United States), Robert Montgomery (NYU, United States), Cynthia Kramer (Leiden, The Netherlands) and Lianne Singer (Toronto, Canada) who each gave outstanding and thought-provoking lectures in both the ancillary meetings and the ASM. The presentations in the cutting-edge field of immunogenicity and the potential clinical applicability of novel therapies in bone marrow and solid organ transplantation were extremely timely, given the explosion of data in these areas over the last few years. We would also like to thank our local speakers, in which the ASM and ancillary meetings would not have been possible without their contributions. The basic and clinical research

projects presented by our junior and senior TSANZ members were again of high quality, emphasizing that transplant research and mentorship in Australia and New Zealand will remain in good hands for many more years to come. Women in Transplantation (WIT) session remains a showcase event, and we do hope that TSANZ is in some small part, helping to achieve and promote gender equality and inclusiveness in all aspects of the system procedures within the Society. Our selection of the convenors and speakers proves the Society's commitment of achieving this equality.

We would like to thank and acknowledge our sponsors for their ongoing commitment to TSANZ, in particular our platinum sponsors, Astellas and Hansa and gold sponsor One Lambda Thermo Fisher. The President's prize honours for 2023 were awarded to Atharva Kale and Ahmer Hameed for their basic science and clinical research presentations, respectively. Other prestigious prizes were awarded to Michaela Lucas (Ian McKenzie Award); Natasha Rogers (Josette Eris Award) and Joshua Kausman (TSANZ Aviva Rosenfeld Award).

To the fun aspect of the ASM, we once again like to acknowledge the ECR subcommittee in hosting a "Meet a Research Leader Event", People's choice award (which is not too different from the judges' awards) and for organising the fun run (which the lack of ECR in participating in the actual run is noted). The ECRs were also instrumental in helping with the organisation and in the participation of the TSANZ grand rounds throughout the year.

We have had 3 virtual grand rounds this year, and we acknowledge the funding provided by Astellas for this initiative. We have two remaining grand rounds this year, with a grant writing session and we will close TSANZ with a fun and fact pre-Christmas quiz (with presents) so please look out for details in the coming weeks. The grand round and other initiatives will continue in 2024 and a draft program and announcement of new initiatives will be posted on the TSANZ website in the New Year.

We are again indebted for the tireless work of our extraordinary administrative team, brilliantly led by our experienced TSANZ Executive officer Nieves Piaggio and TSANZ Administrative Officer Roslyn Davies. Their level of work ethics and attention to details are incomparable, providing invaluable support to all the convenors and to both of us. With the increasing complexity in the logistics of organising an ASM and education programs, we are extremely fortunate to have the support of Nieves and Roslyn.

The quote by the American physicist Jerome Isaac Friedman "Innovation is the key to the future, but basic research is the

key to future innovation" is perhaps a timely reminder for transplant researchers, and we hope that basic science research will continue to grow and take centre stage in future ASMs. We are grateful for the continuing support of the council, society members, and funding bodies, the support of which is critical for the successful implementation of current and future SPEC programs. We wish everyone have a Merry Xmas and look forward to another year of education and seeing everyone at the 2024 ASM in Melbourne.

Wai Lim and Lucy Sullivan

ECRC REPORT

Brenda Maria Rosales & Eric Au Co-Chairs of ECRC

It has been a year of transition for the ECR Committee. With many of the original committee members stepping down to pursue other endeavours, this was the last year of the original cohort of ECRs that started in 2019.

We continued many of our initiatives at the 2023 ASM in Brisbane, where we recruited some local talent to assist with our events. The ECR Networking drinks, held right after the PGC, was a lovely opportunity for ECRs and others interested in pursuing research, to connect. I was struck by how many people working and studying transplantation didn't consider themselves ECRs, despite obvious evidence to the contrary. It made me think how the Committee could be more inclusive and how we could help build confidence. A task for the new cohort, perhaps.

