

# ICOPA XII - POST CONGRESS REPORT

The XII th International Congress of Parasitology 2010 was held at the Melbourne Convention Centre, Melbourne, Australia from 15 – 20 August. This report is published on the World Federation of Parasitology website both to inform the delegates at ICOPA XII and for reference for future Congress organizers.

## Section 1: Conference Statistics

### Delegate Numbers

Full Early Conference Registrations	840
Full Conference Registration	127
Full Student Conference Registration	407
Trade/Sponsor Passes	27
Day Registration	102
Two Day Registration	22
Complimentary Registration	209
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TOTAL Congress delegates, speakers and sponsors	1734

### Delegate Demographics

Total number of Countries represented 194

Country	Number of pre-registered delegates	%
Argentina	5	0.3%
Armenia	2	0.1%
Australia	512	11.6%
Austria	8	0.5%
Bangladesh	3	0.2%
Belgium	13	0.7%
Benin	1	0.1%
Brazil	50	2.9%
Brunei Darussalam	1	0.1%
Cambodia	7	0.4%
Cameroon	3	0.2%
Canada	22	1.3%
Chile	3	0.2%
China	35	2.0%
Cote D'Ivoire	1	0.1%
Colombia	1	0.1%
Cuba	2	0.1%
Czech Republic	23	1.3%
Denmark	16	0.9%
Egypt	9	0.5%
Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas)	1	0.1%
Finland	1	0.1%
France	42	2.5%
French Polynesia	1	0.1%
Gabon	4	0.2%
Germany	30	1.7%

Ghana	14	0.8%
Great Britain	2	0.1%
Greece	1	0.1%
Haiti	1	0.1%
Hong Kong	1	0.1%
Iceland	1	0.1%
India	44	2.5%
Indonesia	9	0.5%
Iran	123	7.1%
Ireland	1	0.1%
Israel	4	0.2%
Italy	6	0.3%
Japan	75	4.3%
Kenya	11	0.7%
Korea	3	0.2%
Kuwait	1	0.1%
Libya	1	0.1%
Lithuania	1	0.1%
Macedonia	2	0.1%
Malawi	2	0.1%
Malaysia	22	1.3%
Mali	3	0.2%
Mexico	20	1.2%
Nepal	1	0.1%
Netherlands	11	0.6%
New Zealand	25	1.4%
Nigeria	22	1.3%
Norway	2	0.1%
Oman	1	0.1%
Pakistan	5	0.3%
Papua New Guinea	7	0.4%
Peru	1	0.1%
Philippines	4	0.2%
Poland	11	0.6%
Portugal	3	0.2%
Puerto Rico	2	0.1%
Romania	2	0.1%
Russian Federation	5	0.3%
Rwanda	2	0.1%
Samoa	1	0.1%
Saudi Arabia	5	0.3%
Senegal	1	0.1%
Sierra Leone	1	0.1%
Singapore	13	0.7%
Slovak Republic	4	0.2%
South Africa	26	1.5%
South Korea	65	3.7%
Spain	15	0.9%
Sri Lanka	1	0.1%
Sudan	11	0.6%
Sweden	8	0.5%
Switzerland	28	1.6%
Taiwan	1	0.1%
Tanzania	1	0.1%
Thailand	43	2.5%
Turkey	3	0.2%
Uganda	1	0.1%
Ukraine	1	0.1%

United Kingdom	127	7.2%
United States	132	7.6%
Uruguay	6	0.3%
Uzbekistan	1	0.1%
Venezuela	9	0.5%
Yemen	1	0.1%
Zambia	1	0.1%
Zimbabwe	1	0.1%

## Scientific Programme

Accepted Oral Presentations	678
Accepted Poster Presentations	1161
Withdrawn or rejected	148

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Total Submitted Abstracts	1987
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## Social Events (numbers attending)

