



NEWSLETTER

# Endpoint

OF THE AUSTRALASIAN SOCIETY FOR ECOTOXICOLOGY  
(now SETAC Australasia)

## **Volume 19 Issue 2**

September 2012

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## Message from the Editor

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We have another bumper issue of Endpoint. Thanks to everyone who has contributed to this issue as there are a number of exciting developments in SETAC AU and in the greater world of environmental toxicology and chemistry. A special thanks and welcome also goes out to our new Council members who have taken up their posts since the AGM in Brisbane.

Following a closing plenary roundtable discussion in Berlin involving our very own president Dayanthi, SETAC has drafted a "Berlin Declaration on Sustainability" on sustainability and SETAC's role in this very important topic. All SETAC members (including SETAC AU members) are now encouraged to provide comments on the Declaration. For more details on this go to <http://ww2.setac.org/globe/2012/august/sustainability-update.html>.

Of course now Brisbane 2012 has come and gone. The conference was extremely successful (both technically and financially) with many people providing very encouraging feedback to the organisers. Fred has compiled a report on the conference on pages 21 to 26 and Phil has included a students' perspective on page 12. We now turn our attention to Melbourne for SETAC AU's next annual conference scheduled for 1 to 3 October 2013 (mark your diaries now). Vin will be providing updates on progress organising the conference in subsequent issues of Endpoint so stay tuned.

In respect to new Council members, at the last AGM members agree to the creation of two more positions on the SETAC AU Council; Strategic Directions Officer and Liaison Officer (temporary position until 2013). Andrew Harford and Beate Escher were elected to these positions respectively. Andrew has already been hard at work carving out a future direction for our society and has included his inaugural report on page 19. Beate has also hit the ground running with a plan for liaising with SETAC Pensacola and other societies related to SETAC AU.

Finally, SETAC AU intends to compile a list of student and laboratory profiles for publication on our Website and/or future issues of Endpoint. If you are a student or a laboratory and wish to advertise what you have to offer to a future employer or client respectively and are a current member of SETAC AU read the articles from Phil (page 14) and Di (page 7) respectively.

Of course you find our usual bill of fare including regional reports, student reports, Bulletin progress etc. Please enjoy.

**David Everett** ([david.everett@ehp.qld.gov.au](mailto:david.everett@ehp.qld.gov.au))  
Editor

## Sustaining Members

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Office of  
Environment  
& Heritage

**NSW Office of Environment and Heritage**

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au>



Australian Government  
Department of Sustainability, Environment,  
Water, Population and Communities

**Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities**

<http://www.environment.gov.au>



**Hydrobiology**

<http://www.hydrobiology.biz>



**Ecotox Services Australasia**

<http://www.ecotox.com.au>



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**Advanced Analytical Australia**

<http://www.advancedanalytical.com.au>

Welcome to our first issue of Endpoint following the 2012 AGM held in Brisbane. I would like to extend a special welcome to the new members of the SETAC AU Council. It is very pleasing to have new nominations and fresh faces in Council to rejuvenate us. Di Jolley as a new Vice President and our new state representatives and student representative.

Welcome also to the former Council members who kindly nominated to serve again – it would seem that we enjoy our work. The two new positions on Council: the Strategic Directions Officer and Liason Officer were endorsed at the AGM and we are pleased to welcome Andrew Harford and Beate Escher to these roles. Thank you also for accepting my re-nomination and electing me to serve again as President until our AGM at the Melbourne 2013 Conference.

Since it is just 5 weeks after the AGM where I presented a comprehensive report, this report will be pleasantly brief.

### **Conferences**

The Brisbane 2012 conference was a great success, we had great plenaries, scientific talks and posters, the venue and catering was excellent and the atmosphere was superb as usual with great camaraderie, dancing (dare I say drinking!) laughs and friendship. So much so, that the visitors from the US kept asking for invitations to our Melbourne conference so that they could return to SETAC AU. The conference dinner was especially impressive. I would like to reiterate our thanks to Fred, Beate and the Brisbane 2012 organising committee for a superb conference. I do hope we can mirror this in Melbourne 2013. The enthusiasm has definitely been carried to Melbourne, we have formed an energetic organising committee and Vin Pettigrove chair of the Melbourne conference has provided a brief report (page 20).

The extended abstracts from the SETAC World Congress in Berlin are available on the web and the report from the conference chairs was in the June issue of the Globe which all SETAC AU members received.

SETAC Asia Pacific in Kumamoto Japan 23-26 Sep 2012 will be followed by the Minimata Symposium on the 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>, and some of our members, including myself will attend, though I think at the last count it was only 12 from AU who are registered with some chairing sessions. It is quite expensive to fly to Kumamoto which would have deterred some of our members and we should note this with reference to the proposed conference in New Zealand 2014.

SETAC North America in Longbeach will be held in November and we receive regular updates via



email.

### **Science and Technology Australia**

Scott Wilson and Tom Cresswell have been nominated as the "Senior " and "Early Career" Scientists respectively to represent SETAC AU at Science meets Parliament and I hope they are now registered. We look forward to their reports on their experience in a future issue of Endpoint.

### **Australian Academy of Science and the Review of National Committees 2012**

In my capacity as President of SETAC AU, I received a letter from Bruce H J McKellar who is Chairing a Committee to Review National Committees for the Australian Academy of Sciences, asking me to provide responses to their questions and comments. The purpose of their review is to "strengthen science in Australia and assist the interaction of Australian scientists with their peers in Australia and internationally". Since my reply was delayed (embarrassingly as a result of their email being buried amongst many emails from RMIT students), I made an urgent request last week to the Senior members of Council for their quick input before I finalised my reply. I am very grateful to Munro especially and Di Jolley and Ross for their swift responses and for assistance with drafting my reply.

### **Increasing Nominations for Council Positions**

I have asked Council to reflect on how best to increase nominations for Council positions and whether we should have some caveats on elections to key positions like President, Secretary and Treasurer. Should we fix on the SETAC NA model where the Vice President is a "President in waiting" and should there be just an endorsement not an election? We have two Vice Presidents as a result of carryover from ASE.....etc. We will collate our thoughts and make a recommendation to the next AGM prior to elections.

I look forward to an interesting and active year for SETAC AU Council and our members in 2012/13.

**Dayanthi Nugegoda**  
([dayanthi.nugegoda@rmit.edu.au](mailto:dayanthi.nugegoda@rmit.edu.au))

President





### EPA – Anti-fouling biocides reassessment

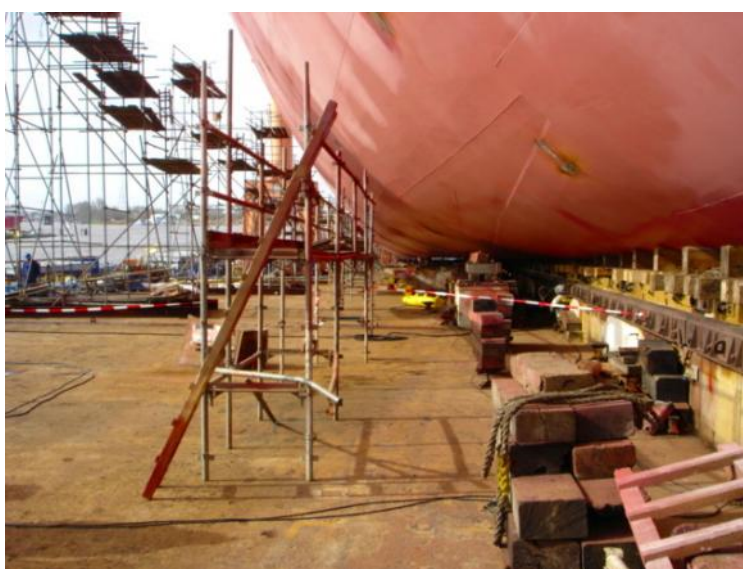
The NZ Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) is reassessing all biocides used as active ingredients in anti-fouling paints that are imported, manufactured and used in New Zealand. A preliminary risk assessment has been completed, looking at both human health and environmental risks (see <http://epa.govt.nz/Publications/Antifouling%20paints%20reassessment%20Preliminary%20Risk%20Assessment.pdf>). The environmental risks were based on modelling of antifouling concentrations in NZ marinas and ports using the MAM-PEC model, developed by the OECD and adapted for NZ marinas and ports by NIWA (see [http://epa.govt.nz/Publications/EPA\\_AntifoulingPhase2.pdf](http://epa.govt.nz/Publications/EPA_AntifoulingPhase2.pdf)).

