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***Everyone's a Geneticist!?*****From the President**

Recently, an eminent visitor to my university commented that 'everyone's a Geneticist here'. Having heard similar comments before I can be both pleased that so many biological scientists think so highly of the title 'Geneticist' that they want to claim it, and concerned that Genetics has an identity crisis, meaning that we and others struggle to define what our discipline is.



Identifying the boundaries of Genetics was once a simple task. Textbooks of the 70's such as Srb, Owen & Edgar or Strickberger were able to cover the subject well. Genetics was about crosses that would explain patterns of inheritance. While you could theoretically do genetics with any organism, practicalities meant that it took a whole lot more work to do it with anything other than a model organism. The extraordinary progress of the molecular revolution since the mid 1980's has changed all of that. PCR, RNAi and next-generation DNA sequencing have opened the door to genetic analysis in any organism that one would want to investigate.

Some Geneticists were slow to embrace molecular biology; many biochemists warmed to it a whole lot faster. Genomics and bioinformatics still cause some to struggle. Is it a subset of Genetics? Is it something different? Clearly, many biologists who once would not have said they were 'Geneticists' are now into genomics and call themselves 'Geneticists'.

So back to defining what 'Genetics' is. You will have your own definition, but here is mine. Genetics is a discipline that uses inherited variation (natural or induced/created in the laboratory) to solve biological problems.

Defined this way Genetics is a tool kit rendered powerful by its reliance on inherited variation. Like a master tradesperson, a Geneticist has developed skill in using a variety of these tools through constant use. Other biologists may use one or more tools occasionally, but it is not at the heart of what they do. In reality it may be challenging and, in many contexts, pointless to define who is or is not a Geneticist.

But is defining the discipline important? I think it is. History tells us that if a discipline is not understood and appreciated within a university, then it can come under threat from both the research and teaching perspectives. Research assessment exercises such as the ERA have highlighted the significance of this. Similar lessons have been learned in research only institutions.

I think there is a message for the Genetics Society too. It's a message of opportunity. 21st century Genetics has extra gears – we have forward genetics and reverse genetics. Both can be quick and powerful in generating momentum. So whether a biologist uses a wide range of genetic tools or finds utility in one or alantwo, our Society should provide a useful point of connection.

The reach of Genetics has expanded. Genetics can be applied in almost any organism to the broadest range of biological problems. All can be discussed under the umbrella of the Genetics Society.

The Genetics Society offers real strength in connecting us all to the greatest genetics research lab that the world will ever see. This lab that has been researching for eons, experimenting with all aspects of life. We can learn much from research that has been done in the Laboratory of Evolution. Dobzhansky wrote, Nothing in biology makes sense except in the light of evolution.

Comparative genomics and genetics have underlined the extraordinary evolutionary conservation of the genetic machinery that controls a wide range of biological processes. Variation discovered in nature is an equally precious resource. Evolution IS making sense of so many aspects of biology. Hence, there is real value in Geneticists who work on organisms from microbes to humans coming together within a Society that has had long standing core strength in evolutionary genetics, the Genetics Society of AustralAsia.

So what is the point of this article? Well the point is unity. A century of genetics research has taught us that the extraordinary diversity of life is underpinned by unifying principles and processes. Modern geneticists work with some tools that are almost ubiquitous in their application. So there is value in coming together. The Genetics Society of AustralAsia aims to offer value to all who identify themselves as Geneticists.

One way of offering value is through our annual conference, to be held this year (July 10-13) in Melbourne <<http://conference2011.genetics.org.au/>>. In the spirit of what I have written here, this conference is about inclusiveness, quality and diversity. We have an amazing lineup of local and overseas speakers, but we need you to be involved. Whether it be by poster or talk we want to learn about your latest research and to provide opportunities for you to strengthen your research network. We want to provide you with the opportunity to absorb some of the amazing things that are happening in the world of Genetics. Finally, we want to hear about ways in which this Society can better support the discipline of Genetics in our region and you as a Geneticist.

I hope to meet you in Melbourne.

Phil Batterham
President, Genetics Society of AustralAsia

2011 GSA Annual Meeting in Melbourne

The 2011 conference of the Genetics Society of AustralAsia will be held at the University of Melbourne from July 10 to 13. The program will embrace the breadth of the extraordinary genetics research being conducted in Australia and around the world. Expect to be excited the opportunities that this conference will offer for you to listen, to present and to network. This conference is for you.