Welcome Reception	1400
Congress Dinner	800

## Sponsorship

Australian Society for Parasitology  
 Burroughs Wellcome  
 Cambridge University Press  
 EH Graham Centre, Charles Sturt University  
 Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative (DNDi)  
 Elsevier BV  
 Mars Petcare Australia  
 McGill Centre for Host-Parasite Interactions  
 Meat & Livestock Australia  
 Melbourne Convention & Visitors Bureau (MCVB)  
 Merial  
 New England BioLabs  
 Pfizer  
 Qiagen  
 The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation  
 Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research  
 Wiley-Blackwell  
 Victorian State Government

## Exhibitors and Advertisers

ARC/NHMRC Research Network for Parasitology  
 Cambridge University Press  
 Center for Neglected Diseases Drug Discovery at Institut Pasteur Korea (DND3)  
 Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative (DNDi)  
 Elsevier B V  
 Enjoy Montpellier  
 Eukaryotic Pathogen Databases  
 Leishmaniasis Research Society  
 Meat & Livestock Australia  
 Melbourne Convention + Visitors Bureau (MCVB)  
 Merial

Miltenyi Biotec Australia  
National Opal Collection  
Olympus Australia  
Partnership for Child Development  
Public Library of Science  
resolvingIMAGES  
Savetcon Event Management (Parasitology Association of South Africa  
Shinpoong Pharm. Co. LTD  
The Wellcome Trust  
Tourism Melbourne  
Turismo & Convenciones, MexicoS  
World Federation of Parasitology/University of Aberdeen  
WAAVP  
Wonderful Copenhagen

## Section 2: Conference Report

### Background to Report

An ICOPA is convened every four years by the World Federation of Parasitologists (WFP). The aim of these meetings is to bring together parasitologists from many different life and research experiences, from all over the world, to facilitate exchange of information and to encourage and support the establishment of collaborative projects. The Australian Society for Parasitology (ASP) won the bid to host ICOPA XII in Melbourne in 2010. We hoped to provide a forum for the presentation and discussion of new research pertaining to parasitic diseases that impact on global health and to integrate these discussions within the context of wider aspects of parasite transmission and veterinary and wild life diseases.

The theme of the congress was “Understanding the global impact of parasites-from genomes to function and disease” and an exciting scientific program was developed that provided a dynamic platform for the vibrant and fruitful exchange of new findings, research questions and state-of-the-art techniques. A diversity of themes was covered and 1,987 abstracts were received spanning an enormous range of topics within the parasitology field. The conference included ten Plenary presentations to complement the large number of oral presentations in parallel thematic sessions. The poster sessions were a particularly important aspect of ICOPA XII with poster presentations grouped by themes each day throughout the conference period. The social programs, with refreshments organised around the poster displays, were to encourage even greater discussion and collaborations. A competitive travel award scheme enabled 65 students and postdoctoral scientists from developing countries to attend and present their research. This funding was provided by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Wellcome Trust and the Victorian Government.

It was recognised that a conference of this magnitude provided an opportunity for parasitology to be promoted to a wider audience. With this in mind a number of outreach activities were held to inform the general public about research with a particular emphasis on parasites. The outreach events were very well attended by the general public and both the events and programs were

highly successful. Activities included a free public lecture and forum held at the Melbourne Recital Centre “Melbourne Conversations: Climate Change, New Diseases and Parasites - What will it mean for Melbourne?” on Tuesday 17 August. This event was hosted by Dr Graham Mitchell (Chief Scientist, Victorian Government) and featured expert panellists Professor Anne Kelso AO (Director, WHO Collaborating Centre for Reference and Research on Influenza, Melbourne), Professor Kevin D Lafferty (Marine Ecologist, University of California, Santa Barbara, USA), Sir Gustav Nossal AC CBE (Professor Emeritus, The University of Melbourne), Dr Haylee Weaver (Research School of Biology, Australian National University, Canberra), and Ms Natasha Mitchell (Science Journalist and Broadcaster, ABC Radio National) who was the moderator. This event was attended by 250 people.