According to the EPA risk assessment there is a distinct group of biocides that may pose very high risks to the aquatic environment (chlorothalonil, diuron and Irgarol) compared to all other biocides used in anti-fouling paints in New Zealand. These biocides pose significantly high environmental risks for all exposure scenarios and some of them trigger additional concerns due to their persistence, ecotoxic metabolites, and bioaccumulation potential. For Irgarol there are also concerns regarding its endocrine disruption potential. According to the modelling, the presence of othilnone, Sea Nine and thiram in marinas poses very high risks to the aquatic environment and therefore may need to be reduced. This prevention can possibly be achieved through the prohibition of application of paints containing these actives on small vessels (<25 m).

Feedback on the risk assessments is being sought from the public to assist the EPA in making their final decision on whether to remove some biocides from the approved list. Contact Apostolos Koutsaftis, Advisor, Hazardous Substances, EPA, for more information.

**Jenni Gadd** ([Jennifer.Gadd@niwa.co.nz](mailto:Jennifer.Gadd@niwa.co.nz))

New Zealand Regional Representative





First off, I would like to say a massive thank you to the outgoing NSW Rep, Dianne Jolley, for her time in the position...I have some big shoes to fill. As we swap the torch, I would like to make sure that I have the up to date contact details of all the NSW members. If you are a paid NSW member and have not received the recent email from Dianne regarding submissions for this edition of Endpoint, could you please email me so that I can add you to my list? Please do not hesitate to contact me for anything SETAC-AU related.

Below is an update from the (very busy) NSW SETAC-AU members this quarter. Many thanks to all those who submitted...keep it up!

### Update from CSIRO Land and Water

Stuart Simpson (stuart.simpson@csiro.au)

Lisa Golding started at Lucas Heights in February 2012 as an aquatic ecotoxicologist. She is conducting research on the mechanisms of toxicity of ceria nanoparticles to a freshwater alga and the speciation and toxicity of aluminium in seawater. She is aiming to develop a high reliability ANZECC trigger value for Al in seawater as the current value is of low reliability. This month we also welcome Megan Gillmore to the group. Megan is from the University of Wollongong and will be with us for 12 months as she undertakes her year-in-industry placement in ecotoxicology. Monique Binet is currently working with volunteer fellow Karla Virches Soares, in collaboration with colleagues at Macquarie University and Ecotox Services Australasia, assessing the effects of climate-change stressors on early life stages of invertebrates. Monique and Karla are developing and applying flow cytometric methods to assess for cellular health markers of invertebrate sperm. The methods are rapid (5-30 minutes) and Monique aims to apply these rapid methods to investigate the underlying mechanisms of toxicity seen in traditional fertilisation/motility experiments.

Merrin Adams has been co-supervising Charlotte Watson, an honours student from UoW, who has improved methods to assess the chronic toxicity of sediments to marine microalgae. The application of this test to field collected sediments was particularly exciting, and successful. Francesca Gissi has recently become a permanent employee of CSIRO and is currently finishing the last few experiments investigating the acute toxicity of a range of contaminants to the tropical copepod *Acartia sinjiensis* and preparing a paper for publication. In the genomics lab, we continue to explore the possibilities of using gene expression profiles as part of a TIE based approach to identify and prioritize stressors, as Hannah Osborn described in her talk in Brisbane. The trials with algae are wrapping up and we are about to start work with amphipods. As Sharon Hook presented, we are also using gene expression assays to look at the potential impacts of herbicides on fish in the GBR catchments. Prof. Evan Gallagher, of the University of Washington, recently visited the lab to discuss taking a molecular diagnostics based approach towards assessing fish health.

Tom Cresswell recently submitted his PhD and has commenced work at ANSTO, Lucas Heights as a Research Scientist in Stable/Radioecology. Contact Tom for all your aquatic radiotracer needs! Stuart Simpson and David Spadaro will be hosting Dr Maria Jesús Belzunce from the Marine Research Division of AZTI (Spain) for 5 to 7 months from Oct 2012. During her sabbatical, we intend to conduct a comparison of the exposure and response of the benthic bivalve *Tellina deltoidalis* both *in situ* and in static laboratory tests for metal contaminated sediments and utilise the technique of diffuse gradients in thin films (DGT) for assessing *in situ* metal bioavailability in sediments. This project will be in collaboration with Dianne Jolley and co-supervised PhD student, Elvio Amato. From 2012, Stuart Simpson commenced as Chair of the Sediment Advisory Group with SETAC (<http://www.setac.org/group/AGSediment>). Don't forget to check out all the great working groups when you renew your 'profile' on the new SETAC web site.

# Regional Reports

## New South Wales (cont'd)

### Update from Ecotox Services Australia

Chris Doyle (CDoyle@ecotox.com.au)

First of all we would like to thank and congratulate the organisers of the Brisbane conference for delivering such a great event. All of the ESA staff that attended had a fantastic time and it was terrific to catch up with all of our SETAC colleagues again.

Once again we have been keeping busy with our commercial testing activities and continuing our efforts to expand ESA's testing services. Amandine Vincent has been focusing on introducing a number of terrestrial toxicity tests, including an earthworm reproduction test. On the marine side of things, Zoe Fluit has been trying to maintain her sanity while attempting to catch tropical copepods, while Chris Doyle has given himself a much easier organism to catch, the sand dollar *Arachnoides placenta*, with which he is developing a larval development test.

Meanwhile, Anneke Ralph has managed to escape the lab and the Sydney winter altogether and is now enjoying an extended holiday in Europe. The rest of the team (and our hydra cultures), are eagerly awaiting her return!



Close up of a spawning female sand dollar



Close up of a spawning male sand dollar

### Update from UTS

Anne Colville (Anne.Colville@uts.edu.au)

It's been a while since the last report from UTS, and there have been many changes since then. Richard Lim has officially retired from UTS at last, but is still involved with several projects. Richard and Anne Colville have been involved with water sampling for endocrine disruptors for the ARC Linkage project headed by Fred Leusch from Griffith Uni. With all the recent rain, there should now be some excellent data on EDCs in floods. Anne has also been refining her techniques with duckweed, working with UTS engineers to measure the effectiveness of cleanup of herbicide from water. She has also been working with Simon Mitrovic and David van Reyk on biochemical measures of stress in duckweed. Patrick Gregson is just beginning his Honours project with Simon, David and Anne, and will be studying the effects of cyanobacterial toxins on freshwater macrophytes.

Kathryn Korbel recently completed her PhD research on using stygofaunal and microbial communities to assess groundwater health. Emanating from her findings she developed a multimetric tiered framework to assess groundwater health based on land use. Her thesis is currently being examined.