The program will begin at 2pm on Sunday July 10 with a series of outstanding plenary addresses. This will be followed by a Welcome Reception (5 – 7pm) with canapés and drinks. Meet up with colleagues and then take up the opportunity to go to one the many excellent local restaurants.

Over the following three days the program will continue with excellent plenary addresses and concurrent symposia. This years conference will also incorporate the annual meeting of the Insect Molecular Biology and *C. elegans* research communities.

The conference dinner will be held in the historic dining room of Ormond College on the evening of July 12. The conference program will conclude at 5pm on Wednesday July 13.

We are building a great conference program to bring the AustralAsian genetics community together in Melbourne. Please join us. The abstract submission and early bird registration deadline is April 29th. Third year undergraduates may apply for a travel grant to attend the conference.



Report from 2010 GSA Annual Meeting

The 2010 GSA Conference was held in Canberra on 5-9th July at CSIRO Black Mountain and was jointly organised by CSIRO, ANU and University of Canberra. The meeting was very well attended attracting more than 150 researchers and students including 12 undergraduates awarded travel bursaries by the GSA to attend the meeting. Keynote speakers were Prof. John Pannell (Dept of Plant Sciences, Oxford University), Assoc. Prof. Rachel O'Neill (Center for Applied Genetics and Technology, University of Connecticut), Emeritus Prof. Dick Frankham (Dept of Biological Sciences, Macquarie University), Dr. John Buckleton (ESR, New Zealand), Prof. John Thompson (Ecology & Evolutionary Biology, University of California SC) and Prof. Claire Wade (Chair of Computational Biology and Animal Genetics, University of Sydney) with the MJD White address being given by Prof. Michael Hynes. Presentations covered a broad range of organisms (plants, animals, insects and microbes) and topics such as gene expression, co-evolutionary and conservation genetics, sexual dimorphism and new technologies. A special session, in honour of Ross Crozier, included talks from a number of past students and postdocs and a tribute to Ross's contributions to the Australian scientific community. The Crozier family concluded the session by announcing the Ross Crozier Medal (see Awards below). This diversity of topics and speakers over the 5 day meeting created a lively and motivating atmosphere that saw many in depth discussions during tea breaks and lunch. The Conference dinner was held at The Lobby restaurant in the Parliamentary Triangle precinct allowing visitors to experience some of Canberra's more renowned buildings at night. Many thanks to the conference organising committee members: Rohan Williams (ANU), Janine Deakin (ANU), Tara Hopley (CSIRO), Anna MacDonald (UC), Kate Hodges (UC), Michael Whitehead (ANU) and Joe Miller (CSIRO) for their unswerving servitude to the cause.

Linda Broadhurst (CSIRO)



2010 Catcheside Prize Winner

Dr Catherine Grueber's PhD project was supervised by Assoc Prof Ian Jamieson of the Department of Zoology, University of Otago, in Dunedin, New Zealand, where she was awarded her degree in August 2010. Measuring and mitigating the effects of inbreeding and inbreeding depression in threatened populations remains a challenging issue for conservation genetics, even despite continued improvement to our molecular and analytical techniques. An understanding of the relatedness structure of a wild population is invaluable in conservation management, but difficult to attain without a pedigree. Dr Grueber's PhD thesis investigated how molecular markers can be used to study the effects of inbreeding in a pedigreed population of takahe – a highly endangered, flightless New Zealand bird.



First, Dr Grueber used microsatellite genotyping and mtDNA sequencing of museum specimens of takahe from the 1800's, to determine whether this species had undergone a prolonged or rapid bottleneck. Early levels of takahe genetic diversity were very low, similar to current levels, suggesting long persistence at a small population size (Grueber & Jamieson 2011 Ibis doi: 10.1111/j.1474-919X.2011.01110.x). Today, takahe persist in a remnant wild population, and on a number of offshore islands to which they were translocated in the 1980's. Detailed pedigree information is available for these island birds, and the main aim of Dr Grueber's thesis was to also develop microsatellite markers for these birds (Grueber et al. 2008 Mol Ecol Res 8: 884-886), and then compare estimates of inbreeding depression using both techniques.