Also, on the morning of the 17 August, a breakfast was held for 100 business leaders in Melbourne (BioMelbourne Network) where a number of talks were presented on parasitology and biotechnology by Dr Debra Woods (Pfizer Animal Health), Professor Simon Croft (London School of Hygiene and Tropical Diseases) and Dr Wayne Best (Epichem), within the theme “The road less travelled: Commercialising niche and neglected diseases”. The ICOPA XII outreach program also included the ASP SCHOOLS PROGRAM - Art, Science and Parasites (outlined below).

## **ASP SCHOOLS PROGRAM - Art, Science and Parasites**

### **The Art of the Bodysnatchers Competition**

A competition was held to design a cover featuring a parasite for the International Journal for Parasitology. Students were encouraged to “Draw/paint/design or computer generate their version of a parasite – luscious-looking lice, heinous hydatids, tenacious tapeworms, or your own abstract parasitic interpretation”. The winner was Natalya Rojeinikova from John Monash Science School in Victoria and she was chosen based on the artistic merits, originality, and demonstrated research of her chosen parasite: she received a \$1000 prize. The design will be printed on the IJP journal cover later this year. Three entrants also received certificates of participation and an ICOPA t-shirt in recognition of their efforts.

### **“Parasites in Focus” Online Quiz**

The ICOPA XII Outreach team published an online “Parasites in Focus” quiz which encouraged entrants to research the answers to multiple choice questions in the area of parasitology. There were 43 entries from around Australia and the winner with a perfect score was Amarisa Wangpen from Rossmoyne Senior High School in Western Australia. Amarisa received an I-Pod and a Certificate for her achievement.

### **“Parasites in Focus” - The Exhibition**

Activities for secondary students from Victorian schools at the Gene Technology Access Centre (GTAC) was also organised and included seminars from some of the ICOPA Plenary speakers who talked about parasitology and parasitic diseases as well as hands on work looking at some of the more common and dramatic parasites of the world.

The "Parasites in Focus" hands-on exhibition, featuring the extraordinary world of the parasite, was on display at GTAC, The University High School, Parkville, Melbourne from Saturday 7 – Thursday 12 August 2010. Teachers were invited to a special evening viewing of the exhibition on Monday 9 August.

An exciting one-day student workshop at GTAC was launched by Marshall Lightowlers (The University of Melbourne). Tony Chiovitti (GTAC) prepared an outstanding program of wet lab exercises, quizzes, and interactive exercises for over 100 Victorian school students. Ian Beveridge (The University of Melbourne) gave expert advice for the microscopy workshop. GTAC ran a full day program in which students investigated a number of aspects including how liver flukes find their host snails. They also examined the larvae of the bot fly and used DNA testing to identify Plasmodium species. Students visited "Parasites in Focus" and had to hunt for clues amongst the parasites on show to answer the following question: What proportion of animal species are parasites?

The "Parasites in Focus" exhibition was showcased at ICOPA XII and featured twenty-six superb photographic prints showing the amazing microscopic world of the parasite accompanied by four hands-on parasite exhibits. Visitors competed in the parasite game show "Who's my host?" and explored lots of different parasites found in Australia and around the world using "The microscopic world of parasites", "Look closer at parasites", and "Parasitic lifecycles" exhibits. Visitors also viewed the stunning animations of the life cycle of the malaria parasite by BAFTA and renowned Emmy award winning biomedical animator Drew Berry, on GTAC's the lifecycle exhibit.

"Parasites in Focus" was on display at the Exhibition Centre during ICOPA XII for delegates to enjoy and after featuring at GTAC and ICOPA XII this exhibition moved to the Museum of the Riverina, Wagga Wagga, NSW. "Parasites in Focus" has entertained more than 200,000 Australian school students and general public visitors at 13 venues in every state and territory across Australia since 2007.