## Regional Reports

### New South Wales (cont'd)

Ben Kefford is continuing his work with salinity, pesticides and risk assessment methods using macroinvertebrates. Rebecca (Bec) Herron has upgraded from a Master's to a PhD and is using rapid tox tests to determine the sensitive of many species of freshwater attached algae to herbicides with the aim to develop a biomonitoring index of herbicide impacts on algae communities. We have been joined by a French interim, Perceval Depresle, looking at whether light intensity or nutrients alter the effect herbicides on attached freshwater algae species. Lloyd Werry joined us from PNG to start a PhD looking at the risk to stream invertebrates in the Snowy Mountains from climate change. Noni Dowsett is continuing her PhD looking doing a marathon preparation of metal samples in water, sediment and sea grass from in Lake Macquarie (NSW). Renee Dowse is writing up papers for her PhD (at RMIT University) on how temporal changes in salinity alter the effect of salinity on selected stream invertebrates.

Aziz Rahman has joined us as a Chancellor's Post Doctoral Research Fellow, and is looking at the biotransformation and detoxification of arsenic in freshwater phytoplankton, and bioavailability and ecotoxicology of arsenic in freshwater food chains. Ben Hogan is working with Aziz on ecotoxicological validation of a couple of arsenic remediation techniques in freshwater.



Richard Lim collecting water samples on the road at Monkerai, NSW

### Update from Environmental Chemistry at the University of Wollongong

Di Jolley (djolley@uow.edu.au)

We have had a very busy first half of 2012. Congratulations to Dr Ann Stavert who has had her PhD accepted on "*In situ* carbon and nitrogen cycling in near-shore estuarine environments", and is working for CSIRO Marine and Atmospheric Research in Melbourne. And Congratulations to Dr William Bennett who has had his PhD accepted on "Development of the diffusive gradients in thin films technique for the measurement of inorganic arsenic speciation in water, and the investigation of arsenic sediment biogeochemistry". Will worked with three supervisors (Peter Teasdale, David Welsh (Griffith Uni) and myself) and still managed to produce a very impressive thesis in less than 4 years! Daniel Ward and Helen Price have hit the hard times, and are both busy writing up their theses.

## Regional Reports

### New South Wales (cont'd)

We have a French research intern from Renne with us until September, Ms Sylvaine Bergeret, and she is working closely with PhD student Cassandra Smith on the molar ratio of intracellular copper and phytochelatin production over time in marine microalgae. This analysis involves massive cell numbers and flexible working hours, and both Cass and Sylvaine have risen to meet the challenge! Elvio Amato (PhD student co-supervised by Stuart Simpson, CSIRO) has completed his first year of research, working on unravelling the relationship between DGT available metals in sediments and metal toxicity to benthic organisms, and is on a well-deserved holiday in his home town of Milan, Italy. We also have several honours students in the group, Jessica Steele is optimising a technique to measure the effect of copper exposure on the ratio of oxidised to reduced glutathione in marine algal cells, a project that has proven a little tricky! Chris Vardanega (based at CSIRO with Stuart Simpson and Chad Jarolimek) is investigating metal speciation dynamics in neutralised acid sulfate soil runoff. So lots of exciting research and data on its way, so if any industry people out there want to share some funding to buy into this dynamic research group, please give me a call!

#### Update from the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage

Dan Ward (Daniel.Ward@environment.nsw.gov.au)

There have been a lot of changes recently at OEH. John Chapman retired at the end of June and Therese Manning resigned from her position to take up a new position as an environmental consultant. We wish them all the best for the future. John is likely to come back in a couple of months to be an Honorary Fellow, without the pressures of managing the Ecotox section.

It has been a busy year in the labs. Ron Patra, Ramasamy Sunderam, Fleur Pablo, Amanda Rose and Moreno Julli have been busy conducting routine and some not-so-routine toxicity testing for the EPA. Some of them also continue to provide expert statements for pollution incidents, while NATA re-accreditation seems to come around before you have time to blink.

Fleur, Amanda and Daniel Ward (who joined the team in April 2012) have been working hard on assessing the toxicity of AWT products used as a soil amendment in mine rehabilitation and agriculture. They have been developing test methods with plants, worms, bacteria and springtails to investigate potential environmental harm resulting from its use. Sunderam and Ron also contributed to the project, and John had been a valuable adviser to the team and we hope he'll continue to advise when he comes back as an Honorary Fellow.

Ross Hyne and Paco Sanchez-Bayo have recently completed writing a report and a manuscript for the Goulburn-Murray Water funded project of developing a passive sampling device for the herbicides amitrole and glyphosate. Pann Chung is nearing completion of her laboratory studies investigating the population genetics of the amphipod *Melita plumulosa* in response to exposure to contaminants before writing her PhD thesis. Sri Muralidharan (Macquarie University PhD student) has recently resumed her studies investigating the proteomic response of *Melita plumulosa* to low concentrations of zinc.



# *Regional Reports*

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## *New South Wales (cont'd)*

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### **Update from WorleyParsons**

Megan Andrew-Priestley (Megan.Priestley@worleyparsons.com)

Sue Codi-King and myself (Megan Andrew-Priestley) joined WorleyParsons as marine scientists in late 2011 and have since been busy doing consultancy work on several projects which have involved some exciting ecotoxicology and contaminant monitoring components. Some recent projects include:

- Undertaking a survey of pesticide usage and retail within drinking waters catchments, assessing environmental fate and transport of a broad suite of pesticides and re-developing a pesticide monitoring program.
- A project that involves monitoring of ocean outfalls on the east coast of Australia. The monitoring includes effluent direct toxicity assessments, water quality monitoring and contaminant monitoring in effluents, sediments and water using biomonitors.

Assessing baseline water quality parameters for a site proposed for dredge spoil disposal.

We welcome any queries regarding our capabilities on any potential new projects.

### **Update from Macquarie University**

Grant Hose (Grant.Hose@mq.edu.au)

Antarctic Ecotox is growing at Macquarie. We are currently on the lookout for a new PhD student to work on soil contamination issues at Macquarie Island and Casey Station with colleagues at the AAD, UNSW and Uni of Saskatchewan. Contact Grant Hose (Grant.Hose@mq.edu.au) if interested. Meanwhile, new PhD Student Konstantinos Kotzakoulakis has begun working with Simon George and Grant at Macquarie on the ecological risks associated with the use of fuels in Antarctica.

Steph Gardham has been working busily in the CSIRO metagenomics lab with Anthony Chariton to analyse the sediments from her mesocosm experiment. Fresh from the Brisbane SETAC conference, Steph is preparing to head over to SETAC Nth America in Long Beach. Lois Oulton has also been spending time at Lucas Heights testing the toxicity of runoff entering and leaving artificial wetlands. After a wet summer, the current dry spell is playing havoc with Lois' thesis plans. We have recently instigated lab rain dance sessions to help her out.. but we continue to wait for rain.

Alex Michie is currently developing new tests for groundwater beasties, including the culture of groundwater rotifers and protists for toxicity testing. Josie Lategan is also continuing her work on groundwater microbial responses to toxicants and refining her laboratory test methods. Grant continues to work on tox testing with groundwater invertebrates and writing up the swag of data now laying idle on his computer. Although not directly toxic, he is working on the effects of drying and water table drawdown on groundwater biota.

Along with colleagues at Uni of Wollongong, Flinders and the Plague Locust Commission, Grant is also looking at the toxicity of pesticide to non-target invertebrates and reptiles in arid grasslands. With heaps of exciting fieldwork planned for this project, he is on the lookout for willing volunteers!

**Tom Cresswell** ([cresswell.t@gmail.com](mailto:cresswell.t@gmail.com))

New South Wales Regional Representative



There's been plenty of activity in Victoria since our last update. Firstly, a number of staff and students from RMIT University, Deakin University, University of Melbourne (CAPIM) and the Department of Primary Industries presented their research at the recent SETAC AU conference in Brisbane. All reports are that it was an excellent conference that has stimulated much thought for new research ideas and applications. Over at RMIT, Tom Cresswell has recently submitted his PhD thesis on metal bioaccumulation in crustaceans, while at CAPIM Rhianna Boyle has completed her Master's degree on the effects of sediment-bound synthetic pyrethroids on chironomid growth and emergence. Congratulations to both! CAPIM also has a new PhD student, Lee Engelstad who will be working with Sara Long amongst others to develop new tests with freshwater and estuarine invertebrates to measure mixture toxicity.