Modelling evolutionary fitness for this threatened population was technically challenging, and resulted in a specific thesis chapter detailing the complexities of multi-model inference as applied to the study of inbreeding in a wild population, subsequently accepted for publication in *Journal of Evolutionary Biology* (Grueber et al. 2011 JEB 24: 699-711). Nevertheless, pedigree analysis showed that the negative effects of inbreeding, although subtle at individual life-history stages, could have important cumulative effects on evolutionary fitness over the entire life-span (Grueber et al. 2010 Cons Biol 24: 1617-1625). However, given that managing inbreeding is important in conservation

genetics, how can this be done when pedigree information is not available, as is the case for the majority of wild populations? Using microsatellite heterozygosity-fitness correlations, and comparing these to the pedigree results, Dr Grueber and her colleagues showed that molecular estimates of individual inbreeding can be imprecise. This imprecision can hinder the usefulness of these analyses for detecting inbreeding depression in the wild, complicating threatened population management (Grueber et al. 2011 *Mol Ecol* 20: 67-79). More generally, multiple population-genetic processes can influence the detection and interpretation of molecular measures of inbreeding depression in threatened species, which Dr Grueber and colleagues have argued is not widely appreciated (Grueber et al. 2008 *Mol Ecol* 17: 3978-3984).

The research that Dr Grueber conducted during her PhD led not only to publications in reputable journals, but also became the basis of informed management decisions for her study species. In particular, Dr Grueber has worked closely with the NZ Department of Conservation's Takahe Recovery Group, for which her genetics work has had significant impacts on the current management program, leading to a major change in direction of the program in terms of how they manage inbreeding in their offshore island populations. Dr Grueber has recently taken up a post-doctoral research position at the University of Otago with Assoc Prof Ian Jamieson, investigating whether natural selection can overcome the effects of inbreeding and genetic drift on the genetic diversity of an isolated population of the New Zealand Stewart Island robin. Next-generation sequencing techniques will be used to evaluate functional and neutral genetic diversity of the individuals in this long-term study population, which offers a unique and exciting opportunity to evaluate how population bottlenecks and inbreeding impact the genome of a wild population.

burial, and King Canute's forest laws. The University of Melbourne's Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health generously sponsored this interview.

Geologist John Lovering has been privileged to study rock samples collected from many exotic places including Heard Island, Antarctica and even the moon. During the interview, Lovering shared stories from his beginnings as an assistant museum curator to his time as Vice-Chancellor of Flinders University and beyond. This interview was kindly sponsored by the Faculty of Science at the University of Melbourne.

Oliver Mayo was first inspired by the world of maths in biology when reading an article by Francis Crick on the DNA code. Throughout his career in biological statistics he never lost the passion for learning and has recently completed a BA in Italian. CSIRO Livestock Industries generously sponsored Mayo's interview.

In addition to filming these three interviews, seven new transcripts were posted to the Interviews website, including Charles Birch FAA, James Lance FAA, Barry Marshall FAA, James Morrison FAA, Robin Warren FAA, Fiona Wood and Roy Woodall FAA.



Oliver Mayo
*CSIRO Livestock
Industries &
University
of Adelaide.*

Interviews with Australian Scientists

(reprinted from the Australian Academy of Science Newsletter, September 2010)

Academy Fellow and ABC Radio talent Adjunct Professor Robyn Williams donated his time and expertise in May and July to interview three Fellows for the Interviews with Australian scientists project. Interviews with Professor Roger Short, Professor John Lovering and Dr Oliver Mayo were filmed in Melbourne, Canberra and Adelaide respectively.

The topics discussed in Roger Short's interview ranged from his work on the aquatic origins of elephants, to his efforts in the fight against HIV transmission, his advocacy of upright

White Travel Award – Kerensa McEnvoy

Kerensa, the 2010 recipient of the Smith-White Travel award is an ARC Future Fellow in the Faculty of Veterinary Science at the University of Sydney. Kerensa is slated to attend the meeting of her choice in July of 2011. The full travel report will therefore be available in the next newsletter.

News from the States & NZ

NSW

New Surroundings

The Fruit Fly Research Group (Marianne Frommer, Stuart Gilchrist, Kathie Raphael, Deb Shearman and John Sved) have moved several suburbs from Sydney University to join Bill Sherwin and other members of the Evolution and Ecology Research Centre (EERC) and School of Biological Earth and Ecological Sciences (BEES) at The University of New South Wales. The group is collaborating with members of the Ramaciotti Centre at UNSW to produce a genome sequence of the Queensland fruit fly.

