

### NGED ECR Meeting & Forum

#### NGED Forum 13-15 June 2007

Ninety delegates attended the 2007 NGED Forum, which was held at the Novotel Palm Cove Resort, North Queensland from 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> June. Following the suggestions and feedback received at last year's forum, the 2007 program set aside more time for scientific talks, providing early career researchers with an opportunity to introduce their work to the members of the Network.



Attendees gained insight into the research undertaken in the areas of epigenetics, developmental biology and developmental physiology, and were able to familiarise themselves with the latest techniques and some current animal models used in developmental science. The program also included talks from NGED awards recipients and an update on the activities organised by the Network's Early Career Researchers Committee. Invited guests, Professors Margaret Clayton (ARC) and Alan Bell



(CSIRO), presented talks on ARC Research Networks and the CSIRO Livestock Industries.

The two poster sessions and meal breaks offered many opportunities for interaction and the NGED has already received reports from forum participants about newly formed collaborations and planned exchange visits between delegates who met at the forum.

To wrap up the meeting, a panel discussion was held to address how the NGED can achieve its objectives and to identify opportunities for collaborations, joint grant applications and publications. The feedback received at the forum is appended to this newsletter. Forum photos can be viewed on our website at <http://www.nged.adelaide.edu.au/news/>

The NGED Steering Group has identified five of the suggestions received as a priority for discussion at the next Steering Group meeting:

- a) The proposal to facilitate collaborative projects that address major national environmental problems that impact development (e.g. alcohol, obesity)
- b) Organisation of state meetings to include more ECR / student involvement
- c) Addressing the needs of "Mid Career Researchers"
- d) Production of a booklet/pdf on various techniques / areas of interest for distribution to NGED community
- e) Linking art and science (photographic exhibition)

We wish to thank all delegates for their participation in and contributions to this highly interactive meeting, and wish to thank the ECR Committee for organising a very successful ECR Meeting (please refer to Hugh Morgan's summary below).

Helli Meinecke, NGED

#### ECR Meeting 12-13 June 2007

Early career researchers assembled this year at Palm Cove a day before the NGED Forum started for a short programme to help the ECRs meet each other, and provide mentorship and career advice. The ECRs found it useful to have the 24 hours to get to know each other before the Forum started. Many ECRs had not met people from other NGED labs, and this day helped ECRs interact for the duration of the Forum and communicate more freely; a little more like the lab heads some of whom have known each other for a long period of time.

We started with a session for the ECRs to introduce themselves to each other, and Dagmar Wilhelm, the retiring Chair of the ECR Committee, reminded the ECRs of the aims of NGED and the ECR committee



benefiting ECRs. This includes a proposed meeting that is being planned primarily for NGED ECRs at North Stradbroke Island 28-30 November, 2007. Look out for further details on this.

Hugh Kearns, Head of Staff Development and Training, Flinders University, ([www.flinders.edu.au/staffdev/phd.htm](http://www.flinders.edu.au/staffdev/phd.htm)) ran two sessions and gave an entertaining after dinner speech. His sessions were carried out in a way that promoted interaction among the ECRs. In his first session he spoke about the way our own thinking prevents us from working effectively. He told us that we have "automatic negative thoughts" (ANTs) that are often detrimental to us, and gave us ways of turning these into "more accurate thoughts" (MATHs). He gave us many examples of negative thinking, to try to help us identify which of these happen to us. Hugh's second session explained seven techniques that should help Ph.D. students successfully and happily complete their thesis. These were useful for Ph.D. students, and many of the points were useful for post-docs for their own sake, and potentially for the sake of students they participate in supervising. ECRs received material at the course which outlines these.

The ECRs' meeting finished with a Mentor Lunch with several mentors in round table discussion with ECRs. Thank you to the mentors who participated: Dr. Ruth Arkell, Dr. Jean Finnegan, A/Prof. Mary Wlodek, A/Prof. Marie Dziadek, Prof. Richard Harding, Dr. Simon Koblar, Dr. Klaus Matthaei, A/Prof. Murray Whitelaw, Dr. David Walker. They talked about issues that affect people all through their career. It was interesting for many to hear how many common experiences there are that affect them. ECRs who attended the Forum are encouraged to share the information they were presented to interested people in their respective laboratories.

Hugh Morgan, NGED ECR Committee

## ECR Committee News



### BABY NEWS

NGED ECR Committee member, **Andrew Siebel** and his wife and Brionhy are very proud parents to a beautiful baby girl, Caitlin Alana, born on Saturday, May 19, 2007, weighing in at 7 pounds & 7 ounces and 50 cm long. Mother and baby are very well, and Dad is chuffed.