Vin Pettigrove and Graeme Allinson have been racking up plenty of frequent flyer points with visits to international collaborator organisations in various places including Europe, Japan and China. They recently met with staff from the Institute of Applied Ecology, Chinese Academy of Sciences and are working on developing collaborative linkages. Graeme and Mayumi Allinson and Kathryn Hassell will also be heading to the upcoming SETAC Asia Pacific Conference in Kumamoto (Japan). Graeme and Mayumi are chairing a session: "passive sampling in environmental monitoring" and Kath will give a presentation on the preliminary findings from a collaborative project with scientists from Nagasaki University.

In other news, Simon Sharp has recently completed the first round of sediment monitoring in Westernport Bay. This is a newly established program to compliment the other components of the large Westernport Bay study that was recently commissioned by the Victorian Government and is being overseen by Mick Keough (who also heads up the CAPIM Estuaries Program).

### **ToxConsult Pty Ltd**

Tarah Hagen ([tarahhagen@toxconsult.com.au](mailto:tarahhagen@toxconsult.com.au))

There's a new kid on the block!

Together with Dr Roger Drew, a national and international well known toxicologist with American Board of Toxicology certification, I have recently set up a new toxicology consultancy company based in Melbourne but servicing all of Australia and New Zealand.

By providing expert opinion based on sound science our mission is to assist a variety of industries and government to defensibly manage the risk posed by chemicals in the environment. Our work primarily involves evaluating the potential for chemical exposures to affect human and environmental health and welfare. We've officially been in business since June 1<sup>st</sup> 2012, and so far everything is going very well.

We offer a range of services including:

- Advice on the implications of chemical exposure to public and worker health.
- Provision of reliable and defensible litigation support using scientifically accepted and epidemiologically proven principles for data interpretation.
- Preparing toxicological chemical assessments and reviews.
- Conducting health based risk assessments for air, water and food contamination (e.g. industrial emissions, discharges and spills).
- Conducting ecological risk assessments and providing other ecotoxicology consulting services:
  - *De novo* derivation of chemical-specific environmental guidelines.

# *Regional Reports*

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## *Victoria (Cont'd)*

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- Acquiring and collating hazard and effects data for a range of chemical stressors to the environment.
- Advising on, and coordinating ecotoxicity testing with subconsultant laboratories.
- Deriving environmental hazard classifications, for example for sparingly soluble mineral concentrates.

More information on the types of projects we have been involved in, as well as staff profiles and our contact details can be found on the ToxConsult website: [www.toxconsult.com.au](http://www.toxconsult.com.au)

### **RMIT Ecotoxicology Group**

Dayanthi Nugegoda ([dayanthi.nugegoda@rmit.edu.au](mailto:dayanthi.nugegoda@rmit.edu.au))

The RMIT Ecotoxicology group feels somewhat depleted with the departure of a number of colleagues:

- Shanthanagouda Admane (Gouda) who moved to Hongkong on a postdoctoral fellowship with A/Prof Doris Au at the City University of Hongkong.
- Ryan Betson also completed his Honours project evaluating bioremediation of trace metal contaminated soils using microcosms.
- Tom Cresswell submitted his PhD and began his employment at ANSTO and though he was never based in our lab in Melbourne, we miss him too!
- Kavi Chinnathamby has completed her labwork and submitted her first paper for review.

Nevertheless, other work is continuing:

- Ana Miranda is toiling on with her project and wishing her fish would breed (if anyone knows how to induce flat-headed gudgeons to breed please do contact Ana!).
- Roocha Shah is working through the mysteries of dot blots and ELISAs. Both Ana and Roocha presented posters at SETAC AU in Brisbane and enjoyed the conference.
- Vu is analysing data from his soil microcosm experiments and preparing to write his thesis.
- Rob Stark has been working on an interesting Honours project with Golam Kibria of Goulburn-Murray Water using Artificial Mussels and live mussels to monitor trace metals.
- Liliana has been evaluating the tolerance of duckweed to salinity stress.
- Dayanthi completed her globetrotting activities, attending the SETAC World Congress in Berlin followed by a visit to the University of Aveiro in Portugal with Ana and then presented an invited lecture at the Natural History Museum in Paris. She also had the opportunity to visit the ecotoxicology company "Watchfrog" to see the "glow in the dark tadpoles". After SETAC AU Brisbane and a short visit to Fred and Phil on the Gold Coast on their ARC grant (timed to avoid a few days of the Melbourne winter), she is now completely immersed in teaching Ecotoxicology and other courses on-campus and via Open Universities Australia.

**Kathryn Hassell** ([khassell@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:khassell@unimelb.edu.au))

Victoria Regional Representative



# *Student Representatives Report*

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This is the last student report from the 2011 -2012 student reps: Tom, Bianca, and Tristan and we would like to congratulate and introduce the 2012-2013 representative: Phil Scott.

For this installment of the Transitional Pathways feature we have Phil Emnet from the University of Canterbury

In addition we have student reports from the SETAC World Conference in Berlin earlier this year, and from SETAC-AU Brisbane conference, as well as some advice for writing your thesis.

## **SETAC Berlin World Congress May 20-24<sup>th</sup> 2012- A Students Perspective....**

Bianca Sfiligoj (bianca.sfiligoj@aad.gov.au)

It was a cold, miserable day in Hobart as I boarded my flight; destination, Berlin! Having kept an eye on the weather, I was not so optimistic, but after the long haul flight I arrived in the amazing German city and was welcomed by endless sunshine! What a way start the conference trip!

With the opening ceremony on the Sunday night at the Estrel conference centre, many of the Australian delegates gathered together over some traditional German beer and delicious fair to chat about their trip to the sunny side of the world and discuss the week ahead.

And what a week it would be! With 10 sessions running in parallel over the four days as well as over 400 posters displayed each day, there was an overwhelming wealth of cutting edge science to see. Thank goodness for the conference smart phone App! Included in those presentations were a number of outstanding talks and posters from our own student delegates! With some taking the stage in terrifyingly large rooms and others spreading the word about their work from the poster hall floor, the presentations were a huge success! It was great to see so many Australian students promoting their research at this world congress platform and I'm sure the international SETAC family were impressed with our efforts. Congratulations to all!

As usual, the conference is not all business and no play and we were lucky enough to have a fantastic Student Party organised by the Berlin SETAC social committee. A beach party and bbq was arranged right on the river Spree and some older "students" also joined the party with many dancing the night away!

After four days of non-stop platform presentations and posters the Aussie contingent gathered once again with some new international friends to enjoy a final, farewell supper with dunkel hefferweizen. From the banks of the river Spree we recapped the fantastic week that was the Berlin SETAC world congress with many discussing future collaborations and plans of going to Glasgow in 2013.

## **A student report from SETAC Australasia Brisbane 2012 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> July 2012**

Phil Scott (philip.scott@griffithuni.edu.au)

Shortly after the organizing committee and group of volunteer students finished prepping the Terrace room at the beautiful University of Queensland St Lucia campus, delegates began to arrive for the registration and welcome reception. As the room filled and people spilled out onto the balcony I saw many familiar faces and took the opportunity to chat with colleagues, friends and delegates from across the world. Many of the Aussie students I had gotten to know at SETAC Berlin were there and it was great to catch up, closer to home. It reminded me how much of a close-knit SETAC community we have here in Australia.

