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Honorary Life Memberships of ANZCCART awarded

The ANZCCART Board of Directors has taken the significant step of creating a new category of ANZCCART Membership that is specifically designed to be the highest level of recognition we, as an organization, can offer to those who have made the most significant contributions to animal welfare in research and teaching over a number of years. The aim of this award is to acknowledge the lifetime commitment of those we recognize as not only having provided outstanding service to ANZCCART, but also contributed more broadly to the field in other contexts. In 2010, the Board decided to award not one, but two such awards and the recipients of these awards were formally recognized at the ANZCCART annual conference held in Hobart during July.

The inaugural recipients of honorary life membership of ANZCCART were Professor Margaret Rose and Professor Warwick Anderson. Regrettably, during the lead up to the conference, the Australian Prime Minister called an election and this meant Warwick's presence was required in Canberra, so he had to cancel his trip to Hobart

to receive this award. He did ask Mrs Elizabeth Grant to accept this award on his behalf. Elizabeth delivered the presentation Warwick had prepared and acknowledged both his outstanding work in the area of animal welfare and his passion for the Australian Code of Practice and everything it represents. Fortunately, Margaret was able to attend the conference and receive the award in person and she spoke passionately about many of the advances made in Australia during her career and of what still needs to be addressed. The formal presentations were made by the Acting Chairman of the ANZCCART Board, Professor Richard Russell at the conference dinner.

Professor Margaret Rose was awarded an honorary life membership of ANZCCART in recognition of her outstanding contributions to ANZCCART and the welfare of animals used in research and teaching during her career. Margaret was one of the people who played a leading role in the formation of ANZCCART and has played a significant role in our development and recognition during the 23 years since. Much of

this has been via her work in writing and editing a number of ANZCCART's key publications such as the Euthanasia Guidelines, Housing Guidelines and a number of conference proceedings to name but a few. When it comes to the welfare of animals in research and teaching in the International arena, there are two names that are associated with Australia; the first is Margaret Rose and the second is ANZCCART, and it is probably true to say that the reason ANZCCART rates second is largely a result of work where Margaret has been a (if not the) major contributor. Aside from her work with ANZCCART, Margaret has spent an enormous amount of time and energy working on a number of revisions of the Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes – including the one currently in progress. She has also been a key player in the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy (AAWS) research and teaching group and the principal driver of many committees and working groups within NSW and Australia as well as in the international arena.



Professor Margaret Rose - Honorary Life Member of ANZCCART

Professor Warwick Anderson AM was also awarded an Honorary Life Membership of ANZCCART in recognition of his long and devoted role in ensuring the welfare of animals used in research and teaching. Warwick, who is currently serving as the CEO of the NHMRC was instrumental in the formation of



Professor Warwick Anderson, Honorary Life Member of ANZCCART.

ACCART (the forerunner to ANZCCART) and was closely involved with the early discussions regarding the role of ACCART in the research community as well as the wider community. In 1990, Warwick clearly stated that the scientist must accept ultimate responsibility for their use of animals in research. This idea has remained central to the way Warwick has approached the issues associated with the scientific use of animals and his background as a high profile researcher lent a great deal of credit to the importance of this attitude. Warwick was the inaugural chairman of the NHMRC animal welfare committee (known in those days as the Animal Experimentation Ethics Committee) and in 1990 also took on the role as chair of the Code writing group which brought the responsibilities of researchers to the fore – consistent with his stance on the subject. This version of the Code also created the framework for the ethical review of proposals to use animals in research and the ethical aspects of research through the AEC approval process. Warwick is justifiably proud of the Code which is nationally and internationally respected. Warwick's contributions to the ethical use of animals in research and teaching through his roles with both the NHMRC and ANZCCART (particularly throughout the critical phase of changing opinions that were evident in the 90s) has been outstanding and awarding him one of the first honorary life memberships of ANZCCART is an appropriate acknowledgement.