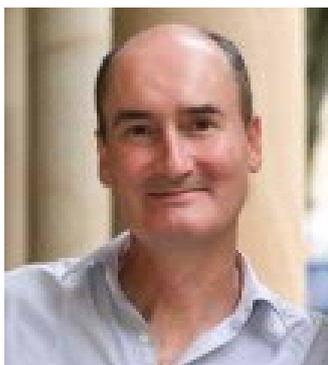
The photograph of current and past members of the group includes (L to R) Xiumei Liang, John Sved, Stuart Gilchrist, Kit Streamer, Marianne Frommer, Kathie Raphael, Deb Shearman, Chris Gillies, Jen Morrow and Emilie Cameron. It was taken at a party to celebrate Marianne's election to the Australian Academy of Science.



Qld

Election into the Australian Academy of Sciences

Congratulations to Professor Mark Blows of the School of Biological Sciences in the University of Queensland who has been elected as a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Science. This is amongst the highest recognition for individual science achievement in Australia, and arises from Mark's outstanding work on the evolution of complex traits that has overturned conventional wisdom concerning the nature of the two fundamental components of evolutionary change; genetic variation and selection.



Queensland Floods

The second week of January 2011 saw two major disasters in South East Queensland - devastating flash flooding events in Toowoomba and the Lockyer valley that resulted in significant loss of life and the largest flood in Brisbane and Ipswich since 1974. Thousands of homes were inundated causing significant destruction. The University of Queensland's St Lucia campus, which resides on the banks of the Brisbane river was inundated in most low lying areas. Thankfully most teaching and research facilities were unaffected, but sporting facilities were badly damaged. Two main childcare centers that support UQ staff and students were forced to close due to the flooding and a temporary facility had to be constructed on very short notice. As many students and staff live near the river there were a significant number whose homes were badly damaged. Many international students returning to university after summer holidays found their units had been destroyed by floodwaters. The Vice Chancellor of UQ, Paul Greenfield, started a fund for such students to help recover from their loss. Within the genetics community, some plant geneticists were badly affected as the UQ greenhouses were inundated. Many precious experiments and mapping lines across other research groups were lost due to power failures. The University campus was closed for a period of eight days during cleanup. Echoing the overwhelming level of volunteer support from the local community seen across Brisbane and Ipswich, at UQ a "mud army" of students, postdocs and staff all contributed to the cleanup. Although some summer courses had to be postponed or cancelled, campus was able to open on time for semester 1 classes.

New Zealand Earthquake in NZ

The second major earthquake to hit Christchurch within a year occurred on Feb 22, 2011. The quake had an epicentre just to the east of the city centre and resulted in significant loss of life and property across the city.

At the University of Canterbury, just west of the city centre, many buildings were damaged although not seriously. Even so all the buildings required checking for structural integrity with to date 120 of 186 structures passing. A huge clean up and reorganisation was required so that the teaching year could begin, which it did on March 14, even though many lectures were given in tents! A number of universities have taken students into their courses and at Adelaide University as well as students, a number of lectures have also moved across the ditch temporarily. A number of graduate students have also been moved to other universities and research

centres to undertake their studies on a short-term basis. The Lincoln campus and associated research centre further west of Christchurch was largely unaffected. However many scientists, academics, staff and students, who live in Christchurch have damaged homes and live with limited services such as power, water and sewerage.

Some of you may be approached for help, perhaps housing a graduate student in your lab or asked for access to equipment that has been damaged or is in a building that cannot be accessed. Please help if you can.

At this time we are also thinking of those in Japan who have been afflicted by similar natural forces.

The Role of FASTS?

The Federation of Australian Scientific and Technological Societies, or FASTS, is the peak scientific representative organisation that promotes the value of research to federal politicians and the broader community as well as lobbying the government on issues that affect research in Australia. As the GSA is a financial member of FASTS, members of our society are entitled to stand for positions within FASTS. In November of last year I was elected as the Early Career Researcher representative and sit on both the FASTS Board and Executive Committee. While FASTS does a great deal of work on our behalf very few junior researchers are aware of its existence let alone its activities or the opportunities that exist within this organization. Over the next few issues of Linkage I will outline some of these to help raise awareness of FASTS and its efforts to support our research.