### MOVING ON

**Dagmar Wilhelm**, IMB, University of Queensland, has recently decided to step down from her position on the NGED Early Career Researchers Committee due to other commitments. As the chair of the committee, Dagmar has been actively involved in the organisation of a number of ECR initiatives supporting PhD students as well as early and mid career scientists. We sincerely thank Dagmar for her contributions.

### VACANCY

Due to Dagmar's resignation, we now have a vacancy on the ECR Committee. With the breadth of research undertaken within the NGED in mind, we are seeking **nominations from** early career researchers from the field of **developmental biology**. If you are interested in joining the ECR Committee, please fill in the attached **ECR Nomination Form** (Attachment 1) and return it by email to [Helli Meinecke](mailto:Helli.Meinecke) by **Monday, 16<sup>th</sup> July 2007**.

## Lab News

### Australian Phenomics Facility

#### The Australian Phenomics Facility (APF) offers new mouse models of disease

At the NGED Forum, Dr Michael Dobbie (Scientific Programmes Manager for Development Projects at the APF) highlighted the role of the APF in the production of new mouse models of human disease and development through chemical (ENU)-mutagenesis, which enables the linking of a phenotype to a point mutation. Contacts made during the forum have already led to discussions aimed towards initiating projects to develop new mouse models. Information about access to the ENU-mutagenesis discovery projects and the NCRIS-funded infrastructure support can be obtained from Michael ([michael.dobbie@anu.edu.au](mailto:michael.dobbie@anu.edu.au) or Tel: (02) 6125 9117).

## Fellowship News



ARC Federation Fellowships worth more than \$35 million over five years have this year been awarded to 20 outstanding researchers in fields as diverse as mathematics, philosophy, economics and genetics.

The NGED wishes to congratulate Professor Peter Koopman, Institute for Molecular Bioscience, University of Queensland, who was awarded a \$1.5M fellowship to fund his work: "Deciphering genome function in animal development".

## 6<sup>th</sup> Australian Developmental Biology Workshop

Application deadline 11 September

### North Stradbroke Island, Queensland, Australia 7-11 November 2007

The Australian Developmental Biology Workshop was established in 2001 to provide scientists and students in developmental biology with a conceptual and practical toolkit that can be used to facilitate their research. The Workshop provides unparalleled opportunities for networking and collaboration in Australia and the Asia-Pacific region.

The Workshop is an intensive, 3.5-day meeting limited to 21 participants and open to researchers at all career levels, mostly grad students and postdocs. This style of meeting is loosely modeled on Gordon conferences and the Cold Spring Harbor summer courses: enough participants to make the meeting fun, representative and worthwhile, but small enough to create an intimate and personal atmosphere. The emphasis is on learning about research and analysis strategies and available methods, and building a network of developmental biologists. In this sense the workshop fills an important niche, particularly for younger researchers, since relatively few opportunities exist for getting to know new people at larger national and international meetings.

A major feature of the Workshop is extended (3-hour) lectures given by the invited international instructors. These allow speakers to present extensive background, illustrate how major trains of thought unfolded, showcase technologies that have been important in delivering the science, and show some of the avenues that have not worked (as well as the ones that have).

Previous international speakers have included Robb Krumlauf, Ruth Lehmann, Richard Behringer, Cliff Tabin, Phil Ingham, Nadia Rosenthal, Mary-Ann Bronner-Fraser, Brigid Hogan, Conny Basler, Janet Rossant, Scott Fraser, Alex Schier, Utpal Banerjee, Gail Martin and Liz Robertson. **2007 speakers include the outstanding international researchers Nicole Le Douarin, Steve Cohen and Andras Nagy.**

The Workshop also features discussion groups on strategic themes in developmental biology research, such as functional analysis, imaging, and career paths. Sessions cover a range of model organisms including *Drosophila*, chicken, zebrafish, mouse, ascidians and sponges.

The 21 participants will be selected on the basis of 3 major criteria:

1. Genuine and demonstrable interest in Developmental Biology
2. Achievement or track record relative to other applicants at the same career level
3. Need for, or benefits to be gained from, attendance at this Workshop

Participants who are from NGED member labs will be eligible to apply for the NGED Conference Participation Award, for which applications close on 31 October 2007.

More information, including how to apply, can be found at <http://www.imb.uq.edu.au/devbiology>

## Events Calendar \*\*\* YOUR HELP IS NEEDED \*\*\*

Helli would like to update the NGED Events Calendar <http://www.nged.adelaide.edu.au/seminars/> and needs your help in identifying conferences and workshops in developmental biology and developmental physiology held in 2008. Please drop [Helli](#) a short email if you are aware of any meetings that are not yet listed in the NGED calendar. Thank you for your help!