ANZCCART AEC Member Award

ANZCCART was once again delighted to be able to recognise the exceptional work done by AEC members by announcing this year's AEC Member of the year at the conference dinner in Hobart. This year the winner was Patricia Baitz from Victoria.



Ms Patricia Baitz receiving her award from Professor Richard Russell, Acting Chair, ANZCCART Board. July, 2010.

Patricia has been an active member of Animal Ethics Committees over the last 18 years and currently sits as a Category D member on two Monash University Committees, the Monash University Animal Welfare Committee and the Royal Women's Hospital AEC.

Outside of the AEC meetings Patricia has provided invaluable support to the AECs by attending additional animal facility and laboratory inspections, meeting with various parties on particular concerns and through membership of the AEC Executive and Sub-Committees.

Patricia has continued her dedication and commitment to animal welfare through her involvement and presentations at various conference and workshops, hosted by Monash University, the Victorian Bureau of Animal Welfare and La Trobe University.

Patricia is the second recipient of the ANZCCART AEC Member of the Year award, with the inaugural Winner Mrs Kay McGrath from South Australia being recognised last year. Kay was nominated by three of the eight

AECs on which she serves in South Australia and was unanimously endorsed by all members of the judging panel as being the ideal recipient of our first ever award.

Kay's involvement in animal welfare spans over 40 years and she is currently a member of seven animal ethics committees in the state, including those established by the Independent Schools' organisation; Primary Industries and Resources South Australia; the South Australian Government Department of Education and Children's Services; CSIRO; the University of Adelaide, the National Parks and Wildlife Service, and the Flinders University and Southern Adelaide Health Service Animal Welfare Committee.

Kay's commitment to animal welfare is clearly demonstrated by her longstanding and active engagement with RSPCA S.A. Inc, starting in 1968 as a voluntary rescuer, then as both Secretary and Treasurer to the Southern Branch and now to her current appointment as a Board Member of the association. Her work and commitment to the Society were recognised by her election as a Life Member in 1995.

Kay's generous contribution to animal welfare, shown through her long involvement and diverse experiences in memberships of various animal ethics committees, and animal welfare and rescue organisations has earned widespread respect and credibility and she is truly deserving of the inaugural ANZCCART AEC Members Award.

As part of their prize, each winner received an all expenses paid trip to attend the ANZCCART conference.



Mrs Kay McGrath receiving her award from Dr Chris Prideaux, Chairman of the ANZCCART Board. July, 2009.

**The 2010 ANZCCART Conference,
“Ethics in a Changing Environment”
Hobart, Tasmania**

Peter Maley

The keynote speaker was Dr. Matt Leach of Newcastle University (UK). He spoke each day on topics including:

- Analgesic use in laboratory animals in recent times: species and international differences
- Recognition of pain in rodents and animals
- New approaches to assessing the emotional component of pain in animals.

Matt is a member of Paul Flecknell’s research team. Flecknell first addressed some of these issues in Australia at the 2007 Melbourne conference in a video presentation; his research is watched closely throughout the worldwide scientific community. Each of Matt’s presentations was presenter/audience interactive. The only slight regret associated with Matt’s presentations was the relatively low proportion of researchers in the audience who would have gained more from his presentations purely because they are working with animals on a daily basis. Comments from lay members indicated that his sessions were of significant interest and clearly demonstrated the benefits that come from the appropriate use of analgesia.

His presentations were vigorous and at times challenging for lay people. With his rapier sharp intellect I am sure we will hear much more of him in terms of international renown.

Another topic that was given significant airing was Devil Facial Tumour Disease (DFTD) and the variety of welfare issues with Tasmanian Devil Research. DFTD is a fatal condition in Tasmanian devils which is characterized by the appearance of facial cancers. The tumours are first noticed in and around the mouth as small lesions or lumps. These develop into large tumours predominantly around the face and neck.

This was a series of presentations dependent upon much visual input. Research is indicating that while the tumour has serious extinction impact on the east and southern coasts, north western Devils have shown immunity and are breeding healthy colonies. This now is a major focus.