# *Student Representatives Report*

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With the theme of "Navigating through extreme weather events in a changing environment", the first day of presentations started off with a session on "Impact of extreme weather events", among four others throughout the morning, and a dedicated afternoon poster session. In total, there were 14 sessions over the three day conference, with three sessions running in parallel. With the session rooms in close proximity it was easy to hop from room to room, as long as you didn't get caught up in the hall chatting with a colleague. I learned a great deal from the conference and it certainly left me with lots to digest. The conference had a stellar turn out with approximately 130 platform presentations and 50 poster presentations. Of these, we had great student representation with 50 student presentations. As Dianne Jolley mentioned in the closing ceremonies, these were all of a very high calibre, and I think people were most impressed.

Complementing the excellent academic programme was the (a student might argue) equally important social programme. After the AGM, many delegates met up for the pub crawl treasure hunt, which was heaps of fun. We watched the Maroons take the Blues in the final game of the State of Origin, which meant celebratory drinks for some, condoling drinks for others, and for those like me, a couple of drinks due to rather neutral feelings.

Despite the late night for many, we had a great turn out the student breakfast early the next day where we had the opportunity to chat one-on-one with the keynote presenters, and gain insight from Dr Ross Smith and Prof Jenny Webster-Brown regarding their career choices in consultancy and academia, respectively, and how to navigate from one to the other. Following this was the conference dinner at Customs House, located on the Brisbane River. The location, food and drink were superb, and the entertainment got everyone up on the dance floor! I've never seen a group of scientists leave their seats so quickly to bust-a-move.

In chatting with people at the Red Room after the closing ceremonies, it seemed as though the conference was a great success and people had a great time. I'm looking forward to attending SETAC Australasia in Melbourne next year!

## **Writing-up: Some advice on writing the thesis**

Tristan Stringer ([tristanjstringer@gmail.com](mailto:tristanjstringer@gmail.com))

One of the hardest aspects of doing a post-graduate degree is the write up. The research aspect, while challenging, is why most of us decide to do a post grad degree. This often means that the writing of the thesis and publishing of papers is something that is left to do later or put off. The number one tip I was given, (and that I was not the best at following) is to write!

First the best thing to do is to know when you write the best: morning, afternoon, evening and then decide on one day of the week that you will not have distractions (i.e. not Friday) and then make it a part of your weekly schedule. Then on that day write. Write anything, the new method that you tried, summary of the papers that you read that week, start interpreting your results. The more things that you have written down before you start to put together a paper or chapter the easier it will be.

Get feedback from your advisors. Regularly have your advisors review your writing. They know scientific writing and it is a skill that is learned over time. Use them not only for direction on your project but use their comments on your writing to make you a better scientific writer.

If you are good about writing regularly you will be able to publish papers as you go. This will make your life much easier when you go to submit your thesis. Having a chapter already peer reviewed will take a lot of pressure and scrutiny off your thesis from the reviewers.

It will be inevitable that the day will come that you have a lot of writing to finish the thesis. This can be a very challenging time often with time pressure. It may seem illogical but it will not help

# *Student Representatives Report*

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to sit in front of your computer all day and night and try to write. The best thing to do goes back to knowing when you write the best and how to set yourself to get the best results when you are in front of the computer. It will vary for everyone and when you get going don't stop.

Know when to cut your losses. If you are stuck on how to tie your thoughts together, or are just having trouble getting words on paper, leave it and take a break. Go have a coffee with a friend, go for a run, or anything that is not related to your research and come back to it later with a clearer mind.

Don't let your thesis take over your life. You need to maintain balance in your life, make sure that you spend time with friends and family. Stay active; it is amazing how physical activity can help relieve stress and clear your mind.

And finally, thank the people that support you; your husband, wife, boyfriend, girlfriend, parents, siblings, friends... If you do not have the support from them while doing something crazy like a PhD then you will not get through it!

For additional tips (and where a few of these ones came from) see The Thesis Whisperer ([thesiswhisperer.com](http://thesiswhisperer.com)) it is packed with useful information about getting through your PhD.

Best of luck!

## **Students: Get your thesis mentioned in Endpoint**

Phil Scott ([philip.scott@griffithuni.edu.au](mailto:philip.scott@griffithuni.edu.au))

After you have written up your thesis - what then? Another research project, a job; but how do you spread the word about what you have been doing? Who is going to read about you or your project? Don't worry! Here is the answer to your dilemma: have a profile of yourself and your thesis project published in Endpoint so the whole of SETAC AU knows what you are doing.

We are asking all current students (and supervisors) who are members of SETAC AU to send in the details of their thesis so that it can be used in a future issue of Endpoint as a student profile. The details required will be:

- Your name
- Photo or your work and/or yourself (optional)
- Thesis title
- Degree
- Supervisor/s
- Institution
- Email address
- Expected completion date
- Summary of yourself and your project.

For ideas on what you can include and formats to use take a look at past issues of Endpoint (<http://ww2.setac.org/sapau/publications.html#endpoint>). When you have it together send your details to Phil Scott (see my address above) and it will be forwarded onto Endpoint for publishing in a future issue.

**Bianca Sfiligoj** ([bianca.sfiligoj@aad.gov.au](mailto:bianca.sfiligoj@aad.gov.au)), **Tristan Stringer** ([tristanjstringer@gmail.com](mailto:tristanjstringer@gmail.com)) and **Tom Cresswell** ([Tom.cresswell@csiro.au](mailto:Tom.cresswell@csiro.au))

Student Representatives



**Name:** Phil Emnet

**Institutions:** University of Canterbury

**Degree:** Doctor of Philosophy

**Supervisors:** Dr Sally Gaw, Dr Grant Northcott, Professor Bryan Storey, Professor Bill Davison, Professor Ian Shaw

**Estimated time of completion:** April 2013

**Thesis title:** Presence, fate, and behaviour of emerging micropollutants in the New Zealand and Antarctic coastal environment

### How did you get involved in environmental chemistry research?

From a young age onwards I was very interested in science and nature, and definitely was the kid who would poke ant nests in the forest. As an undergraduate I enjoyed studying all areas of chemistry and could have pictured myself going into one of many different routes of postgrad study, especially biochemistry. However environmental chemistry ranked highest on the interesting scale because it explained many of the natural processes we see around each other every day. The fact that I'm also quite an analytical thinker, and the prospect of not only sitting in the lab but to also to get to conduct fieldwork helped a lot. Plus job prospects for environmental and analytical chemists are always good because others always want to know what is in their soils, waters, and food stuffs.

### What led you to your Ph.D. project and what's the importance of your work?

After I completed my Honours year at the University of Canterbury in 2008 I was accepted into the Postgraduate Certificate in Antarctic Studies (PCAS) summer school program. It is a three month course run through Gateway Antarctica, Canterbury's Antarctic research department, designed to immerse students into all areas of Antarctica, including science, politics, tourism, environmental protection, and everything in between. Apart from a lot of lectures and assignments it also includes a two week trip to Antarctica. It was therefore a course I have had my eye on ever since I first enrolled as a student in Canterbury. After completing the course it was only natural that I wanted to continue down the Antarctic pathway for my PhD, and applied for a scholarship which sponsored the required fieldwork for the following season.

Given my background it was obvious that the project should be focused on the environmental monitoring of pollutants, which was something Antarctica New Zealand is very keen on, but giv-



en budget restraints isn't happening as extensively as they would like. The hot topic at the time was, and still is, endocrine disrupting chemicals and micropollutants, which is something no one had done in the Antarctic until this point, and which has only been carried out to a limited extent in New Zealand. The importance of this work therefore was to show that many of these chemicals are present in the Antarctic environment, and to supply further data on the New Zealand environment as well. In addition to this was the fact that we could study two vastly different environments using the same methodology, which will help tremendously in trying to determine what environmental factors might help control the distribution and fate of micropollutants.

