

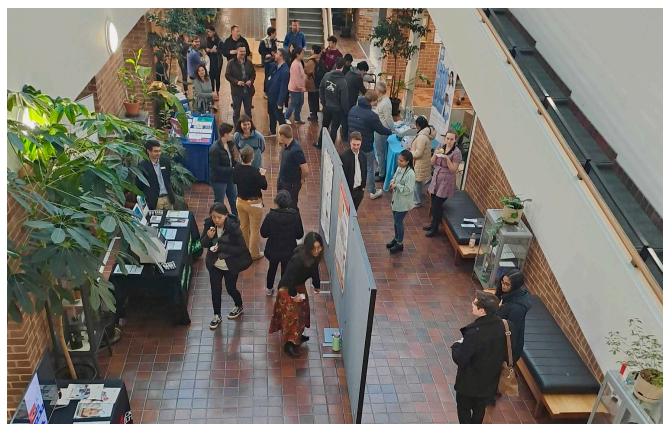
# Canberra Protein Group: an ASBMB Special Interest Group

The Canberra Protein Group (CPG) is a Special Interest Group of the ASBMB that brings together protein scientists across the ACT and surrounding region. Our purpose is to foster a vibrant and inclusive community for researchers working on all aspects of protein science, from fundamental structure and function to applied biotechnology and therapeutic development. The group has grown steadily since its inception in 2017, and now includes more than 150 members drawn from the Australian National University's Research Schools of Biology and Chemistry and the John Curtin School of Medical Research, as well as researchers at CSIRO and affiliated institutes. CPG has always been guided by two central principles: a commitment to scientific excellence and a determination to support the careers of early- and mid-career researchers (EMCRs) and PhD students. These values are reflected in the format of our events, the voices we showcase and the welcoming spirit we try to cultivate within the Canberra scientific community.



Over the past three years, the group has steadily expanded its activities, combining seminar series, practical workshops and symposia with informal opportunities for networking. In 2022 and 2023, we ran a themed seminar series that covered topics ranging from the organisation and function of oligomeric protein complexes to the application of machine learning in protein science, and advances in precision design and mutagenesis. A hallmark of the series was the deliberate pairing of established researchers with PhD students and EMCRs, ensuring that junior members had the opportunity to present their work to a broad audience. These talks routinely attracted lively discussion and helped establish collaborations that stretched across disciplines. Additionally, we aim to begin each year with our New Faces session, which serves as an opportunity to introduce newly arrived group leaders and postdoctoral fellows to the community.

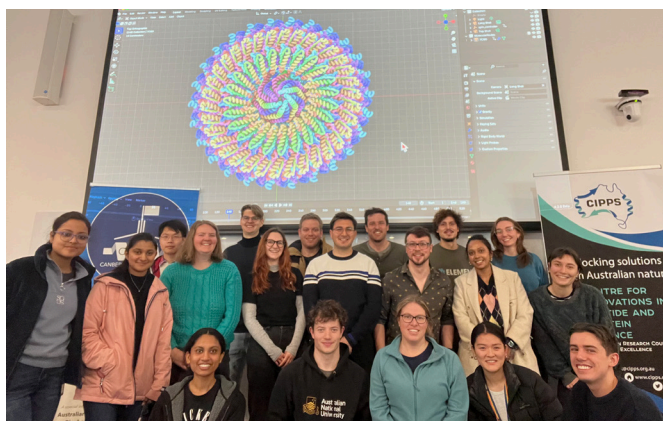
Our flagship event remains the annual EMCR Symposium. The symposium brings together members



*Poster session held during the CPG EMCR Symposium.*

from across the ACT and provides a showcase for the breadth of local research. The best talk, selected by an independent judging panel, is awarded the opportunity to represent the CPG at the ASBMB-sponsored conference later in the year. In 2024, the competition was particularly fierce, with outstanding talks on topics as diverse as multidrug resistance in pathogenic *Candida* species, ligand specificity evolution, chromatin remodelling by histone variants, and the function of *Plasmodium* transporters. Alongside the talks, the catered poster session has become a popular element of the day, giving graduate students and postdocs a chance to share their work in a more informal setting and strengthening connections across Canberra laboratories.

The past year also saw us broaden the scope of our professional development activities. In collaboration with the Centre for Innovation in Peptide and Protein Science (CIPPS), we hosted a Molecular Nodes workshop led by Brady Johnson, which introduced participants to new approaches for visualising protein structures. The workshop catered to all levels of experience and was especially well received by students looking to integrate advanced visualisation tools into their projects. Later in the year, in partnership with Cytiva, we delivered a week-



*CPG members at the Molecular Nodes workshop hosted by Brady Johnson in collaboration with CIPPS.*

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long program on FPLC/AKTA systems. This covered both basic and advanced purification techniques, along with machine care and troubleshooting and concluded with a lively networking session over pizza. These events, while very different in scope, shared the same goal of providing practical skills in an accessible and collegial setting.

The ability to deliver this program has been greatly supported by ASBMB funding, which has allowed us to cover catering and venue costs, support poster and people's choice prizes, and subsidise training workshops. This financial support ensures that our events are welcoming and accessible, and that they continue to deliver real value to our members, particularly students and early career scientists. Looking to the future, the

Canberra Protein Group remains committed to providing a platform for protein researchers at all stages of their careers. We will continue to host seminar series that balance fundamental and applied research, and expand training opportunities through collaborations with industry and academic partners. Above all, we will maintain our focus on supporting EMCRs and graduate students, ensuring that Canberra's vibrant protein science community continues to thrive.

**Sacha Pulsford**  
**EMCR Representative**  
**Canberra Protein Group**  
[sacha.pulsford@anu.edu.au](mailto:sacha.pulsford@anu.edu.au)