

GTTAC Members 2011-2014

John E. J. Rasko



BSc (Med), MBBS (Hons), PhD, MAICD, FFSc(RCPA), FRCPA, FRACP
Professor Rasko is a clinical haematologist who directs the Department of Cell and Molecular Therapies at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and heads the Gene and Stem Cell Therapy Program at the Centenary Institute, University of Sydney. He was the first formal appointment in clinical gene therapy in Australia.

John Rasko is an acclaimed physician-scientist with a productive track record in gene and stem cell therapy, experimental haematology and molecular biology. In over 130 papers he has made major contributions to the understanding of stem cells and blood cells, gene transfer technologies, cancer, and human kidney disorders.

Contributions to scientific organisations include co-founding (2000) and past-President (2003-5) of the Australasian Gene Therapy Society; Vice President, International Society for Cellular Therapy (2008-12) and founder (2009) ISCT-Australia; Scientific Advisory Committees for philanthropic foundations; and several Ethics Committees. He has served on GTTAC 2001-2003, 2004-2007, and was Chair of GTTAC 2008-2010.

Jason Able



Dr Able is a mid-career academic who was awarded his PhD in 2001 from the University of Queensland. Since then Dr Able has received several research and innovation awards, including a UQ research excellence award in 2003 and the Peter Goldacre Medal in 2008. He has published more than 25 peer reviewed journal and book articles since 2001. Dr Able has established several prominent national and international collaborations and has been invited to present his group's research at numerous national and international conferences. Dr Able currently leads

the Southern breeding node of the Australian Durum Wheat Improvement Program (ADWIP); while his research interests lie in understanding the molecular mechanisms of the plant reproduction process known as meiosis.

Lesley Ashton



Dr Ashton is head of the Molecular Epidemiology Group at Children's Cancer Institute Australia (CCIA) in Sydney. Her research uses the latest molecular techniques to investigate possible links between a child's genetic make-up (genotype), their exposure to environmental factors and the occurrence of cancer. Her postgraduate training as an epidemiologist (MPH and PhD) together with her undergraduate degree in basic science provided her with a unique combination of multi-disciplinary expertise in genetics and public health. Prior to

joining CCIA, Dr Ashton was a senior researcher in the Epidemiology Unit at the Kirby Institute (formally the National Centre in HIV Epidemiology and Clinical Research) where she gained substantial experience in the design, co-ordination and analyses of epidemiological studies, particularly those with a molecular or genetic focus.

Over the past decade Dr Ashton has been successful in attracting peer reviewed funding for research examining the causes as well as outcomes of those treated for cancer during childhood. Dr Ashton has a career total of 2 book chapters and over 50 peer-reviewed publications, including papers in the New England Journal of Medicine and The Lancet.

Dr Ashton has substantial knowledge of the diverse ethical issues applicable to the conduct of genetic research in human populations. She is a presiding member of the University of NSW Human Research Ethics Committee (since 2001) and Health Research Data Linkage Committee (since 2009). Dr Ashton is also an international associate member of the Children's Oncology Group USA and a member of the Infection & Immunity Group of the Childhood Leukaemia International Consortium.

She has served as GTTAC/GTECCC Cross-members since 2008-2011.

Gabrielle Belz



BV Biol BVSc (Hons) PhD DVSc, Sylvia and Charles Viertel Fellow, Division of Molecular Immunology, Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research, Melbourne.

Gabrielle Belz trained as a veterinarian and received her PhD from the University of Queensland in 1997. During her postdoctoral training at St Jude Children's Research Hospital she developed an interest in how the immune system develops protective immunity against bacterial and viral infections. In 2000, she returned to Australia to pursue studies in antigen presentation and viral immunology at The Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical

Research. In 2005 she was made an International Scholar of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute and in 2007/8 received the Burnett Award and Gottschalk Medal for contributions to our understanding of immune system function. Dr Belz's research focuses on the molecular and cellular signals required to generate a productive immune response and form long-lived protective immunity.

Graham Bonnett



Dr Graham Bonnett has been a research scientist with CSIRO since 1993. Prior to that he was a post doc at the University of Melbourne where he went after finishing a PhD (in 1989) at the University of Leeds. Over the last five years he has been a Program Leader then Theme Leader within CSIRO Plant Industry for the last 5 years and is currently a Theme leader in the Sustainable Agriculture Flagship leading the “Advancing agricultural productivity and environmental health”. His research expertise is in the physiology and development of crop plants and more recently the science underpinning the regulation of genetically modified sugarcane cultivars with respect to the environment and food composition. In 2009 he spent 5 months in Panama (Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute) researching the reproductive biology of the weedy sugarcane relative *Saccharum spontaneum* on a Queensland/Smithsonian Fellowship.