### What experimental work have you undertaken so far?

Because we were a new research group we first had to get a GC-MS method up and running to analyse for the range of compounds we had in mind. Luckily for us we had another PhD student, Lisa Graham, who had a lot of previous experience with gas chromatography, do most of this aspect of the method development, and teach us along the way! In the meantime I collected a lot of field samples to be analysed at a later stage, and also had to validate the solid phase extraction method we were going to use. Unfortunately the September 2010 and February 2011 earthquakes put a spanner in the works. I lost most of the samples I had collected until that point, and it wasn't feasible to repeat most of it. When I became an earthquake refugee I was able to conduct some photolysis experiments at CSIRO in Adelaide investigating the effects that both light intensity and temperature have on the photo degradation of micropollutants, the paper of which is currently under review. Since then I have begun an extensive sur-

## *EndPoint Feature*

### *Student Profile—Phil Emnet (cont'd)*

vey of the sewage effluents and ocean waters in Lyttelton Harbour and now have data coming out of my ears.

#### **Where to from here with your work?**

We were successful in securing an additional field season in Antarctica to follow up on the results from the first field trip. I am currently getting all my ducks in a row for that, and the plan is to stay for 4 – 5 weeks over November and December 2012. I also still need to finish the Lyttelton Harbour study, which I hope will be complete by January 2013. After that I have to finish analysing all my samples, collate the data, and finish writing up my thesis! Luckily I already have a couple of chapters pretty much finished. I have also begun on a couple of others, but won't be able to finish those until all my fieldwork and data analysis is complete.

#### **What are your plans for the future?**

I'm adamantly aiming to submit by April 2013. Everything that hasn't been turned into a paper by then will be written up as I wait for the examiner reports. I'm also starting to keep my ears and eyes open for any jobs/post-docs which may become available in the near-ish future. I think its time for my stint in New Zealand to come to an end, so heading overseas to Australia and/or further abroad would suit me quite well.

Phil Emnet

([phil.emnet@pg.canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:phil.emnet@pg.canterbury.ac.nz))



Satellite image of Antarctica (source: Geology.com)

# PhD Opportunity

## Macquarie University

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A full-time PhD scholarship is available in Biological Sciences at Macquarie University associated with an Australian Antarctic Division Grant 4135.

**Project Name:** Residual toxicity and risk assessment of petroleum hydrocarbons in Antarctic and sub-Antarctic soils.

**Project Description:** Fuel contamination poses significant environmental risk in cold regions. Key to appropriate cleaning up and remediation practices of contaminated sites in cold regions is an understanding of how petroleum products degrade over time to their less toxic residual products. This study will evaluate the toxicity of fuels in soils as they degrade with a focus on areas currently undergoing bioremediation at Macquarie Island & Casey Station, Antarctica. The project will identify safe levels of contamination where no environmental risk remains & will provide rigorous, scientifically-based targets for the clean-up of contaminated sites in Antarctic & subantarctic regions.



This project is a collaboration between Macquarie University, UNSW, the University of Saskatchewan and the Australian Antarctic Division. The project will require the candidate to spend time on Macquarie Island to establish long term field experiments and to undertake laboratory research at the AAD in Hobart, Macquarie University and UNSW.

In addition to a First Class Honours degree (or equivalent), applicants should have experience in any of the following areas: invertebrate community ecology, soil contamination, ecotoxicology, molecular analysis.

Prospective applicants should, in the first instance, submit a cover letter detailing relevant experience, a CV and an academic transcript to the principal supervisor: Dr Grant Hose, email: [grant.hose@mq.edu.au](mailto:grant.hose@mq.edu.au) telephone: +61 2 9850-6296

The 2012 MQRES full-time stipend rate is \$23,728 pa tax exempt for 3.5 years.

Applicants will need to complete a candidature/ scholarship application form and arrange for two academic referee reports to be submitted to the Higher Degree Research Office. Refer to: [http://www.hdr.mq.edu.au/information\\_about/applications](http://www.hdr.mq.edu.au/information_about/applications) for further application instructions. Macquarie University will advise the successful applicant of entitlements at the time of scholarship offer. Please quote the allocation number on your application.

For further information contact Dr Grant Hose ([Grant.Hose@mq.edu.au](mailto:Grant.Hose@mq.edu.au)) or Dr Cath King ([Cath.King@aad.gov.au](mailto:Cath.King@aad.gov.au)).





The first issue of the *Australasian Bulletin of Ecotoxicology and Environmental Chemistry* is taking shape. It will be a collection of proceedings articles presented at the Salinity Session of the SETAC AU conference in Brisbane.

I had previously asked the membership for ideas for a theme for the second issue, and at the AGM in Brisbane, I proposed an issue dedicated to methods in ecotoxicology and environmental chemistry. Over the next couple of days I had numerous expressions of interest for submissions to the issue, which more or less confirmed that this should be the theme for Volume 2. Unfortunately most of them were communicated to me during the pub-crawl, and I must admit I am having trouble remembering who they were. So, this is the official call for submissions.

Volume Two of the *Australasian Bulletin of Ecotoxicology and Environmental Chemistry* will be titled:

New Methods in Ecotoxicology and Environmental Chemistry in Australasia (or something like that). This is how the submission process will work. I ask all contributors to provide, as usual, a manuscript detailing the method, and also provide the name (s) of at least one reviewer to assess the manuscript for clarity and any bugs in the method. Needless to say, that reviewer should be an expert in the field.

If any one of the membership is interested in taking on the co-editorship for the issue, then I (Editor) and Anne Colville (Associate Editor) will appreciate the help.

Also, I am now looking for ideas for a theme for the third issue.....

**Reinier Mann** ([reinier.mann@uts.edu.au](mailto:reinier.mann@uts.edu.au))

Editor – ABEEC

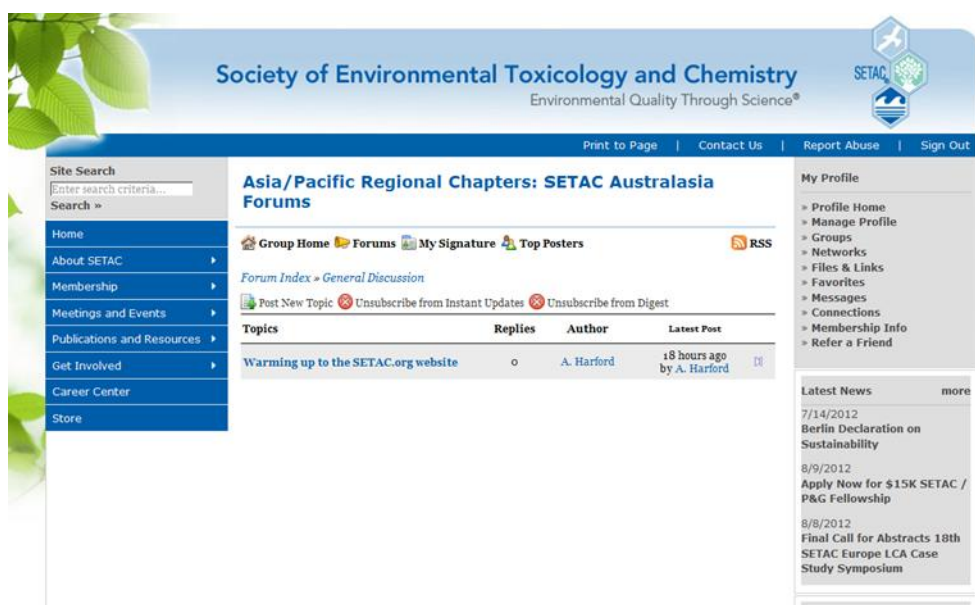


# Strategic Directions Report

I've found that the SETAC-AU society has been a stimulating and entertaining group of professionals to be involved with and I hope that the activities we participate in today will provide the foundations and inspiration for many generations to come. We are, a little sadly, witnessing an evolution in the workforce as the baby-boomers move into much-deserved retirement and leave the professional world in the hands of the X and Y generations. This evolution is also coinciding with new economic challenges that are likely to increase pressure on our time and budgets. Recently, these conditions were described in an article as "a perfect storm" that will ultimately impact on the operation of professional societies and make the coming years more challenging <http://www.smsonline.net.au/pages/membership-is-dead.html>.