## \* NEW \* BSc Major in Developmental Biology at Monash

### New BSc Major in Developmental Biology at Monash

The Department of Anatomy and Cell Biology (soon to be renamed Anatomy and Developmental Biology) at Monash University has introduced Australia's first BSc major in Developmental Biology. The Department has offered a stand alone 3<sup>rd</sup> year unit in developmental biology for many years, but this new major provides a clear sequence in developmental biology through second and third year for science students, as well as elective units for Bachelor of Biomedical Science units. Student interest has been strong, with nearly 200 students enrolled in each of the second year units, offered for the first time in 2007.

The new units are:

- DEV2011 Early human development from cells to tissues
- DEV2022 Principles of organ and body design
- DEV3011 Fundamentals of developmental processes
- DEV3022 Developmental pathways to health and disease
- DEV3031 Stem cells and regeneration
- DEV3990 Action in developmental biology research project

In second year, students are required to take a molecular biology unit and are encouraged to take a cell biology unit. In third year, an existing unit "Genetics of development" is also recommended.

For further information see <http://med.monash.edu.au/anatomy/> or contact Prof John Bertram (99052751; [john.bertram@med.monash.edu.au](mailto:john.bertram@med.monash.edu.au)) or Dr. Helen Abud (99052749; [Helen.abud@med.monash.edu.au](mailto:Helen.abud@med.monash.edu.au))



## NGED Funding Programs

The Network has introduced a number of funding programs to support the interaction amongst Network Members and with other researchers and research organisations from Australia and overseas. Award rules and application forms are available on the [NGED website](#).

<u>Closing Dates</u>	<u>Programs</u>
31.07.2007	<p><a href="#">NGED Conference Support Awards</a></p> <p>The purpose of the NGED Conference Support Program is to assist conference organisers to provide high profile meetings in the areas of developmental biology / developmental physiology. Preference will be given to international conferences held in Australia with an emphasis on promoting multidisciplinary interactions in order to provide the greatest benefit to NGED members from different scientific backgrounds.</p>
31.07.2007	<p><a href="#">NGED Conference Participation Awards</a></p> <p>The purpose of the NGED Conference Participation Award is to provide young scientists with an opportunity to present their work at a scientific forum, which they otherwise may not have been able to. Preference will be given to the Network's PhD students and early career researchers. Awards will not normally exceed \$500 (for meetings in Australia) or \$1,000 (for overseas meetings).</p>
31.07.2007	<p><a href="#">NGED Laboratory Interchange Award</a></p> <p>The NGED Laboratory Interchange Award is available to assist NGED students, early career scientists and other members of the Network to visit other NGED laboratories to work on collaborative interdisciplinary projects, learn specialised techniques or access specialised equipment.</p>
Ongoing	<p><a href="#">NGED Cross-Disciplinary Workshop Attendance Award</a></p> <p>To facilitate research interactions and research training activities, which cross discipline boundaries, the Cross-Disciplinary Workshop Attendance Award will assist NGED students, early career scientists and other members of the Network to attend cross-disciplinary workshops (i.e. a physiology student attending a developmental biology workshop).</p>
31.07.2007	<p><a href="#">NGED Focus Group Award</a></p> <p>The purpose of this award is to support 'Focus Group/Think Tank Meetings' that lie within the objectives of the Network (i.e. strategic planning across the fields, Centre of Excellence planning, or establishment of collaborations between NGED groups that cross disciplinary boundaries).</p>

