

Perth Protein Group: an ASBMB Special Interest Group



The Perth Protein Group (PPG) is one of ASBMB's more recently established Special Interest Groups. PPG is now in its third year, having been launched in mid-2019.

The Executive Committee for PPG in 2021 was Josh Mylne (Chairperson and Webmaster), Abi Ghifari (Treasurer), Tahlia Bastholm (Secretary), Nicolas Taylor (ASBMB Liaison), Brady Johnston (Media Officer). There were also four Events Officers, Jeffreena Miranda, Aleshanee Paxman, Andrew Marshall and Farley Kwok van der Giezen.

While we all hoped 2021 would be a brighter one than 2020, last year certainly had its complications. WA had the good fortune to remain largely COVID-free in 2021, and in lieu of meetings interstate or overseas, we held our 2021 AGM in September down South (aka 'Douth' for us sandgropers).

Organisation of the PPG AGM 2021 was spearheaded by rising star Dr Pauline Zaenker of Edith Cowan University. We held our AGM at the Edith Cowan University campus in Bunbury. The City of Bunbury has a population of approximately 80,000 and is about 180 km south of Perth.

We stuck to the format of our first AGM, similar to the long-running and successful SPG/QPG East Coast Protein Meeting. Most delegates arrived on the Friday afternoon 10 September, and we opened proceedings with a keynote session by Dr Pauline Zaenker titled 'Autoantibodies as powerful cancer biomarkers – are we there yet?' This was followed by a session of three more talks, before drinks and then dinner.

Saturday was jam-packed with 15 talks, starting at 8:45am. The program included sessions entitled Biological Chemistry, Biochemistry and Chemical Biology. The day ended with a poster session and the conference social at the Rose Hotel in town.

Sunday 12 September opened with a keynote session by Professor Charlie Bond who gave an inspiring talk titled 'RNA-induced control of the structure and organisation of proteins'. One last session showcased four early- and mid-career research talks, and the day was closed out by awarding some prizes. There were four winners, each taking home a \$150 prize:

- Zahra Abbas – Best Student Talk (sponsor: Proteomics International)
- Mark Agostino – Best EMCR Talk (sponsor: John Morris)
- Tahlia Bastholm – Best Student Poster (sponsor: John Morris)
- Indra Roux – Best EMCR Poster (sponsor: ASBMB)

Registration remained at the very low rate of \$60 for the early birds. We plan to continue using remote university campuses that are ideal for small conferences, provide a getaway and are usually very affordable. The venue for



Delegates at the 2021 Perth Protein Group AGM at the Edith Cowan University campus in Bunbury, two hours south of Perth. Image credit: Josh Mylne.

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PPG 2022 is yet to be decided and it's Curtin University's turn. The Curtin Kalgoorlie campus seemed a bit too far, being a seven-hour drive away, but a campus in Geraldton, north of Perth might do, although the idea of Rottnest Island was mooted for 2022 too.

Our most recent event was a special presentation by Evelyne Deplazes titled 'An integrative approach to characterise membrane-altering peptides and proteins', held at Curtin University and streamed live on Friday 29 October 2021. Evelyne is currently based in Queensland, but was over in WA visiting. She is an alumna of both Curtin University and UWA. Evelyne emerged from quarantine to deliver her lecture and then everyone

adjourned to a nearby rooftop for some yeasty Friday afternoon refreshments.

Our database contains 141 active members. To be added to our database and be made aware of what we are doing in WA, email perthproteins@gmail.com.

Josh Mylne

Chairperson, Perth Protein Group

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