## **The Conference**

ICOPA XII 2010 attracted a total of 1734 delegates, invited speakers and commercial attendees from all corners of the globe. Almost 15% of the attendees received some financial support to attend the meeting from sponsorship or grant funds provided by the Victorian Government, Burroughs Wellcome, The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Wellcome Trust, the World Federation of Parasitologists, the Australian Society of Parasitology, the EH Graham Centre at Charles Sturt University and the McGill Centre for Host-Parasite Interactions.

Scientific highlights of the meeting included welcome and opening speeches from David Rollinson, President of the World Federation of Parasitologists; Alan Cowman, Chair of the Organising Committee; and Terry Spithill, President of the Australian Society for Parasitology

and Chair of the Program Committee. Plenary lecturers and topics included Sir Gustav Nossal-Australia (Conquering parasitic diseases), Prof. Jonathan Carapetis –Australia (Parasite diseases in the indigenous communities), Simon Brooker-UK (Mapping global distribution of human parasitism), Aaron Maule-UK (Neural gene function and RNA interference), Abdoulaye Djimde- Mali (Malaria in the field), Janine Caira- USA (Parasite Diversity), Debra Woods-USA (Drug discovery and development in Animal Health), Banchob Sripa- Thailand (Liver Flukes), Dominique Soldati-Favre- Switzerland (Host cell invasion), and Marshall Lightowlers- Australia (Anti-parasite vaccines).

In addition, a number of Workshops and Debates were incorporated into the program to explore more deeply the topics of 'Malaria Vaccine Strategies', 'Schistosomiasis: drugs or vaccines', 'Designing Worm Vaccines', 'Echinococcus and its challenges', 'Using helminth genomes', 'Anthelmintic resistance', 'Kinetoplastid drug discovery', 'Foundation/Philanthropic support', 'New technologies for helminths', 'Polyparasitism', 'Naming Genes in Nematodes', 'Career Development', and 'Bioinformatics-dataset mining'. A special Lecture was held during the meeting at the Australian Society of Parasitology annual general meeting at which Prof. Leann Tilley gave a presentation and was awarded the prestigious Bancroft Mackerras Medal by the Society.

## **Travel Grants**

The travel grants to developing country scientists described above were on a competitive basis and were advertised on the ASP and ICOPA web sites. A large number of applications for this scheme were received and the following criteria were used by a selection committee made up of members of the ICOPA Organising Committee in deciding whether to award a travel grant. Applicants who resided in a resource-poor country were asked to submit an abstract describing scientifically sound research relevant to the meeting.. Priority was given to scientists at the early stage of their careers who had limited or no access to funds from other sources. Each of the committee members assessed the applications individually and final decisions were made after a meeting of the committee in February 2010. All bursary recipients made oral or poster presentations at the meeting and, in total, 65 people were awarded bursaries.

## **Feedback**

No formal feedback was sought from delegates at the meeting itself. However, staff at ASN (our professional conference organiser) and the ICOPA XII Organising Committee have received numerous unsolicited emails expressing very positive feelings about the meeting. Many people at the meeting itself were extremely complimentary about the scientific programme and the organization of the meeting.

## **Organisation**

Organising ICOPA XII presented a number of logistical and organizational challenges. A coherent and wide-ranging scientific programme had to be put together and presentations from over 600 invited speakers had to be timetabled. Ideas for topics were sought widely from local

and international scientists. Chairs of each Symposium selected the oral presentations from submitted abstracts. Sponsorship for the conference needed to be solicited in order to ensure that the meeting was financially viable. The Organising Committee of scientists worked with a professional conference organizer (ASN Events) in order to plan the conference. This group was successful in attracting the sponsorship required for the meeting to be financially viable and in putting together a programme of sessions and speakers that was sufficiently attractive to encourage over 1700 delegates to attend the meeting.