With the recent floods across much of eastern Australia the Federal Government has flagged a number of budgets cuts to fund the reconstruction of these devastated areas. Unfortunately the Australian Learning and Teaching Council have suffered significant cutbacks. Funding for primary and high school science engagement programs such as "Primary Connections" and "Science by Doing" are under considerable threat as is current funding of the NH&MRC. FASTS continues to support a broad campaign aimed at maintaining current funding through direct lobbying of the offices of the Prime Minister, the Finance Minister and responsible portfolio Ministers.

Aside from lobbying, FASTS organises the annual Science meets Parliament, a two-day event where some 200 scientists come to Canberra and discuss their research with the Federal Parliament. This year's SmP will be held on the 20th and 21st of June. During the first day delegates are offered professional development opportunities and are exposed to

how the political and policy making processes works, how the media communicates science and how we might think about communicating science to a general audience. During the second day delegates meet with politicians to discuss their research and attend a number of events that focus on current research issues, like the recent ERA process. To encourage attendance of early career researchers, FASTS will be offering a limited number of bursaries that will support travel, accommodation and registration to the event; these will be advertised shortly.

Jeremy Brownlie, Griffith University

Death of a former geneticist

Mary Mercy Thomson (nee Gunson) died in Sydney on 12 October, 2010. Mary was the wife of John Thomson who left the University of Melbourne to go to Canberra and later to Sydney as Professor of Genetics. Mary was a long time member of the staff of the Zoology Department - being involved in the acquired inheritance experiment that ran in Zoology for many years from the mid 1930s. Later she worked with Drosophila polytene chromosomes and transferred to the Genetics department when it came into existence. She gave up work in the mid-60's after marrying John.

Upcoming prizes/awards

The Eureka Prize

The Australian Museum Eureka Prizes are a unique partnership between government organisations, institutions, companies and individuals committed to celebrating the vitality, originality and excellence of Australian science.

Presented annually by the Australian Museum, the prizes reward excellence in the fields of:

- research & innovation
- science leadership
- school science
- science journalism & communication.

Entries Close: midnight AEST Friday 6 May 2011

<http://eureka.australianmuseum.net.au/>

The Prime Minister's Prizes for Science

The Prime Minister's Prizes for Science are a national tribute to excellent and dedicated work in Australian science and science teaching. Each comprises a cash component, a medallion and a lapel pin of the nature of

those worn by recipients of Australian Honours such as the AO.

The major Prize, the Prime Minister's Prize for Science, is one of the nation's most highly-regarded awards and the premier national award for scientific achievement. It is awarded for an outstanding specific achievement or series of related achievements in any area of science advancing human welfare or benefiting society, and has been awarded previously to such luminaries of Australian science as Frank Fenner, Donald Metcalf, Jacques Miller, Ian Frazer and Graeme Clark and John O'Sullivan.

The Malcolm McIntosh Prize for Physical Scientist of the Year and the Science Minister's Prize for Life Scientist of the Year are awarded to scientists to recognise and reward outstanding early-career research and to demonstrate to the public, and to school students and science undergraduates in particular, that outstanding early-career achievement in science is not only possible but can be of world-class importance.

The Prime Minister's Prizes for Excellence in Science Teaching in Primary and Secondary Schools were introduced in 2002, to honour our inspirational science teachers. Many of today's most prominent Australian scientists have credited their teachers with generating the interest and enthusiasm for science that they have carried with them throughout their subsequent careers.

Nominations close: 17:00 AEST May 13, 2011
<https://grants.innovation.gov.au/SciencePrize/Pages/Home.aspx>

L'Oréal Australia For Women in Science Fellowships

The annual L'Oréal Australia For Women in Science Fellowships are awarded to three female early career scientists to reward excellence in their Australian research and to boost their prospects of sustaining their careers and rising to leadership positions in science.

The L'Oréal Australia For Women in Science Fellowships, worth up to AUD\$20,000 each, are part of the National Fellowships program: over 700 women in 35 countries have been awarded for research in their own countries. The national fellowships complement L'Oréal's international science prizes: the US\$100,000 L'Oréal-UNESCO Awards For Women in Science and the US\$40,000 International UNESCO-L'Oréal Fellowships.