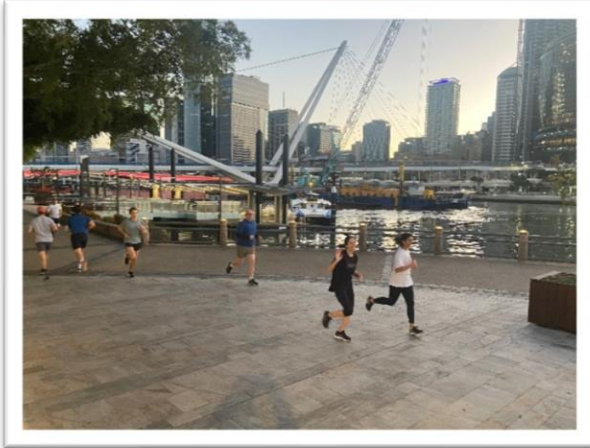
We heard echoes of these sentiments from our panel of experts in the "Meet the Researcher" session. Chaired by new members Lesleigh Winks and Amir Shamshirian. Created so that mid-career researchers could share their insights on how to build a career in research. It was an opportunity for ECRs to discuss challenges they face with those "living the dream". It was so engaging we had many questions left at the end but had to move on to other sessions. Thank you again to our panel members, Dr Melanie Wyld, Dr Michael Collins, and Associate Professor Antiopi Varelias for sharing your research journeys. Your honesty and encouragement will not be soon forgotten.

Last, but not least, we coordinated the Annual Fun Run along the banks of the Brisbane River on a beautiful sunny morning. Again, we were saved by some local recruits who planned, advertised, and marshalled the event. Thank you to Donna Hickling, Nikky Isbel, and Georgie Irish for their organising. I think it's been one of the most successful Fun Runs yet, and we have photos to prove it!

Personally, I am super proud of the efforts of our ECR committee members. We were tasked with bringing together ECRs, clinicians and health care professionals

within transplantation and enhancing ECR engagement within the Society. I believe we have done just that; we have established an ECR presence within the Society and its organising committees and built what we hope are the beginnings of a safe space for ECRs to share.

Now, we welcome a whole new entry of eager ECRs from clinical, scientific, and allied health backgrounds. After attending their first general meeting in November, I am already excited to see some of their ideas come to life. We wish you all the best in your efforts!



Annual Fun Run - banks of the Brisbane River



Meet the Researcher
Dr Melanie Wyld, Dr Michael Collins and Associate Professor Antiopi Varelias

The International Society for Heart and Lung Transplantation (ISHLT), Denver April 19-22

Dr Sanda Stankovic

It was a great honour to receive the TSANZ Travel award this year that allowed me to attend the 43rd Annual Meeting & Scientific Sessions of The International Society for Heart and Lung Transplantation (ISHLT), 19-22 April in Denver, Colorado. I gave two talks, one titled “Donor-Derived Lymphocyte Chimerism is Associated with Protection from Chronic Lung Allograft Dysfunction” in the session Novel Biomarkers of CLAD pathogenesis and a mini oral titled “Bronchoalveolar Lavage Cytokine Profile at Two Weeks Post-Transplant is Associated with Chronic Lung Allograft Dysfunction” in Mini Oral Session: THE PHANTOM MENACE: Basic Science Mechanisms of Chronic Lung Allograft Dysfunction (CLAD).

This was my first international transplant conference and an exceptional opportunity to gain exposure and receive insightful feedback from a broad international audience. The conference featured a wealth of both clinical and basic science talks. I focused primarily on talks in basic research that related to my field. Basic science talks did not disappoint. The prospective biomarkers of disease progression were discussed as well as treatments that can be used to prevent pathological lymphocytes. Allograft immune profiling over the course of the post-transplant period could provide insight into the pathogenesis of chronic allograft damage. The gene expression from T cells at the single cell level can be used as a powerful approach to obtaining a comprehensive understanding of the local T cell milieu from limiting clinical samples. CD52 was found to be upregulated on allograft T cells from CLAD patients. A talk on NK cells in an animal model of primary graft dysfunction demonstrated migration of these cells to airways following ischemia-reperfusion injury with the reduction in their migration with blockade of CCR5.

A great benefit of attending this conference for me was also the opportunity to network with researchers and exchange ideas and experimental methodologies. I was able to meet researchers whose work I greatly respect, which was a highlight of this trip.

Although Denver’s altitude took some adjusting, I thoroughly enjoyed the trip and came away with great enthusiasm for the future of lung transplant research.

Thanks again TSANZ for this opportunity.