**LATE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED**

## What's On....

<p>01.11.07 – 02.11.07</p> 	<p>Monash Healthy Start to Life Research Initiative  <b>Healthy Start for a Healthy Life: The Wintour's Tale</b>  <b>DOHaD Satellite Conference</b>  <b>In recognition of the career of Professor Marelyn Wintour FAA</b>  <b>Nov 1-2, 2007 Grand Hyatt Melbourne</b></p> <p>The Developmental Origins of Health and Disease (DOHaD) is quickly emerging as a major new research focus in basic and clinical medicine. In essence, DOHaD research focuses on the early origins of adult health and disease, as we are learning that the origins of many adult chronic diseases can be traced back to our embryonic, fetal and early childhood development. This Satellite Meeting, an initiative of the Monash Healthy Start to Life research initiative, is being held to recognise the outstanding contributions to this field by Professor Marelyn Wintour FAA. The Satellite will showcase our current understanding of the early origins of health and disease. The programme will include presentations from leading national as well as international researchers in this field.</p> <p>Confirmed invited speakers include:          Dr Dino Giussani, University of Cambridge, UK          Prof Maria Seron-Ferre, Pontificia Universidad Catolica de Chile          Prof John Bertram, Monash University          Dr Tony Hannan, Howard Florey Institute          Prof Eugenie Lumbers, University of New South Wales          Dr. Karen Moritz, University of Queensland          Dr Susan Sayers, Menzies School of Health Research          Prof Bruce Tonge, Monash University Centre for Developmental Psychology          Prof Alan Trounson, Monash Immunology &amp; Stem Cell Laboratories</p> <p>We look forward to seeing you at the Grand Hyatt Melbourne.          John Bertram, Convenor</p> <p>For further information please visit <a href="http://www.asnevents.net.au/dohad">www.asnevents.net.au/dohad</a></p>
<p>04.11.07 – 07.11.07</p>	<p><b>Epigenetics 2007</b>  <b>4 – 7 November 2007</b>          Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre          For further information please visit <a href="http://www.epigenetics2007.com/index2.htm">http://www.epigenetics2007.com/index2.htm</a></p>
<p>06.11.07 – 10.11.07</p> 	<p><b>5th International Congress on Developmental Origins of Health and Disease (DOHaD)</b>  <b>6 – 10 November 2007</b>          Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre</p> <p>The NGED ECR committee, in conjunction with the Network Awareness Group, are delighted to be a major congress sponsor for the upcoming 5<sup>th</sup> International Congress on Developmental Origins of Health &amp; Disease to be held in Perth, Western Australia on the 6<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> of November. DOHaD is emerging as one of the most significant forms of international research in determining the prevention and treatment of many child and adult illnesses. One of the most impressive selection of world experts will be speaking on a number of topics encompassing the major disciplines of the Network focusing on finding global solutions for the origins of disease. One of the exciting sessions for early career researchers will be a breakfast symposium with Nobel Laureates Professor Barry Marshall and Dr Robin Warren present their career paths from ECR to Nobel Prize winner. The talk entitled "Helicobacter pylori – the origins of a Nobel Prize" will be followed by an open panel question time allowing ECRs a unique opportunity to ask questions of the Nobel Laureates. The conference also incorporates a joint session with the 2007 Epigenetics Scientific Conference, also supported by NGED. DOHaD not only consists of an excellent scientific program, but an exceptional social program consisting of a Melbourne Cup Day Lunch, Barbecue and Social Afternoon and the Gala Dinner.          This meeting is a must for all network members, so tell your colleagues, friends and family, and join us in Perth for the DOHaD 2007 conference. For more information, check out <a href="http://www.dohad2007.org">www.dohad2007.org</a>.</p>
<p>07.11.07 – 11.11.07</p>	<p><b>6<sup>th</sup> Australian Developmental Biology Workshop</b>  <b>7 - 11 November 2007</b>          North Stradbroke Island, Queensland, Australia          For further information please visit <a href="http://www.imb.uq.edu.au/devbiology">http://www.imb.uq.edu.au/devbiology</a></p>

Please contact the [NGED Office](#) if you are aware of any upcoming events that are not yet listed in the

[NGED Events Calendar](#).



Academic History:  PhD Details: When: Where: What: Supervisor:  Honours Details: When: Where: What: Supervisor:
Employment History (when, where, what, supervisor):
Fellowships and Scholarships:
Grants:
Awards and Prizes:
Committee Involvements:
Supervisory Duties:
Membership of Societies:
Publications:  a) Total Number b) Number in last 5 years c) List of top 5 publications

