

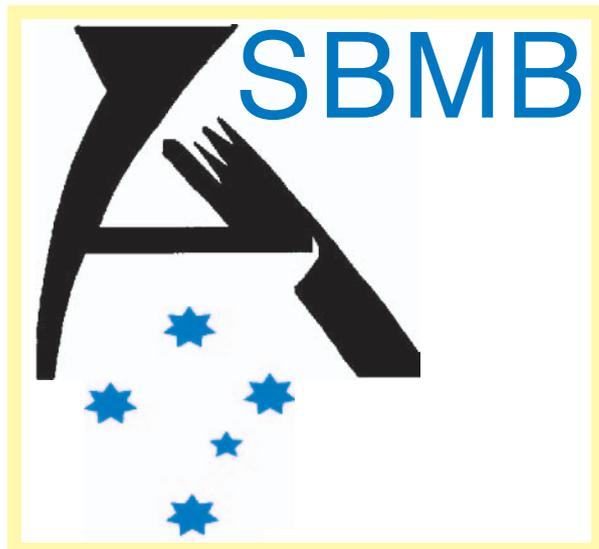
1996-2005

Australian Biochemist

In March 1998, the *Australian Biochemist* was launched while Nick Hoogenraad was both Editor and President. It was a bold move to transform the articles and notices format of the *ASBMB Newsletter* into a non-peer reviewed scientific magazine, with the introduction of Showcase on Research, a series of mini-reviews on a selected topic of interest to highlight the work of Australian biochemists and molecular biologists. The first ever Showcase was on Protein Targeting, and this Showcase on Australian Biochemistry and Molecular Biology is the 25th in the series (a Silver Jubilee in its own right). John de Jersey comments, "The *Australian Biochemist* has been a terrific development, it showcases a lot of the good things in our science, celebrates the awards and produces a nice forum for people to read about our discipline and our Society." By December 1998, Phillip Nagley was secured as Editor, and continued to steer the *Australian Biochemist* in a modern direction. The magazine moved from a dark green theme, first to blue, and then finally full colour was introduced in April 2000. Numerous regular features were established – Reflections, Great Expectations, IP Matters, New Zealand Page, Fellowship Reports and competitions. Tony Burgess wrote in his 2000 President's Report, "Phillip is determined to prod us all... he has encouraged reflective and controversial articles, we need to respond by sharing a little of his dream... an Australia which benefits from and values our art." Phillip also introduced an Editorial Committee as well as an Editorial Assistant to share the workload and for creative input. In 2004, Clem Robinson took over as Editor and with Editorial Officer, Liana Friedman, has guided the magazine along this contemporary course, with greater use of colour and design, the introduction of a Special Technical Feature (published annually), and ever-increasing size (up to 80 sides for a regular issue). Daphne Elliott praises the publication as follows, "It is something just so full of good things, and it makes so many Australian scientists and research places stand out in a way that they'd just get lost when you pick up their papers in the general reading. It makes one very proud, actually, to see much of the worldwide stuff being done here. The articles cover major areas that are really hot topics. And the way that they've been able to do that by having guest editors and topics for each one is brilliant."



April 2005
Australian Biochemist.



The current ASBMB logo was developed in 1998, making use of the 'A' logo of the 1998 combined conference (which played on the alliteration of the ASBMB and ASPP meeting in Adelaide) and the Southern Cross as seen in the Australian sky.

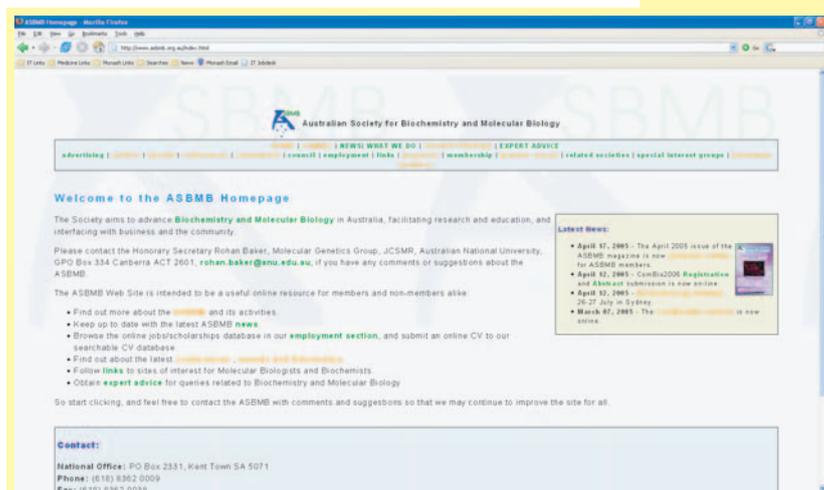
<http://www.asbmb.org.au>



ASBMB homepage.

ASBMB Website

The Society's website was created in early 1998 and originally maintained by Grant Booker. In 1999, Tristan Wallis, the current ASBMB Webmaster, took over. The site is a valuable communication resource for the Society, with up-to-date information, news and links available. Moreover, membership can be paid for online and registration and abstract submission for the Society's annual conferences is possible through specially linked ComBio pages. There are a variety of useful pages, including the Society's profile, Council, awards, Special Interest Groups, historic archive, constitution, employment opportunities, related societies, other conferences, advertising information, and a description of the scientific field. Importantly, the hyperlinks to the Society's Sustaining Members provide a way for our members to interact with our strong commercial supporters. There is also a useful search engine for members maintained by Joel Mackay. A recent and exciting development is the *Australian Biochemist Online*, to which members have exclusive access. This contains PDFs of some of the most popular *Australian Biochemist* features, spanning 2000 to the present.