Applications close: May 2nd, 2011
<http://www.scienceinpublic.com/loreal/>

Genetics Society of AustralAsia Ross Crozier Medal

This award was established by the Genetics Society of AustralAsia to recognise outstanding contributions to the field of genetics research by mid career Australasian scientists. The medal commemorates Ross Crozier an Evolutionary Geneticist who was a past President and an avid lobbyist for the Society. The award is intended to assist the recipient in advancement of their career and will be awarded for work completed within the period five to 15 years from graduating with a PhD. Career interruptions will be taken into account in exercising the 15 year limit.

The award is normally made to one scientist at the Annual General Meeting of the Genetics Society of AustralAsia and is accepted by delivering the Ross Crozier Lecture at the meeting. The Ross Crozier Medal. Where international travel from the normal place of work is required to attend the meeting, the Society may make a contribution to travel costs.

Nominations of geneticists working in Australasia or working overseas and of Australasian origin are solicited from members of the Genetics Society of AustralAsia each year by email. Nominations are confidential, should include a letter describing the contribution of the nominee together with the candidate's CV, and should be received by the Secretary of the Society by 29th April 2011. Nominees are not required to be members of the Society. Self nominations will not be accepted.

Nominations should be sent to the GSAA Secretary, Associate Professor Kathy Belov by email kathy.belov@sydney.edu.au to arrive no later than 29th April 2011.

The Young Tall Poppy Science Award

The prestigious annual Young Tall Poppy Science Awards aim to recognise the achievements of Australia's outstanding young scientific researchers and communicators. Nominations are generally called early in the year for two months prior to the selection process and selection criteria include outstanding research / academic achievement as well as excellence in communication and community engagement to promote an understanding of science.

Over 200 Young Tall Poppy Science Awards had been made around Australia by 2009, and Awards programs are currently in place in New South Wales / Australian Capital Territory, Queensland, South Australia and Victoria/Tasmania with the Northern Territory and

Western Australia joining in 2010. The Award winners ('Tall Poppies') participate in education and community outreach programs in which they become role models to inspire school students and the broader community about the possibilities of science. This involves a range of other science promotion activities for school students, teachers and the broader community, including visits to schools, educational seminars, workshops, public talks and other activities.

Nominations for the 2011 Young Tall Poppy Science Awards will open shortly for all states and territories and will be announced at award ceremonies in coming months. They promise to be as good as awards in 2010. The Young Tall Poppy Science Awards and associated outreach activities are sponsored nationally by the Department of Health and Ageing and by diverse partners in each state, see our current Partners.

Nominations close: May 8th, 2011 (may vary by state)
<http://www.aips.net.au/tall-poppies/nominations-2011/>

Genetics Society of AustralAsia (GSA) Annual General Meeting

Discovery Lecture Theatre, CSIRO Plant Industry
Canberra

7th July 2010

Meeting Opened by David Catcheside 12:20 pm

Members present 21.

Apologies: David Smyth, Rob Saint, Alex Andrianopoulos.

Agenda Items.

1. Special Resolution to change the Constitution of the Society.

David Catcheside explained that a number of minor modifications were needed. These were removing reference to a report from the Secretary for Sustaining Members from Rule 21(2)(c) since the society no longer has a Secretary for Sustaining Members and, importantly; a change from a requirement for prepaid post to the use of electronic mail for notification of the date, place, time and nature of the business proposed to be transacted at the Annual General Business Meeting in Rule 23 (1), and correction of two spelling errors.

A motion to change the Constitution as specified was proposed by Jenny Donald, seconded by Phil Batterham and passed with no dissentions.

2. Treasurer's Report.

Margaret Byrne presented the Associations financial state-

ment noting that the Society has reserves of about \$90,000 in addition to the endowment for the thesis prize. Profits from Annual Scientific Meetings in the past three years have prevented a significant decline in reserves. The Society made a small loss this year. The revised membership fee structure and the scheduled institution of an on-line membership system are expected to correct the structural budgetary imbalance. Significant factors affecting the budget were the cost of student bursaries and low income from membership due to the agency sending dues notices close to end of the financial year. On book, the Society has 250 members but for 2010 there were only 39 Ordinary, 30 reduced rate (Student, Overseas, Part-time) paid members plus 14 Honorary members. In 2009 there were 73 Ordinary and 51 reduced rate financial members. A motion to accept Treasurer's Report was proposed Elizabeth McGraw, seconded Richard Newcomb and passed without dissent.