## **Social Program**

The major social events centred around the Welcome Function, Student and Young Postdoctoral night and, the Conference Dinner. The Welcome Reception attracted some 1,400 delegates and was marked with an Aboriginal smoke ceremony with didgeridoo on stage followed by several native dances performed by an Aboriginal dance troupe. This was followed by live music from a traditional “Aussie” bush band and a range of live Australian animals with professional handlers were available for delegates to handle and have photo opportunities. Food and beverages of local suppliers were available during the evening and the response to this event was very positive.

The Student and Young Postdoctoral night was organised to encourage social inclusion and collaboration between our future global science leaders and was held on the Wednesday evening at the Young and Jackson Hotel. Food and drinks were subsidised for participants with over 300 attending and enjoying a successful evening.

The Conference Dinner was a highlight of the conference with 800 delegates attending. The delegates were welcomed with pre-dinner drinks in the extensive foyer overlooking the Yarra River and entertained by a variety of acrobatic dancers, Chinese dragon performers and a Chilean pan pipe band. Delegates were then led into the decorated banquet area by a troupe of African drummers and dancers to complete the multicultural theme of the evening. A superb 3 course dinner was followed by entertainment from a cover band “The Baker Boys” for delegates to dance the night away. Overall, the social events complemented the highly interactive conference and added to the ambience and success of this conference.

## **Media coverage before, during, and after ICOPA XII**

One Media alert was sent in May 2010 and circulated to international media contacts.

### **SBS World Radio**

SBS Radio World liaised with the ICOPA XII media team and subsequently SBS World Radio reporters conducted 26 interviews with international and local speakers and delegates attending ICOPA XII. Interviews were conducted in the native language of each speaker and included the following languages: Italian, Spanish, Thai, Danish, Dutch, French, Czech, and Polish. From these interviews the following seven PODCASTS have been published on the SBS websites:

- a. <http://www.sbs.com.au/yourlanguage/czech/highlight/page/id/104822/t/Prof.-Tom-Scholz-Intriguing-world-of-parasites/in/english>



- b. <http://www.sbs.com.au/yourlanguage/czech/highlight/page/id/104827/t/Dr.-Zden-k-Franta-Ticks-gut-key-to-solve-borreliosis/in/english>
- c. <http://www.sbs.com.au/yourlanguage/czech/highlight/page/id/104627/t/Prof-Tom-Scholz-on-ICOPA-in-Melbourne/in/english>
- d. <http://www.sbs.com.au/yourlanguage/czech/highlight/page/id/105297/t/Dr.-Jan-Slapeta-We-owe-our-existence-to-parasites/in/english>
- e. <http://www.sbs.com.au/yourlanguage/danish/highlight/page/id/107827/t/The-danger-of-malaria-in-pregnancy/in/english>
- f. <http://www.sbs.com.au/yourlanguage/danish/highlight/page/id/107822/t/Fish-xan-and-should-be-vaccinated-says-professor/in/english>
- g. <http://www.sbs.com.au/yourlanguage/dutch/highlight/page/id/106657/t/International-Symposium-Genetics-of-Industrial-Microorganisms/in/language>

Prior to and during ICOPA XII seven media releases were written by the ICOPA Media team and distributed via AAP Medianet to selected print, radio and TV journalists via both email and fax. The following media releases were distributed with associated media coverage detailed:

- a. (Parasites in Focus at GTAC) "Victorian school students hooked by parasites" distributed 9 August 2010
- b. "The politics of parasites: what is the price on fixing disease?" distributed 10 August 2010
  - o ABC Canberra radio drive-time interviewed Graham Mitchell following this media release
  - o SBS News Radio interviewed Jonathan Carapetis, Alan Cowman, Louis Schofield and Sir Gus Nossal following this media release
- c. "New combination treatment to combat malaria resistance in Southeast Asia" distributed 16 August 2010
  - o [SBS News PODCAST 16 August 2010,](#)
- d. "Chagas disease in Australia" distributed 16 August 2010
- e. "How will global climate change affect parasites?" distributed 17 August 2010
  - o [Climate change, new diseases and parasites. Hosted by Natasha Mitchell was published on SLOW TV](#)
  - o Kevin Lafferty was interviewed by ABC Radio National News and broadcast on 17 August
  - o Natasha Mitchell interviewed Kevin Lafferty for a special report on Climate Change and Parasites