American Transplant Congress, San Deigo June 3-7

Dr Karthik Venkataraman

Thanks to the generous support of TSANZ, I was able to attend the American Transplant Congress in San Diego this year. It was a wonderful opportunity to gain the barest glimpse of the breadth of research in transplantation occurring on the global study. As an early career researcher, it was humbling to be able to offer my small contribution to the work presented.

I had the opportunity to present our work on the association of slow graft function on long term kidney transplant outcomes as a poster. I presented this work on behalf of my co-authors, Dr Georgina Irish, Dr Michael Collins and Dr Phil Clayton. The poster generated some interest, and with some good fortune, may be coming to a scientific journal near you soon!

The conference was not only my first ATC, but my first international conference. The sheer scope and volume of activity on display was slightly overwhelming. The buffet of topics on offer made one want for Hermione’s Time Turner in order to consume it all. In the end, my lack of omnipresence and jetlag forced me to carefully choose which sessions to attend.

While the cutting-edge science of xeno-transplantation and advances in transplant immunology were fascinating, as were the works presented on waitlist management and organ utilization, my standout sessions were the Tuesday morning impact session on BK virus and the Wednesday morning CMV update. The updated BK viraemia guidelines from the TTS working group promises to be an extremely helpful adjunct to clinical decision making in this difficult patient group and I eagerly anticipate its publication.

San Diego itself appears to be a city tailor-made for conferences, with many good restaurants a stone’s throw away. I had the opportunity to watch a baseball game at Petco Park. The San Diego Padres (1) lost to the Seattle Mariners (4). The home team’s only run came from a check swing fielder’s choice in the 3rd innings, that allowed Rowned Odor to run home from 3rd base, a phrase that would have seemed like Wernickian gibberish prior to the game. Though on the wrong side of the result, the San Deigo crowd put on such a display of star-spangled enthusiasm that was difficult to not get swept up in the spectacle. I also had a hotdog.

I am ever grateful to TSANZ for the Travel Award, which allowed me this singular experience. To an early career researcher, the importance of receiving such awards go beyond the financial support but acts as a much-needed vote of confidence. While I am well supported by my

supervisors, the support of the Society provides an extra level of reassurance, for which I am very grateful.

IPITA-IXA-CTRMS Joint Congress 2023, San Diego October 26-29

Hannah Wang

The generous support provided by TSANZ Travel Award made it possible for me to attend the IPITA-IXA-CTRMS Joint Congress in person. This was my first international conference and first time traveling to the United States, and I cherished this experience after many years of virtual conferences.

The 2023 tripartite meeting showcased the collaborative spirit of the scientific research community and served as a platform for leading experts and researchers in the field of pancreas and islet transplantation to connect. Presenting my research to international islet experts and engaging in discussions fuelled by insightful questions presented a significant career opportunity. In contrast to the relatively smaller islet research community in Australia, I was pleasantly surprised by the expansiveness and diversity of the work presented. Even more remarkable was the congruency of findings to my own research.

One of the prominent themes at the conference was the exploration of emerging technologies in islet isolation and transplantation. Cutting-edge research from Japan highlighted promising developments in bioengineering encapsulated islets for transplantation, resulting in improved HbA1c levels ten years post-transplant without the use of immunosuppression. Additionally, experts from the US, Canada, and Italy discussed engineering the islet site using pre-vascularized pouch devices or scaffolds to enhance islet engraftment. These innovations hold great potential for revolutionizing clinical practices and expanding the accessibility of islet transplantation.

Another focal point of the meeting centred on significant advancements in xenotransplantation. Presentations covered a range of experimental, pre-clinical to clinical studies. Notably, Professor Mohiuddin's lab at the University of Maryland shared follow-up data on the first pig heart to human transplant, providing insights into recipient immune cell monitoring, retrospective pig virus detection, and the titre of anti-pig non-gal IgG and IgM antibodies correlated to graft function. The swathe of preclinical work in small animals and non-human primates was evident in the number of presentations on the topic. Such collaborative efforts are crucial in advancing xenotransplantation into the future.

