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In this issue:

Sign-Up

Australian Researchers win Freedom from Political Interference

IUPAB Supports Physics of Life

EBSA 2023 Congress Update

Biophysical Society Annual Meeting 2023 in San Diego

Social Media

Kyoto and Berlin Congresses

Important: Sign-Up

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Australian Researchers win Freedom from Political Interference

Australian researchers have just won a major victory and regained a substantial part of their academic freedom. But just over a year ago the situation was dire indeed. On Christmas Eve 2021, six applications for research support which had already been approved for funding by the Australian Research Council (ARC) were rejected by the Education Minister, who made use of his veto right. Of course there was an outcry from the Australian research community, but also from foreign governments, international learned academies and in the pages of the world's leading scientific journals, e.g. [two articles in Nature](#).



After the resounding defeat of the Government of Prime Minister Scott Morrison in May 2022, the newly elected Labor Minister for Education, announced a review of the ARC. On the 20th of April 2023 the review panel released its report, entitled Trusting Australia's Ability. The title itself reflects the review's intention; a regeneration of trust of Australian researchers in their funding agency but also trust from the side of politicians to allow researchers to decide themselves via peer review which proposals should be funded. Prior to preparing their report, the panel received 223 submissions from universities, learned societies and individuals. One particularly pertinent quotation in the review document from the joint submission of the Australian Association of von Humboldt Fellows and Australian Association of University Professors states: "By politically interfering in the grant approval process and attempting to direct research towards short-term gain, perhaps for political purposes, it's hard to judge what scientific advances and economic benefits might be lost to Australia."

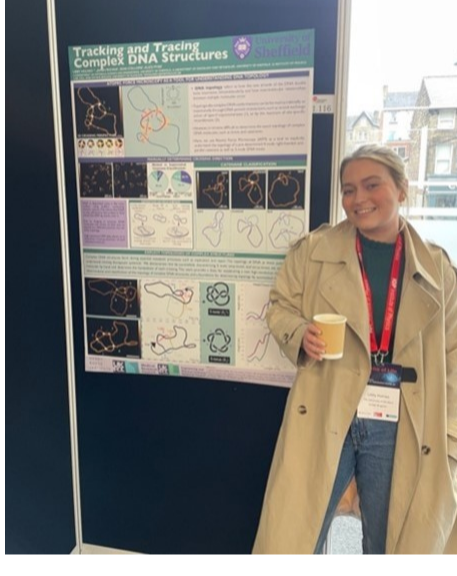
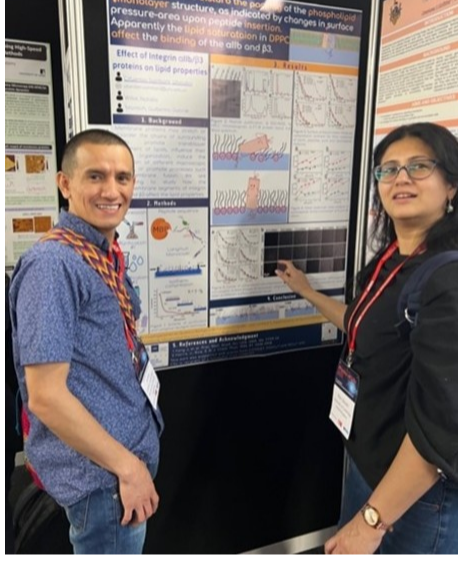
The most important recommendation of the review panel is that in future, grants recommended by the ARC Chief Executive Officer after the peer review process, should be approved by a seven-member ARC Board covering various areas of expertise. The Minister should now only be allowed to intervene in cases of national security, and must subsequently justify the intervention in parliament.

The review panel also highlighted in their report submissions calling for the ARC to be a "guardian of basic, or fundamental 'blue-sky' research and to fund the very best curiosity-driven research to ensure that Australia remained a safe haven for intellectual curiosity and academic freedom". This is good news indeed, not only for Australian researchers and all of their international collaborators, but also as a lesson for Governments around the world that fund science - scientists have a voice.