It was the circulation of this thought-provoking article by Di Jolley, which has motivated SETAC-AU to develop a new council role of Strategic Directors officer. The Terms of Reference of this new role will be to; 1) Investigate and report on the current status of SETAC-AU; 2) Identify membership benefits that are desired by members and potential members; 3) Generate ideas concerning the delivery of desired benefits and; 4) Aid in the implementation of new membership benefits.

Accordingly, this initiative is about you - the SETAC-AU members - what you want and how we can deliver benefits you desire. Therefore we need your buy-in and active participation in setting the future course of SETAC-AU. I'd like to hear your opinions on what you like and what you would like more of from your society. In order to do this I'd like to try establishing some new lines of communication and the commissioning of new SETAC.org website offers a perfect opportunity and will be a great tool for SETAC members. For this reason, I'm encouraging all members to log into the [SETAC.org](http://SETAC.org) website and subscribe to the SETAC-AU forum updates (see picture below). Also, while you're there, please don't be shy and post a quick reply to my topic "Warming up to the SETAC-AU website". If you're a student I'd also encourage you to join the [Facebook group for SETAC-AU students](#) if you haven't already. There is also the main [SETAC-AU Facebook](#) page with some great snaps of the Brisbane conference and anything I do on the SETAC-AU website I'll announce on the Facebook pages.



Please subscribe to SETAC-AU discussion forums

**Andrew Harford** ([Andrew.Harford@environment.gov.au](mailto:Andrew.Harford@environment.gov.au))

Strategic Directions Officer



# Save the Date!

*SETAC AU 2013 Conference:*  
*"Multidisciplinary approaches to managing environmental pollution"*  
1-3 October, 2013  
Melbourne, Australia

Preparations are now well underway for next year's SETAC AU conference, to be held at the University of Melbourne in early October 2013. This conference aims to bring together ecotoxicologists and environmental chemists in a forum that will showcase how scientists from several disciplines can work together to provide "big picture" answers to government and policy makers on environmental pollution problems.

A list of proposed conference sessions, pre-conference workshops and invited speakers will be available soon.

Looking forward to seeing you all in Melbourne next year!

Vin Pettigrove

SETAC AU Conference Chair



## *Conference Report*

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The second SETAC Australasia Conference was held from the 4th to the 6th of July 2012 at the St Lucia campus of the University of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia.



The conference organising committee: from left to right: Phil Scott (student programme; Griffith University), Prof Beate Escher (co-chair; Entox - The University of Queensland), Dr Ross Smith (sponsorship; Hydrobiology), Dr Frederic Leusch (chair; Griffith University), Dr Maud Achard (venue and catering; The University of Queensland), Dr Dianne Jolley (membership and student awards; University of Wollongong), Dr Scott Wilson (social events and student awards; Central Queensland University), Dr Reinier Mann (logistics; Queensland Government), Erik Prochazka (secretary; Griffith University). Missing are Dr Munro Mortimer (treasurer; Entox - The University of Queensland) and David Everett (social events; Queensland Government).

The theme of the conference this year was "navigating through extreme weather events in a changing environment", as a sign of respect to creatures both big and small who suffered from the intense drought and floods that have shaken Australia in recent years.

The conference was opened by Uncle Des Sandy, traditional Elder of the Yuggera People. His warm welcome to country was followed by a welcome speech by Prof Alan Lawson, the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Research at the University of Queensland.

# Conference Report

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Uncle Des Sandy, traditional Elder of the Yuggera People, in the welcome to country.

A very special opening keynote was then introduced by Dr John Chapman, as Dr Robert Letcher (Environment Canada) gave the inaugural Tony Roach Memorial Keynote Address in memory of our good friend and colleague who tragically passed away recently. Dr Letcher presented his recent research and thoughts on "emerging contaminants and the influence of biotransformation and degradation on bioaccumulation, fate and effects in model wildlife and fish".



Award presentation at the end of the Tony Roach Memorial Keynote Address. From left to right: Dr John Chapman (NSW Government), Dr Robert Letcher (Environment Canada) and Dr Frederic Leusch (Griffith University).

Thereafter followed a smorgasbord of great presentations on the impact of extreme weather events, metals, passive sampling, environmental impacts of coal seam gas, and statistics and computational techniques. The tea breaks and lunches - in a marquee outside on the grass - were highly commended by the delegates, who thoroughly enjoyed both the food and being out in the Queensland sun. The poster presentation, which wrapped up the day, was a great success with fantastic views of the sunset on the heritage-listed UQ library building.

# Conference Report

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The heritage-listed UQ Library building.

The evening provided no rest for the wicked however, with a pub crawl in a city that was celebrating a rugby victory - the Queensland Reds defeating the New South Wales Blues in the State-of-Origin competition for a 7<sup>th</sup> consecutive year. The delegates took the good mood of the locals fully on board as another reason to celebrate!

The second day started quite gently, with the student breakfast. Dr Ross Smith (Hydrobiology) gave the students his take on "how to get a career in the industry / consulting world", while Prof Jenny Webster-Brown gave her insights into "how to get a career in academia".



Dr Ross Smith (Hydrobiology) at the student breakfast.

Prof Martin Holmstrup (Aarhus University, Denmark) then opened the proceedings on the second day with his very elegant keynote presentation on "interactions between natural stressors and chemicals", and set the tone for another great day of presentations covering environmental monitoring, risk assessment and environmental guidelines, mixtures and multiple stressors, and ET&C in extreme environments.



# *Conference Report*

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Dr Martin Holmstrup (right) and Prof Beate Escher (left).

After a brief recess, the delegates converged on Customs House on the Brisbane River for the conference dinner. After reviewing the photos from the pub crawl, the awards went flying (amongst others: the "Bring on Global Warming award" for Martin Holmstrup, the "Right Place at the Wrong Time" award for Sally Gaw and the "St Leo's Award for All Night Partying" for Evan Gallagher).



Conference dinner at Customs House.

The historic surroundings, delicious food and convivial atmosphere (and probably also the wine) meant that the delegates were more than ready to rip the dance floor once the band started playing!



## Conference Report

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Conference dinner at Customs House.

After a quick morning coffee (courtesy of Merlo Coffee, who generously donated 2-for-1 coupons to all delegates), the third keynote address was presented by Prof Jenny Webster-Brown (University of Canterbury and Lincoln University, New Zealand) on "environmental chemistry in the freezer: Antarctic meltwaters and their ability to support life". Whether a testament to the dedication of our delegates or (most likely!) the knowledge that Jenny's presentation could not be missed, most of the delegates were in attendance - although many were pretty quiet until the morning coffee break!



Prof Jenny Webster-Brown (right) and Prof Beate Escher (left).

The final day wrapped up with presentations on micropollutants and emerging contaminants, water quality, salinity, soil and sediments, and biomarkers and biosensors. At the closing ceremony, several more awards were handed out, including Best Student Poster to Bhatia Harpreet and Best Student Research Seminar to Sharon Grant.

# Conference Report

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Best Student Poster recipient Bhatia Harpreet (left) and Dr Frederic Leusch (right).

Dr Maud Achard (the only member on the conference organising committee who was not a SETAC member) was also awarded an honorary SETAC membership in recognition of her contribution to the conference.



Our newest SETAC member Dr Maud Achard (left) and Prof Beate Escher (right).

The post-conference drinks at the Red Room on the UQ campus provided a great way to wrap up the Brisbane conference and announce the next conference: September 2013 in Melbourne.