1996-2005

ComBio Concept

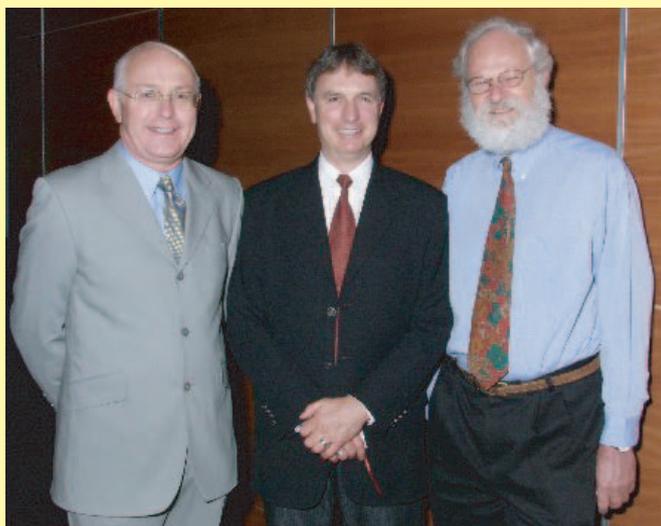
The idea of running a joint meeting was already contemplated as early as 1990, as a means to save on costs and to justify the use of the relatively expensive commercial venues. The Society's first joint meeting was held in 1993 with the Genetics Society of Australia. From 1994, ASBMB ran its meetings with the Australian Society of Plant Physiologists (ASPP – now the Australian Society of Plant Scientists, ASPs) and from year to year, with some other societies, including NZSBMB, NZSPP and the Australian Society for Biophysics.

It emerged that the highly relevant Australia and New Zealand Society for Cell and Developmental Biology (ANZSCDB) had been holding its annual meetings at the same time and city as ASBMB's conferences. Thus, during the Society's 1998 Adelaide meeting, President Nick Hoogenraad liaised with John Wallace (1998 meeting co-organiser), David James (ANZSCDB 1999 meeting organiser), Joe Wiskich (ASPP President and 1998 meeting co-organiser) and Miranda Grounds (ANZSCDB President) about combining forces for annual meetings. He recalls that they decided to run "a joint meeting and that it would be co-owned. We would share the profits. The title needed to be neutral so the Organising Committee for the 1999 meeting came up with the ComBio name."

This culminated in the inaugural ComBio at Conrad Jupiters on the Gold Coast in 1999, incorporating the annual meetings of ASBMB, ASPs, ANZSCDB and the Society of Cytokines, Inflammation and Leukocytes. This was followed by ComBio2000, held offshore in Wellington, New Zealand with NZSBMB, ASPP and NZSPP. Since 2001, ASBMB has held its annual meeting together with ASPs, ANZCDB and occasionally with other related societies under the ComBio banner. David Hume cites

the advantages of ComBio as, "a completely integrated meeting with a single secretariat and combined registration. There are great benefits in having a larger meeting with a greater number of participating groups. Most people had been taken by the molecular biology era into quite different directions, and on the other hand people who didn't regard themselves as biochemists were biochemists by any other definition."

Bill Sawyer agrees, "The development of ComBio has been very successful and has been a way of addressing the modern tendency for the divisions within biology to disappear – departments have been fused together and so biochemistry as a separate discipline is becoming rarer. And the interest, in terms of research, is in a multidisciplinary approach across several areas – molecular genetics, physiology, cell biology, microbiology." Phillip Nagley observes, "ComBio meetings are as good as any international meeting that I've attended. It's clear that we get some of the best speakers in the world – these are the top contributors to Nature and Science who convey their information in an informative and entertaining manner. These conferences, notwithstanding the long distance from Australia to other places, have really made Australia part of the international scene."



ComBio2004 (left to right) Plenary Lecturer Sir Philip Cohen, Chair Professor David Day and Lemberg Lecturer Nick Hoogenraad.

Heads of Departments Meeting

An education symposium was held at ComBio99 and from this, Kiaran Kirk formulated the idea of the annual ASBMB Heads of Departments (HODs) meeting. Thus, the inaugural HODs meeting was held in Canberra in 2000. John de Jersey notes, "The Society has sponsored that and that's been a very good step. The decision was to not meet during the conference but to meet at a different time because then you could focus." Nick Hoogenraad believes that, "HODs meetings are 'a real eye-opener' as they make clear the differences in priorities of the various universities – some are more interested in research whilst others were focussed on the high-tech delivery of biochemistry education." HODs meetings draw about 20 department heads annually to discuss the issues facing them and to plan for the future. It is a useful forum for sharing of knowledge and experience, and a fertile ground for planning joint activities. Nick noted about the 2005 HODs meeting, "I continue to find these meetings interesting and gain from hearing how other Heads solve the plethora of problems a department faces."



2002 Heads of Departments meeting held in Brisbane. Three of 23 enthusiastic participants (left to right) Jim Burnell (James Cook University), John de Jersey (University of Queensland) and Kiaran Kirk (Australian National University).