## NGED FORUM 2007 – Summary of Feedback

1. What went well?	2. What can be improved?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Organisation:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ A well organised and well run meeting</li> <li>➢ The format of the abstract book was great</li> <li>➢ Table allocations worked well (promoted opportunities to meet new people)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Organisation:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Table allocations could be extended to include dinners to maximise interaction.</li> <li>➢ Remind presenters to avoid small font on PowerPoint presentations</li> <li>➢ Include in abstract book: lab name &amp; position of attendee</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Venue:</b> nice venue / good meals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Choose a more central location?</li> <li>➢ Larger screen / better access to internet</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>ECR Meeting:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Great format (informal, interactive) – it was good to have this meeting precede the NGED Forum</li> <li>➢ Hugh Kearns was excellent</li> <li>➢ Discussions with mentors worked well</li> <li>➢ Unique opportunity and huge help for ECRs – incredibly valuable!</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ NGED to extent opportunities like those provided at the Forum to more ECRs. Organise local meetings (state meetings) to include more ECR / student involvement.</li> <li>➢ Cater for needs of 'mid career researchers' (more info on senior postdoc to group leader transition)</li> <li>➢ Introduce NGED ECR online forum (also: scheduled online meetings where we can speak with professional delegates)</li> <li>➢ One delegate expressed concerns about the proposed ECR Conference planned for later this year.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Forum Program:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Inclusion of ECR talks in NGED Forum and the quality of ECR presentations</li> <li>➢ The breadth of research presented</li> <li>➢ Short talks (15 minutes) – format and content of talks were great (scientific program was better than last year).</li> <li>➢ Meal breaks and dinners offered great networking opportunities</li> <li>➢ Techniques workshop (diversity of models) – exposure to science models and approaches makes you think outside your box / area of expertise</li> <li>➢ Poster sessions (excellent presentations)</li> <li>➢ Concentrating our support of ECRs is decisive difference from all other meetings. Typically, ECRs are 'add-ons', at the NGED Forum they are built into the structure. This must be preserved beyond the lifetime of the NGED.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Forum Program:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Chairs to introduce speakers better (name, lab, position, research field)</li> <li>➢ Fewer long talks - More shorter talks (15 minutes only)</li> <li>➢ Keep speakers to time</li> <li>➢ More structured discussion (moderated) after each session</li> <li>➢ The different sessions could be given themes to focus the audiences thinking</li> <li>➢ Include introductory talk for each theme (i.e. general intro to epigenetics prior to epigenetics research talks)</li> <li>➢ No more than one talk from any given lab</li> <li>➢ Balance of talk content to more accurately reflect the broad membership of the network</li> <li>➢ Some free time outside of talks (to enjoy surroundings, i.e. walk, bike ride, tennis, surf, golf) or extended lunch break (2 hours)</li> <li>➢ Extended poster session (split time within poster session did not work well)</li> <li>➢ More talks on fundamental issues at the heart of genes vs environment</li> <li>➢ Have 10-15 min each day to allow introductions at tables</li> <li>➢ Consider inviting other national service providers (e.g. Aust. Genome Res. Fac) to display &amp; highlight the ways they can enable our research.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Other:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Small size of meeting allowed for excellent person-person interaction; highly effective and interesting networking opportunity (the majority of feedback forms highlighted that the size of the Forum should not be increased).</li> <li>➢ Great social ambience</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Other Suggestions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Plan for big picture 'science' question (e.g. what is 'programming')?</li> <li>➢ Next year include: a) environmental epigenetics theme; b) animal models: marsupials, chick, corals, cattle; c) discussion: NGED beyond NGED</li> <li>➢ Succinct short statement of the key aims of NGED and progress towards them</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Interaction between young and old went well both at conference level and social level.</li> <li>➤ Unique meeting for a mix of people from diverse but overlapping backgrounds</li> <li>➤ Having an ARC representative present</li> <li>➤ NGED – a professional organisation</li> <li>➤ The role of central organiser / administrator is great.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ A real collaborative project that addresses a major national problem (invite max. of 3 proposals for a 'framework' consortium for discussion and action)</li> <li>➤ Direct interactions with NZ groups to build Australian capability to compete effectively with North America and Europe, whilst at the same time build links with Asia</li> <li>➤ Include NGED News in various Newsletters</li> <li>➤ NGED to produce a booklet/pdf on various techniques / areas of interest that could be distributed to members.</li> <li>➤ Add group of clinicians with research background to membership to provide some perspective of the big issues in health</li> <li>➤ Linking art/science to promote research would be a great idea</li> <li>➤ NGED lectureship support (e.g. 4 lectures p.a.)</li> </ul>
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**International contacts to extent network opportunities**

- Richard Behringer (Houston, Texas)
- Fumi Iskino (Tokyo, Japan)
- Phil Ingham
- **Jyotsna Dhawan** (India)
- Nadia Rosenthal (EU/OZ)
- Fred Bergen? (Singapore) – plants, epigenetics
- Lucilla Poston (EU Framework, KCL, London)
- Azim Surani
- Anne McLaren
- Mitinori Saitou

<p>Shigeru Kuratani Group Director Laboratory for Evolutionary Morphology Center for Developmental Biology, RIKEN 2-2-3 Minatojima-minami, Chuo-ku, Kobe Hyogo 650-0047, JAPAN e-mail: saizo@cdb.riken.jp Tel: +81-78-306-3064 Fax: +81-78-306 -3370</p>	<p>Shigeru Kuratani Group Director Laboratory for Evolutionary Morphology Center for Developmental Biology, RIKEN 2-2-3 Minatojima-minami, Chuo-ku, Kobe Hyogo 650-0047, JAPAN e-mail: saizo@cdb.riken.jp Tel: +81-78-306-3064 Fax: +81-78-306 -3370</p>		
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