IUPAB Sponsors Physics of Life

IUPAB awarded bursaries to international students attending the Physics of Life meeting (27th – 30th March 2023) in Harrogate, Yorkshire, UK. Over 450 people from around 16 different countries participated, with a range of contemporary biophysics forming a varied programme. The meeting is expected to continue beyond 2023 as a biennial event.

An awardee, Ubeiden Cifuentes Somboni from the University of Cordoba in Argentina, is shown by his poster explaining his work on integrin peptide-membrane interactions to Rhini Ghosh from Cambridge, UK. Lively poster sessions were guaranteed with food, wine and also beer from the local brewery (Cold Bath Brewery) based across the road from the Convention Centre. IUPAB bursaries also allowed Pradyumna Harlapur from Bengaluru, India, and Muhammad Sajeer from Karnataka, India to present their posters. Also present was Libby Homes (shown), one of the IUPAB communications team, from Sheffield UK.



EBSA 2023 Congress Update

The 14th EBSA congress (ebsa.org; July 31st – August 4th 2023) will take place in Stockholm, and already it has attracted significant interest with over 840 abstracts submitted from around the world. Plenary speakers include David Julius (USA), Molly Stevens (UK), Lewis Kay (Canada), Karen Fleming (USA), Thorsten Wohland (Singapore) and Hao Wu (USA), who together with 58 Keynote and Invited Speakers cover the full range of contemporary biophysics.

The congress will be in the University of Stockholm, situated within the City National Park of Stockholm and with the main Aula Magna being used for plenary and keynote lectures. The City of Stockholm has generously invited participants to a reception at the famous Stockholm City Hall, which is also known as the Dining Hall used for the banquet held after the annual Nobel Prize award ceremonies.

With over 25 sessions, ~120 short oral presentations and ~800 posters, the appetite for in-person congresses is back. Four satellite meetings and a pre-congress summer school are also planned, with plenary and invited speakers giving introductory talks to graduate students in a relaxed environment. The early bird registration deadline for the congress is May 2nd.



Biophysical Society Annual Meeting 2023 in San Diego

The 67th Biophysical Society (BPS) Annual Meeting, held from February 18-22, 2023, in San Diego, California, included thousands of scientists from over 50 countries and showcased some of the latest research in biophysics. Highlights of the meeting included the BPS Annual Lecture



from Nobel Laureate Ardem Patapoutian (pictured with BPS President Gail Robertson) from Scripps Research/HHMI "How Do You Feel? The Molecules that Sense Touch" and the President's Symposium "Black in Biophysics: The Next Generation" featuring talks across a broad range of biophysical topics by Lisa Jones, Jerelle Joseph, Aaron Streets, and Kandice Tanner.

BPS Member and Indian Biophysical Society President, Madan Rao, was the IUPAB sponsored speaker and gave a talk entitled "Nonequilibrium Control of Cell Membrane Organisation – Active Emulsions" in the symposium 50 Years After the Fluid Mosaic Membrane on the opening day of the meeting.

BPS2023 also featured 18 Subgroup symposia, 24 Annual Meeting symposia, 4 workshops, 64 platforms, and more than 600 daily poster presentations. Career and education sessions, along with committee programs and exhibitor presentations ensured the 5 days were filled with opportunities to learn and network.

Social Media

IUPAB is now on social media platforms! These include Twitter (@IUPAB1), Instagram (IUPAB1) and Facebook (IUPAB2). Please head over to any of these pages to keep up to date on all IUPAB activities. Additionally, a brand new [website](#) has been launched! A IUPAB Wiki page has also been created – details [here](#).

Future IUPAB Congresses

2024 (June 24-28th) Kyoto, Japan, Chair: Hiroyuki Noji, Tokyo

2027 (October 10 – 14th) Berlin, Germany

Links will be posted on the [IUPAB.ORG](https://iupab.org) website when they are available.