Ian Godwin



Professor Ian Godwin has over 20 years experience in plant biotechnology research, and cut his teeth on plant genetic engineering as a postdoc at Birmingham University in the UK in the 1980s. Since 1990, he has held an academic position in plant molecular genetics at the University of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia. His research involves the use of biotechnological tools for crop improvement, with emphasis on the sustainable production of grain crops. Major focus is on the improvement of crops for food, feed and bio-industrial end-uses, including bio-fuels and bio-materials. Research projects include international collaborations with a focus on food security and plant genetic resource conservation with collaborators in the United States, India, Africa and Pacific Island countries. He is passionate about the public communication of science, and has spoken at many public events on genetics, GM plants and food, animal cloning, and the future of agriculture in a changing climate. In 2003 he was an ABC Science Media Fellow, and has appeared on ABC radio national and local radio on numerous occasions.

Jon Iredell



Associate Professor Jon Iredell is director of NHMRC centre for research excellence in critical infection and Westmead hospital department of infectious diseases and a senior staff microbiologist at Sydney west area health service. Research interest in bacterial infection and ecology and genetics of transmissible antibiotic resistance.

Rod Mahon



BSc (Hons) Zoology 1969 (University of Western Australia), PhD (UWA) 1974.

Dr Mahon is an entomologist with a particular interest in population genetics. His first research position was at Blair Research Laboratory, Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) where he developed a genetic means to differentiate the sibling species within the *Anopheles gambiae* complex. Certain species within that group of mosquitoes are the major vectors of malaria in Africa. Next at the Research School of Biological Sciences, Australian National University, he continued his *Anopheles* focus with a different sibling species complex within the taxon *A. farauti*. This group of contains the vectors of malaria in the SW Pacific region. In 1982 Rod joined the CSIRO Division of Entomology, initially as part of a team that aimed to develop a genetic control method for the Australian Sheep Blowfly. From 1994 to 2000 while based in Malaysia, he established a facility to refine methods to apply the sterile insect technique for the Old World Screw-worm Fly. While this pest of mammals including man is presently not found in Australia, the SIT technique is expected to be implemented if an incursion occurs. Since his return to Australia, Rod's research has focused on retarding the development of resistance by the Lepidopteran cotton pests *Helicoverpa armigera* and *H. punctigera* to the toxins genetically engineered to be expressed in transgenic cotton. Rod retired from CSIRO in September 2010 as a Principal Research Scientist, but retains an involvement with the *Helicoverpa* team as an Honorary Fellow.

Michael Michael



Dr. Michael completed both his B.Sc. (Hons) and Ph.D. at the University of Melbourne (Genetics). He was a founding scientist at the plant biotechnology company Florigene Pty Ltd (formerly Calgene Pacific Pty Ltd) where he worked in the company's post-harvest and colour modification programs. While at Florigene he helped to create transgenic cut-flower varieties for commercial release. The use of co-suppression (RNA interference) in the generation of many of these plants led to an interest in RNA-mediated gene silencing. Dr Michael is now the head of a molecular biology laboratory in the Gastroenterology and Hepatology Department at Flinders Medical Centre, where he studies the altered gene expression that is associated with gastrointestinal cancers. With an interest in the epigenetic regulation of cancer-associated genes, he has been a pioneer in studying the association between microRNAs and solid tumours.

Pam Moore OAM



Ms Moore is a partner in a pastoral enterprise in north western NSW growing cotton, wheat, canola, chick peas and faba beans, and grazing Angus cattle.

I have held several State positions within the Country Women's Association of NSW, and am extremely interested in genetic technology as a means of feeding and clothing the world in the future whilst protecting our natural resources.

Gabrielle O'Sullivan



BSc PhD MPH

Dr Gabrielle O'Sullivan is the Executive Officer of Royal Prince Alfred Hospital Institutional Biosafety Committee. Her PhD and post-doctoral work were in the areas of biochemistry and immunology and she has made contributions to genetics and public health education and to ethics and biosafety aspects of gene technology.

Brian Priestly



Professor Brian Priestly is the Director of the Australian Centre for Human Health Risk Assessment and a Professorial Fellow (now part-time) in the Department of Epidemiology & Preventive Medicine at Monash University. He previously held SES level positions in the Dept of Health & Ageing & the TGA. He is the inaugural President of the Australasian College of Toxicology & Risk Assessment (ACTRA). He was a member of GTTAC 2008-2010.

Rob Moore



Dr Rob Moore is a Principal Research Scientist working at the CSIRO Australian Animal Health Laboratory in Geelong. He is a molecular biologist with a wide range of research experience in microbiology, genomics, microbial metagenomics, gene expression analysis, microRNA, and RNA interference. His research group studies bacterial pathogenesis, host/pathogen interactions, and microbial and host influences on health and productivity. The group aims to develop vaccines and therapeutics for use in production animals, in particular chickens.