We would like to thank the conference sponsors Vision Environment, CAPIM, Hydrobiology, Ecotox Services Australasia, Advanced Analytical, and the Smart Water Research Centre. The conference was organised by SETAC Australasia, SETAC, The University of Queensland, Griffith University and Entox. To find out more about this conference or view the book of abstract, please head to the conference website at <http://www.setac.org/sapau/brisbane2012>.

**Fred Leusch** (f.leusch@griffith.edu.au)

on behalf of the Brisbane 2012 organising committee

# Consider Membership

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Have you considered affiliate or sustaining membership or do you know an organisation that should? Affiliate memberships are suitable for not-for-profit organisations or academic institutions and sustaining memberships are suitable for for-profit organisations, government agencies, or individuals. They are cost effective means of covering membership and conference registrations as well as other benefits. Here are the details below:

## **SETAC-AU Sustaining Member**

For-profit group, government agency or individual

### **AUD1650 GST inc**

2 free registrations or 4 free student registrations or 1 full and 2 student registrations

Meeting signage and program

Meeting receptions free

Membership Directory access

Journal -Hardcopy & online

Access to online newsletter

Annual acknowledgement in journals (SETAC AU publication)

Free advertising

Free Job adverts online

Listing on SETAC AU web page

Acknowledgment for other assistance such as student grants etc.

Certificate

## **SETAC -AU Affiliate Member**

Non-profit group or academic institution

### **AUD880 GST inc**

1 free registration or 2 free student registrations

Meeting signage and program

Meeting receptions free

Membership Directory access

Journal –online

Access to online newsletter

Annual acknowledgement in journals (SETAC AU publication)

Free advertising

Free Job adverts online

Listing on SETAC AU web page

Acknowledgment for other assistance such as student grants etc.

To follow up with these membership options please call me or email me on 0266203250 or [amanda.reichelt-brushett@scu.edu.au](mailto:amanda.reichelt-brushett@scu.edu.au) and also pass this information on to anyone or any organisation you think might be interested. Remember we now represent ecotoxicology and environmental chemistry.

**Amanda Reichelt-Brushett** ([areichel@scu.edu.au](mailto:areichel@scu.edu.au))

Sustaining Membership Officer

## **1. Science meets Parliament 2012**

Thank you all for your overwhelmingly positive response to Science meets Parliament 2012. We have a record number of delegates and parliamentarians attending this year, and a terrific program.

We are particularly delighted that Prime Minister Gillard will be addressing delegates this year.

## **2. Geek the Vote campaign**

This year we have asked the wider community to **pledge to help get a copy of the Geek Manifesto on every federal politician's desk by 17 September**

*Science & Technology Australia* (and many of our friends in the science sector) were reading '[The Geek Manifesto](#)' and think it is time every MP reads it too. Why? Because even though politicians aren't obliged to make every decision according to the available scientific evidence and nothing else, they definitely should make sure they take scientific advice on issues when it is relevant –and let's be honest there are few public policy issues where it's not.

We would like to send 226 copies of the Geek Manifesto to Federal Parliament – that's one copy for every politician in the House.

We are half way there but time is running out – **will you and others in your network pledge to buy one copy before 17 September when our 200 scientists go to Canberra to deliver them during Science meets Parliament?**

**Deadline to pledge: 17 September 2012. Cost per copy: \$35 (incl GST).**

**Go to [www.sta.org.au](http://www.sta.org.au) now to take the pledge and please ask your friends to do the same.**

## **3. Inspiring Australia Survey**

The Inspiring Australia team from the Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education (DIISRTE) is seeking feedback on the Australian science engagement scene and would like your help.

Please find below a link to a five-minute survey which provides an opportunity for you to let us know your thoughts.

[Inspiring Australia Survey 2012](#)

The survey closes **30 September 2012**.

## **4. Recent reports regarding Federal Government grants**

You and some of the members of your societies may be concerned about reports indicating a "funding freeze" on federal government grants. Some have speculated that this freeze may apply to ARC and NHMRC grants.

Indeed there have been reported comments and concerns from organisations which operate in the science sector and by the Opposition to indicate that this may be or is the case.

I wish to provide an update on what is known at the present time following my discussions with senior officials in Canberra. The Department of Finance has been asked to undertake a review of all grants distributed across portfolios so that a careful assessment can be made about how



much money is being expended, where it is being distributed, and what might be deemed discretionary. This exercise will take approximately 2 weeks. At this stage there is no indication that it will effect ARC and NHMRC grants. While nothing can be ruled in or out, it is certainly premature to raise alarm bells. That said Science & Technology Australia has and will continue to raise concerns about the long term negative consequences of stop/start funding in research. Encouraging are the recent public statements by the Prime Minister about boosting maths and science education, an area which is increasingly addressed by her. Also, the Prime Minister will address delegates at Science meets Parliament this year speaking about why science matters. I will keep you abreast of any further information I receive. And needless to say if there were cause for concern, Science & Technology Australia stands ready to mobilise our resources to protect research.

## **5. Events of interest**

To coincide with activities happening at Parliament House during Science meets Parliament the ANU Colleges of Science have organised complementary events:

*Science, politics and the public: breaking down the barriers.* Event details are available here: <http://sciencepoliticsandpublic.eventbrite.com/>

And

Q&ANU: Academic freedom in a world of cures, cloning and climate: Event details are available here: <http://qandanu.eventbrite.com/>

Best wishes  
Anna-Maria

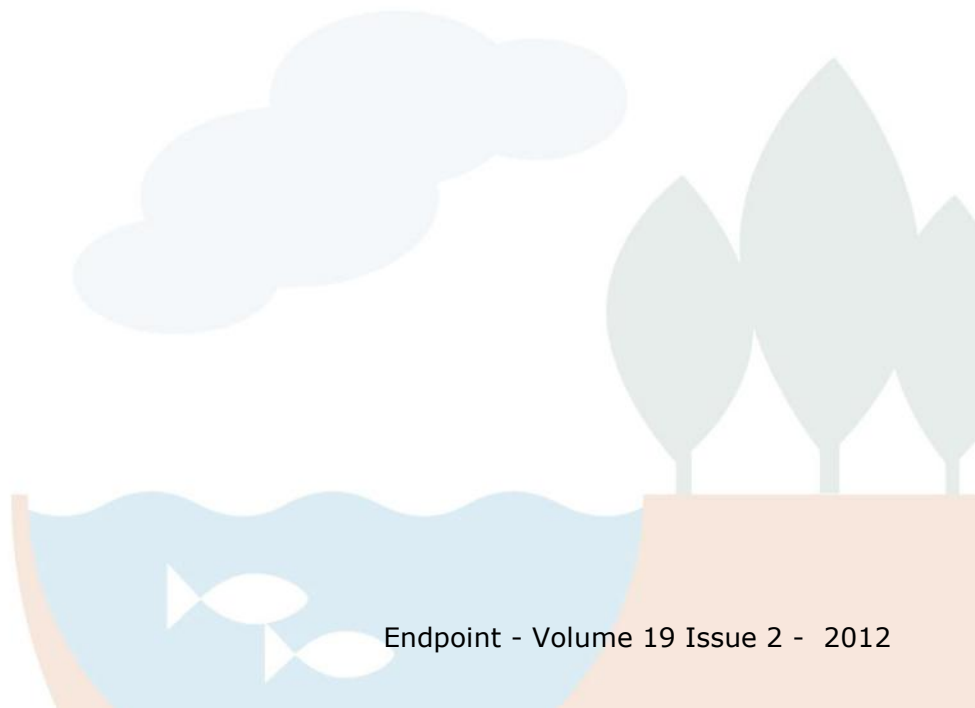
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**Anna-Maria Arabia**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
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South Australia	Mike Williams
Tasmania	Cath King
Victoria	Kathryn Hassell
Western Australia	Chris Rawson
Papua New Guinea	TBC
New Zealand	Louis Tremblay Jenni Gadd