Lastly, I enjoyed networking with fellow students and professors to establish professional connections, exploring the renowned San Diego seaside culture, and participating

in American social events. Engaging with delegates, I learnt about a scientist who was sent to space with mice to model cardiac health in astronauts. I also enjoyed a light-hearted debate about the pronunciation of the word "dragon" with a Canadian and listened to delegates share tales about their hometowns of France, Germany, England, and so on. It was an extraordinary learning experience, and I am profoundly grateful to TSANZ for the Award.

Denghao Wu

The TSANZ Travel Award for 2023 provided me with the opportunity to attend the IPITA-IXA-CTRMS Joint Congress in San Diego. This marks my first attendance at a joint international conference, where three major transplantation societies from around the world gather to disseminate the newest scientific and clinical discoveries in their respective fields. I must sincerely thank the TSANZ for the support in attending this conference.

At the conference, alongside Professor Toby Coates and Mr. James Zuiani, I presented our latest update on the clinical outcomes for patients with hereditary pancreatitis undergoing the total pancreatectomy with auto-islet transplantation procedure. A personal highlight for me was that my presentation was slotted into an exceedingly robust and competitive islet transplantation session alongside the largest and most advanced research groups in the field. Hence, it was tremendously exciting to share and discuss my research with researchers who had inspired it in the first place. Furthermore, I shared our findings on the health economics burden of chronic pancreatitis hospitalization in individuals under 18 years old in New South Wales, Australia, as a poster presentation.

A topical focus for the conference, as has been the trend in the past couple of years, was xenotransplantation. It was particularly fascinating to see how rapidly the field of xenotransplantation had advanced since the first pig-to-human heart transplant in 2022. Some specifically notable presentations for me were the transgenic porcine islet cluster model by Professor Wayne Hawthorne and unquestionably the update on the pig heart transplant model by Professor Muhammad Mohiuddin. Additionally, topics that were interesting to me at the meeting included the field of repeat pancreas transplant coming from the University of Manchester, UK, and the latest update on donor genetic modification for xenotransplantation.

Lastly, the conference had a variety of networking and career development opportunities catered towards young investigators. I had the chance to establish contact with collaborators old and new, both back home in Australia and abroad. The in-person style of this conference simplified the process of research dissemination and establishing collaboration with like-minded researchers, making me

look forward to the future development in the field of transplantation. Overall, the IPITA-IXA-CTRMS Joint Congress was a fantastic learning experience, and I am grateful to the TSANZ for awarding me this opportunity.

Atharva Kale

With the support of the TSANZ Travel Award 2023, I was grateful to be able to attend my first in-person international conference, in San Diego, USA. I attended the IPITA-IXA-CTRMS Joint Congress, held at the Hilton Bayfront, where I received the opportunity to give an oral presentation on my PhD project titled 'Targeting CD47 improves islet function and survival'.

This scientific meeting surrounding transplantation was very informative, well-organised and welcomed over 600 registrants from 30 countries. It was a four-day conference which started off with the IPITA Pre-Congress Symposium which was an interactive discussion on successfully navigating difficult medical and surgical scenarios in pancreas transplantation.

There were many oral presentation sessions that ran simultaneously on all days, for example, there were talks surrounding engineering of the islet site in islet transplantation, preserving graft integrity and evaluating the implant site in islet xenotransplantation, immunological challenges and novel therapies in islet transplantation, donor genetic modification for xenotransplantation, cell-based immune therapy for transplantation, and many more!

There were several invited national and international speakers, for example keynote speaker Professor. Paolo De Coppi who is a Nuffield Professor of Paediatric Surgery from University College London, UK, spoke about advances in cell, tissue, and organ engineering of interest to transplantation. Dr Dorris A Taylor, CEO of Organomet Bio Inc., USA, spoke about bioengineering human organs in 2023. Professor. Jeff W.M. Bulte who is a Professor of Radiology, Oncology, Biomedical Engineering, and Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, USA, spoke about preclinical and clinical non-invasive cellular imaging.

Moreover, I enjoyed the Congress Networking event, where I was able to interact with many fellow PhD students from different institutions and countries, learn about their research and life in their countries, as well as network with other senior researchers. I also found the career development session held for young investigators very helpful as that allowed several young investigators like me to interact with senior researchers at round tables and hear about their career experiences in basic science or clinical

science, or in the industry. It was a good platform to ask questions and participate in discussions. There was also a round table regarding grant opportunities for post-docs.