Tasmanian Devil showing early signs of disease with a relatively small tumour apparent on the left hand side of his mouth.

Photograph courtesy of Save the Tasmanian Devil Program

DFTD is extremely unusual as it is only one of three recorded cancers that can spread like a contagious disease. The cancer is passed from devil to devil through biting. The live tumour cells aren’t rejected by their immune system because of a lack of genetic diversity among Tasmanian devils.

DFTD affects mainly adults - males seem to be the first affected, then females - although juveniles as young as one can also be infected. When the disease is advanced Tasmanian devils may have many cancers throughout the body.

Infected devils may become emaciated if the tumours interfere with teeth and feeding. Many females lose their young. Infected animals die within months of the lesions first appearing.

The Tasmanian government has established a colony of healthy Devils on a small island to preserve the species. The Conference heard from passionate Devil research scientists on how these animals live, feed and reproduce.

An interesting topic covered was the use of animal models in addiction research and the impact of drug and alcohol abuse in the community. Professor Andrew Lawrence spoke in detail of the research undertaken and also its cost in terms of financial, societal and familial impact. His presentation struck a chord with delegates and I thought it was one of the highlights.

The Conference programme provided several opportunities for delegates to comment on The Code (currently under review) and the general standard of AEC applications. Needless to say, consensus was condemnatory when it came to the use of clear and plain English by many applicants.

We are all familiar with the 3Rs in The Code:

- Reduction
- Refinement and
- Replacement.

It was suggested (and received much support from both lay and scientific delegates) that a further 4Rs become a new mantra for all AECs when considering applications not written in clear and plain language:

- Rubbish
- Re-write
- Re-submit
- Rejection.

Many delegates expressed a genuine sense of despair at the number of applicants that sign off on their documentation without reading through it properly.

There was evident concern that the impact of transportation on animals was seldom considered by applicants. My personal AEC experience is quite to the contrary.

There is serious concern throughout the industry at the increasing difficulty in recruiting new C and D members, with a perception that “the days of volunteers might be drawing to a close”. Many organisations are now offering meeting fees to attract new members. It was suggested by some that the problem will become critical within the next three years. The reasons for this problem are seen as:

- No time to spare, too busy
- Ageing
- Malaise, “what’s in it for me?”
- General disinterest/lack of awareness.

A large research organization tried advertising in capital city newspaper and received one expression of interest.

Some other areas of concern were raised by AEC members during discussions and these included:

- A feeling of unease that modifications are being submitted when in fact they should be regarded as new applications; issues such as animal numbers and additional procedures.
- Failure to recognize or advise of adverse incidents seems common and often results from ignorance of The Code.

One discussion group suggested AECs should become more proactive and actively seek “please explain” from research teams; the time for wrist slaps has passed. The group recommended AEC members and researchers be reminded that the following options are provided for in The Code:

- Formal suspension
- Dismissal
- Criminal prosecution.

The sessional chair observed that in her experience word of sanctions spread quickly and resulted in vastly improved attitudes and applications “make the punishment fit the crime”.

It is far more beneficial to establish a very amicable and strong working relationship with applicants; when such a relationship is in place animal welfare is an equal beneficiary. That said, when appropriate AEC rejection of an application occurs, there needs to be some carrot effect with the stick to encourage applicants to raise their standards.

Other concerns raised in discussion and in sessions included:

- Starting experimentation prior to approval
- Unapproved project modification
- Failure to submit annual and closure reports
- Unapproved increased animal usage
- Failure to report unexpected events.

Responses from animal users were interesting and included:

- Do not scare people out of reporting difficulties, “work with us not against us”.
- Disproportionate responses do more harm than good.
- Late or nil responses on applications is delaying important research.
- Refusal to accept “further” modifications and demand a new application is very frustrating.
- Suspension of projects before all the facts are

known is just unfair.

- We should be able to have the Faculty Dean or DVCR as an umpire.
- Retrospective AEC hindsight is unhelpful to researchers.