- Climate change, new diseases and parasites was recorded by New Tang Dynasty Television and interviews conducted with Sir Gus Nossal and Kevin Lafferty
- f. “\$20 million global network to tackle malaria” distributed 18 August 2010
- g. “Ahead of the head lice game – no more itches and scratchies?” distributed 18 August 2010
- h. “New global atlas will transform deworming programmes” distributed by Snell Communications Ltd, London, UK on 17 August 2010
- [19 August 2010 The Medical News “Scientists produce atlas of worm infection prevalence, distribution throughout Africa”](#)

## **Publications and Post-Conference Publicity**

Knowledge Transfer activities stimulated by ICOPA are planned to continue. ‘Parasites in Focus’ will continue its travelling roadshow around Australia. Currently this is showing in the Riverina area of Australia. This will be used to educate school children on parasites and the diseases they can cause.

A number of special issues of journals highlighting ICOPA XII have been organised including the IJP, Parasite Immunology, Veterinary Parasitology and Parasitology.

Further publications may also arise from ICOPA. Medimond scientific publishers have offered all presenters at ICOPA the opportunity to have articles on the topic of their presentation published in “Proceedings” books.

## **Committees and Working Groups**

### **LOCAL ORGANISING COMMITTEE**

Alan Cowman, Chair  
 David Piedrafita, Deputy Chair  
 Jody Zawadzki, Communications Officer  
 Vern Bowles, Financial Officer  
 Terry Spithill, Programme Coordinator  
 Andy Thompson, Satellite Meeting Coordinator  
 Ian Beveridge  
 Els Meeusen  
 Robin Gasser  
 Mark Sandeman  
 Brian Cooke  
 Brendan Crabb  
 Ian Whittington  
 Nick Smith

Carolyn Behm  
Alex Loukas  
Nick Sangster  
Alan Johnson  
Tom Cribb  
Steve Barker  
Shelley Walton  
Danielle Smyth  
Una Ryan  
Brown Besier  
Peter Holdsworth  
David Jenkins

## **INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Carlos Carmona, Uruguay  
Rodrigo Correa-Oliveira, Brazil  
Alan Cowman, Australia  
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Oumar Gaye, Senegal  
Anna Flisser, Mexico  
John Gilleard, UK  
Peter Hotez, USA  
Ikuo Igarashi, Japan  
Kyoshi Kita, Japan  
Carlos Lanusse, Argentina  
Rick Maizels  
Heinz Mehlhorn, Germany  
Carlos Morel, Brazil  
Tom Nutman, USA  
Ayo Oduola, Switzerland-WHO/TDR  
Bill Pomroy, New Zealand  
Robert Poulin, New Zealand  
Roger Prichard, Canada  
Isabella Quakyi, Ghana  
David Roos, USA  
Bob Sinden, UK  
Terry Spithill, Australia  
Naoyoshi Suzuki, Japan  
Jozef Vercruysse, Belgium  
Xing-Quan Zhu, China  
Weiyu Zhang, China

## **PROGRAM WORKING GROUP**

Terry Spithill, Chair  
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Una Ryan  
Els Meeusen  
Alex Loukas  
Nick Sangster  
Deborah Holt  
Mark Sandeman

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Brendan Crabb  
Mike Pickford  
Maree Overall  
Nick Smith  
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Mark Sandeman  
Lisa Jones

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Els Meeusen  
Peter Holdsworth

## **SOCIAL COMMITTEE WORKING GROUP**

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Philippe Boeuf  
Mike Pickford  
Jody Zawadzki  
Hamish McWilliam  
Sarah Preston

[Alan Cowman](#)

Chair, ICOPA XII Organising Committee  
September 2010

Go to the [ICOPA XII](#) web site.