Overall, this was a wonderful learning experience for me, particularly because this was my first in-person international conference and my first time visiting the USA. I would like to thank TSANZ again for supporting me with this travel.

Evelyn Salvaris

The IPITA-IXA-CTRMS Joint Congress held 26 to 29 October in San Diego, USA was the first opportunity since the COVID pandemic for members of IPITA, IXA and CTRMS to meet face-to-face and the atmosphere was energetic. Delegates enthusiastically reacquainted with colleagues, established new networks, and engaged in topical discussions throughout the academic program and the breaks.

The IXA program at the Congress highlighted that Xenotransplantation is on the cusp of clinical reality. This was outlined by various presentations reviewing the data from two genetically modified (GM) pig heart-to human transplants and several decedent models using GM pig kidneys and hearts.

Aminated discussions throughout the Congress focused on the value or otherwise of the decedent model. Two workshop sessions, Genetic Modifications and Microbes: Are we ready for the clinic? and Road to Xenotransplantation: Clinical Trials, provided the opportunity to debate the necessary requirements for xenotransplantation to obtain clinical approval. This included: 1. the optimal number and combination of genetic modifications required for each organ or islet xenotransplant, 2. a consensus list of pathogens and protocols required for screening, 3. whether more pre-clinical non-human primate studies are required, and 4. regulatory requirements for clinical xenotransplantation. Polls were conducted during the sessions canvassing the workshop participants, with the results to be made available at a later date. However, the general impression from the workshops was that further fine tuning and consensus is required before clinical xenotransplantation will be given the green light.

The most compelling presentation for the need for xenotransplantation was given by Mr David Bennett Jr, the son of the first pig heart transplant recipient, who highlighted his father's courage and belief in the xenotransplant program. He expressed the Bennett family's deep gratitude for the opportunity to spend extra time with their father and a second chance of life which would not

have been possible without receiving a GM pig heart. Mr Bennet Jr expressed a heartfelt “thank you” to the surgical and care teams. In addition, he commended the xenotransplantation community for the ongoing research commitment to making xenotransplantation a clinical reality and conveyed his ongoing support for xenotransplantation. A standing ovation was received at the conclusion of his emotional presentation. In my opinion, David’s testimonial and the research outcomes to date clearly indicate the need and benefit for xenotransplantation to become clinical reality.

The Joint Congress program gave Early Career Investigators the opportunity to participate in a dedicated Young Investigator Program, providing opportunities to establish academic and social networks which included a career guidance round table workshop session.

One benefit of the Joint Congress was the opportunity to attend IPITA and CTRMS islet focus sessions which overlapped with my involvement in xeno-islet transplantation.

I am very grateful to the TSANZ for providing me with an international travel grant to attend and present my abstract “Evaluation of a T-cell depleting monoclonal antibody in islets and other tissues of transgenic pigs” at this meeting. The support of TSANZ gave me a valuable opportunity to network in person with many experts in the xeno- and islet transplantation fields. I also had the opportunity to extend my career skills by organising and moderating numerous sessions, in my role as a member of the Scientific Program Committee. On a personal note, I had the privilege to meet Mr David Bennett Jr and the Xenotransplantation team that performed the first GM pig heart-to human transplant.

Thank you TSANZ your support is greatly appreciated.

51st Annual Scientific Meeting of the Australian and New Zealand Society for Immunology (ASI) - December 4-8

Chloe Sligar

In December 2023, with the help of the TSANZ travel grant, I attended the 51st Annual Scientific Meeting of the Australian and New Zealand Society for Immunology that was held in Auckland, New Zealand.

The conference brought together leading immunologists from around the world to showcase their research. The program covered a wide range of topics including transplant immunology, COVID-19, innate immunity, tumour immunology, autoimmunity and many more. The conference provided an excellent opportunity for me and other attendees to network with accomplished academics as well as other PhD students. I learnt about cutting-edge research and the latest developments in my field and gained new strategies to incorporate into my own research. I also had the opportunity to present my research, which allowed me to further develop and polish my communication skills.

Thanks again to TSANZ for the travel award! I couldn't have attended the conference without it.