He is a Project Leader in the Australian Poultry CRC, an Adjunct Senior Lecturer in the Department of Microbiology, Faculty of Medicine, Monash University, and is a member of the ARC Centre of Excellence in Structural and Functional Microbial Genomics. He was a member of GTTAC 2008-2010

Kevin Smith



Kevin is a consultant and managing director of AbacusBio. Kevin's areas of expertise include: technical expertise in genetics and breeding of forage, grain and horticultural crops; design and analysis of plant evaluation trials, strategic analysis expertise in research and technology development in the broad biosciences area especially relating to plants, commercialisation of genetics and biotechnology innovations. Before joining AbacusBio Kevin was Deputy Director of Bioscience Research for the Victorian Department of Primary Industries and Professor of Molecular Plant Breeding at LaTrobe University. His skills and leadership in

plant genetics and plant biosciences have led to invitations to partner with, or undertake reviews of, programs in Australia, New Zealand, Japan, UK, USA, Uruguay and Argentina.

Jason Smythe



Dr Jason Smythe has over 25 years research and senior management experience in the biotechnology sector in Australia and USA. He holds a B.Sc.(Hons) degree in Immunology from Monash University, a Ph.D. from The Walter and Eliza Hall Institute for Medical Research, and performed his postdoctoral studies as an NHMRC C.J. Martin Fellow at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda (USA). Jason has held senior positions at Johnson & Johnson; the Children's Medical Research Institute; CSIRO; and as Chief Scientific Officer at the Australian Tissue Engineering Centre Limited; Benitec Limited, and Horizon Science Pty Ltd. He has published over 30 manuscripts, been granted 4 patents and awarded 3 International Fellowships. He is an Editor of the journal Expert Opinion on Biological Therapy and was a Member of the last two NHMRC Development Grants Review Panels. Jason also holds a Graduate Certificate in Change Management (Grad.Cert.Mgmt) from the AGSM and a Company Directors' Diploma from The Australian Institute of Company Directors. He is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and an Associate Fellow of the Australian Institute of Management. He was a member GTTAC 2004-2007 and 2008-2010.

Elizabeth Tegg



Dr Elizabeth Tegg graduated from the University of Tasmania in 1999 with a MBBS. She undertook specialist medical qualifications with the Royal College of Pathologist of Australasia and obtained a Fellowship in 2006 in both Haematology and Genetics. Dr Tegg undertook her initial training at the Royal Hobart Hospital and at the Royal North Shore and Prince of Wales Hospitals in Sydney. For the last four years she has worked as a Pathologist and completed a PhD on identifying underlying genetic mutations predisposing people to develop haematological malignancies.

She is a senior clinical lecturer with the University of Tasmania, School of Medicine and is involved in teaching haematology and genetics to students from medical and science background and to post-graduate students.

Diane Webster



Dr Diane Webster (PhD) runs a plant biotechnology laboratory in the School of Biological Sciences at Monash University. Her research group focuses on plant-made recombinant proteins with potential therapeutic or vaccine applications. More specifically, Dr Webster is interested in determining the conformational accuracy of plant-made proteins and how plants can be used to produce recombinant proteins with enhanced properties (eg; yield, stability, functionality). Dr Webster completed her PhD in plant molecular virology at the University of Otago (NZ), and has subsequently worked with CSIRO - Plant Industry (Adelaide), the Burnet Institute (Melbourne), Arizona State University (USA; L'Oreal-UNESCO Fellowship) and Monash University (Melbourne). Dr Webster has been a committee member of the Monash University IBC since 2002 and served as the primary OGTR contact person for the Burnet Institute from 2004-2007.

Paul Young



Paul Young is Professor of Virology at the University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia. He gained his PhD at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine in the UK and then joined the academic staff of LSHTM. He began his dengue research program in 1986, initially in the area of vaccine development and supported by the WHO. He returned to Australia in 1989 and joined the University of Queensland 1991. He is the current President of the Australasian Virology Society and the President-elect of the Asia Pacific Society for Medical Virology. His laboratory employs molecular and structural biology based approaches in the study of viral replication. Key steps in this process are in turn targeted for the development of improved diagnostics, vaccines and anti-viral therapeutic control strategies. Current studies are focused on three different viruses; dengue virus, a serious mosquito-borne disease in many tropical countries, Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV), a major cause of hospitalization of children with respiratory infections and KoRV, a retrovirus of koalas which his group has shown is currently invading the koala germline and is linked with high rates of cancer in this iconic species. He was a member of GTTAC 2008-2010.