Two general comments intrigued me:

- There is a definite spiritual side of animal interaction with researchers.
- We all need to do science with a deep feeling of care for our animals.

The conference delivered on its expectation of diverse presentations, open and informal category specific discussion groups, a good blend of scientific and lay topics and an interesting and varied social mix. One problem that did arise at times during the conference was a lack of time available for questions; an issue I hope will be considered by future organizing committees.

As a category D member I have always found conference attendance stimulating on two particular levels:

- Education and understanding of major issues associated with animal use and
- Informal and formal discussion with peers – sharing ideas, opinions and concerns.

Clearly, “The Code” makes many references to on-going training for external AEC members. I see the ANZCCART conference as an essential part of my learning, understanding, and on some important ethical issues a vital part of my AEC membership within several research organisations.

Finally, on a personal level I recognized the event as a very clear demonstration that use of animals in scientific/medical research is well understood by those in political and non-political circles as essential to human welfare. That the conference was accorded a State Reception by His Excellency Peter Underwood, Governor of Tasmania, and Mrs. Underwood at Government House was to me significant.

My conference attendance was equally funded by:

- Howard Florey Institute
- Melbourne University
- Australian Synchrotron.

I am grateful to have such on-going support from my sponsors.

Further, I want to acknowledge the hours, effort and energy put into a great conference by Geoff and by Chris too.

News from New Zealand

Caring for the Animals We Use in Research: A New Science Resource

ANZCCART New Zealand has developed a new science resource for Year 9 & 10 (13 and 14 years) students. It consists of a DVD featuring prominent New Zealand scientists talking about their research and a CD of resources based on the interviews. It has been developed by a group of practising science teachers and educators.

This resource has been developed by the New Zealand Board of ANZCCART and its aim is to promote informed discussion about the care of animals in research and teaching.

The centrepiece of the resource is the DVD which features a wide range of socio-scientific issues that are of relevance in today’s world. It features:

- Jane Harding who is investigating the effects of pre-natal nutrition on lambs;
- Bill Wilson who is developing new anti-cancer drugs;
- Kathy Mountjoy who is investigating genetic causes of obesity;
- Craig Johnson who is exploring the use of pain relief for farm animals;
- Allan Herbison who is investigating puberty and infertility;
- Tim Day who developed the Xcluder Pest Proof Fence;
- Don Love who talks about the legislation and procedures around the use of animals in science.

Jessie Jacobson, the 2007 MacDiarmid Young Scientist of the Year, narrates an overview of the seven interviews and talks about reasons why

animals are used in research.

Each of the interviews is accompanied by a series of lessons. Each series has relevant Achievement Objectives with a focus on the new overarching strand, The Nature of Science. Specific ways that the key competencies can be developed are also included. The lessons are focused on developing scientific understandings through literacy activities together with ideas for investigations and possible action projects. Each series of lessons stands alone and it is envisaged that schools and individual teachers can pick an issue(s) that would interest their students.

If you would like a copy or have any queries, please contact Sally Birdsall at : s.birdsall@auckland.ac.nz

Recent articles of interest:

Increase in EU animal use for basic research

Drug companies in the EU are increasingly turning to non animal strategies to test medicines, but the number of animals used for basic research is on the rise, according to statistics published 30 September by the European Commission. The full article is available in Nature Medicine, Volume 16, Number 11, November 2010 p 1172 and can be viewed online at: www.nature.com/nm/journal/v16/n11/pdf/nm1110-1172b.pdf

Animalgesic Effects

Animal experiments have produced an explosion of information about pain, but this knowledge has failed to yield new painkillers for use in humans. This abysmal track record has led to calls to overhaul the design of preclinical studies. Researchers are now working to learn how monitoring rodents' facial expressions and brain activity might offer a more effective and humane way to test drug candidates. The full article is available in Nature Medicine, Volume 16, Number 11, November 2010 p 1237 – 1240 and can be viewed online at: www.nature.com/nm/journal/v16/n11/pdf/nm1110-1237.pdf

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