Amal Elhage

The Australian and New Zealand Society for Immunology conference was a vibrant gathering that brought together leading immunologists, researchers, and professionals from across the world.

The conference was packed with insightful discussions and ground-breaking talks that will benefit the future research in the field of Immunology. The conference further showcased researchers work through daily poster sessions, where I had the privilege of presenting my research, providing platforms for personal discussions and the opportunity for collaborative networking.

Overall, the conference was of great value, and I am grateful for the travel grant provided by TSANZ that gave me the opportunity to attend the conference





2023 AWARD WINNERS

During the Annual Dinner on June 19, 2023, at the 41st TSANZ Annual Scientific Meeting, award winners were announced by TSANZ President, Professor Helen Pilmore

TSANZ Aviva Rosenfeld Award for Excellence in Patient Care in Transplantation

This award has been established in honour of Aviva Rosenfeld, the TSANZ Executive Officer from 1996 to 2015. The Aviva award recognises an outstanding clinician (including physicians, surgeons, nurses, psychologists, social workers, other allied health Professionals) who has demonstrated excellence in patient care in transplantation.

WINNER – **Joshua Kausman**

TSANZ Ian McKenzie Prize for Outstanding Contribution in Transplantation

This prestigious award recognises researchers who have demonstrated excellence and exceptional contribution in the field of transplantation.

WINNER – **Michaela Lucas**

TSANZ Josette Eris Award

This biennial award is to recognise the life of Josette Eris and her contribution to Transplantation.

WINNER – **Natasha Rogers**

KHA Awards SPONSORED BY



WINNER (CLINICAL RESEARCH) – **Michael Collins**

WINNER (LABORATORY RESEARCH) – **Sanda Stankovic**

President Prize (Basic Science)

WINNER – **Atharva Kale**

President Prize People's Choice Award (Basic Science)

WINNER – **Atharva Kale**

President Prize (Clinical Science)

WINNER – **Ahmer Hameed**

President Prize People's Choice Award (Clinical Science)

WINNER – **Harry Robertson**

Best Poster (Basic Science)

No Basic Posters displayed

Best Poster (Clinical Science)

WINNER – **Amelia Le Page**

Early Career Researchers Award (Basic Science)

WINNERS -

Cheng Sheng Chai

Daniel Cox

Atharva Kale

Mark Ly x 2

Moumita Paul-Heng

Aspasia Pefanis

Chloe Sligar

Hannah Wang

Early Career Researchers Award (Clinical Science)

WINNERS -

Shaun Chandler

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TSANZ SPEC, with support of the council has continued the interactive state-of-the-art educational virtual webinars which will provide a succinct overview of important clinical, translational and practical aspects of the spectrum of organ transplantation and are suitable for all members of the clinical and research community, including medical and surgical advanced trainees in transplantation. The webinars also provide an opportunity to interact and submit questions to the speakers and access to the recorded talks.



Grand Rounds #16 **Grant Writing Workshop**

Featuring



Germaine Wong



Carmel Hawley



Samuel Chan

November 23, 2023
4pm AEDT

Join the TSANZ Grant Writing Grand Round!
Hear from expert speakers from different career stages and research interests about the pearls and pitfalls for grant writing success.
The grand round will include a focus on improving your research impact plus a panel discussion and the opportunity to ask questions of our speakers.



Grand Rounds #15

Dr Lloyd D'Orsogna

The role of pathogens in triggering immune responses to foreign HLA

September 28, 2023, 4pm AEST



Grand Rounds #14

A/Professor Alexandra Sharland

Self-peptide antigens in transplant rejection and tolerance - a key to better immune monitoring?

February 23, 2023, 4pm AEDT

Grand Rounds are presented in 2023 thanks to the support of



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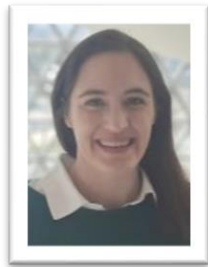


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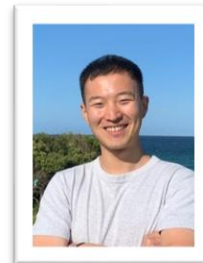
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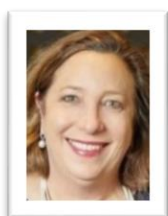
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