3. Student Bursaries.

Jenny Donald reported that \$6000 from Society funds supported twelve undergraduate students to attend this meeting and that \$4000 supported nine students to attend the Boden conference on Marsupial Genomics. She observed that many students had commented how much they had got out of attending the Society conferences and that several students supported in earlier years had attended subsequent conferences, suggesting that the scheme was successful in attracting students to continue in a higher degree in Genetics. It was noted that the committee recommended continuation of support for undergraduate students to attend the annual meeting of the Society and had recorded its thanks to Jenny Donald for her work in making the scheme a success.

A motion put to continue the Student Bursary scheme was proposed by Kathy Belov, seconded Janine Deakin and passed without dissent.

4. MJD White medal.

David Catcheside presented images of the medal design and reported that although a mould has been made the Medal is yet to be struck. Jenny Graves (2009) and Michael Hynes (2010), the first two medallists, would be presented with their awards at a later meeting.

5. Ross Crozier Award.

David Catcheside reported that the Crozier family has made a donation to the Society for an award to commemorate the late Ross Crozier, past president and long term active member of the Society. The Committee recommends the AGM gives it powers to devise the form and rules for the award, taking account of the wishes of the Crozier family and proposes that it receives advice on this from a sub-committee comprising the President, Vice

President and Immediate Past President who will have powers to coopt other persons to assist them. The Crozier family has indicated a preference for the award to be a medal and that the award be for a mid career geneticist.

A motion that the Ross Crozier Award be developed was proposed by Kathy Belov, seconded by Neil Murray and passed without dissent.

6. GSA Committee for 2010/2011

The President, David Catcheside, rotates to Past President and Vice President, Phil Batterham, rotates to President each for two year terms. Vacant positions are Vice President, Secretary and editors for Linkage, the Society's newsletter. At the close of nominations prior to the meeting, Alex Andrianopoulos had been nominated for a two year term as Vice President (Proposer David Catcheside, seconder Phil Batterham) and Kathy Belov had been nominated for Secretary (Proposer Margaret Byrne, seconder David Catcheside). There being no other nominations, the President declared them elected.

Elizabeth McGraw volunteered to assist with the editing of Linkage. (Subsequent to the meeting Yvonne Parsons agreed to continue her editorial role.)

7. National Committee for Plant and Animal Sciences.

The President reported that Rob Saint is rotating off the committee and GSA should propose a geneticist to take his place. Pleasingly, six members had put their names forward. The GSA Committee had decided to nominate Kathy Belov for the position as her secretarial role in the Society would simplify the lines of communication.

8. Annual Meetings.

There was a profit of \$4997 from the meeting held at the University of Queensland. The President thanked Elizabeth McGraw and her team for the excellent meeting they had organised in Brisbane. The President also expressed thanks to Linda Broadhurst and her team for the excellence of the current Canberra meeting. The 2011 meeting will be in Melbourne in July at a date to be determined. The organiser, Phil Batterham, has had offers of help from Coral Warr and others, proposes to set up a national program committee, and to encourage participation by New Zealanders and Singaporeans to better reflect the Society's name of Genetics Society of AustralAsia. It is proposed to include human genetics in the program. Expressions of interest for hosting a meeting in 2012 or 2013 were received from Kathy Belov and Rebecca Johnson to host a meeting in Sydney and from Richard Newcomb to host meeting in Auckland. The Committee will look into the matter and make a decision.

9. Any Other Business.

David handed over to incoming President, Phil Batterham at 12:45 pm.

Phil reported that the International Genetics Federation will not be hosted by Genetics Society of America anymore and will be set up as an independent entity in Melbourne and so will not be an administrative burden on GSA.

The new president apologised that he will miss the MJD White Lecture because of other commitments. Phil expressed thanks to David Catcheside for guiding the Society through the past few years and congratulated him on his achievements of instituting new awards and importantly in building a firm basis for the Society. Phil moved a vote of thanks to David Catcheside which was passed by acclamation.

Phil expressed thanks to Linda Broadhurst and team for organising an excellent 2010 meeting.

The meeting closed 12:48 pm.

Minutes taken by Alan Wilton.