



**The official newsletter of the Queensland Branch of the  
Australian Institute of Medical and Clinical Scientists**

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## **Queensland Branch Committee Members**

**Chair:** Avinash Kundur

**Vice Chair:** Anne-Marie Christensen

**Secretary:** Wendy Walker & Anneliese Da Sliva

**Committee Member:** Allan Hicks

**Committee Member:** Stacie O'Brien (SO)

**Committee Member:** Patricia (Trish) Laube

**Committee Member:** Bec King

**Committee Member:** Karen Dent (Chair, PaLs QLD)

**Student Members:** Jacob Thamm & Claire Wraith (QUT)

Eshwin Rangesh & Dennis Nguyen (Griffith)

**For all enquiries, please contact:** [queenslandaims@gmail.com](mailto:queenslandaims@gmail.com)

## Chair's Report

Welcome to the Queensland Analyser Newsletter August 2023 Edition. The AIMS Queensland Branch Committee and leadership has undergone significant changes in 2023. Firstly, we would like to acknowledge the contribution of Professor Indu Singh as the Chair of AIMS QLD Branch from 2019-2023. In addition, we would also like to acknowledge the contributions and active involvement of Jacqueline Dewirral and Kieren Cheng, our valued committee members to various Branch activities. The committee would also like to thank our two student members from the committee Caitlin Devonport from QUT and Andre Jones-Dorr from Griffith University for their commitment and support in organising various Branch activities. We wish them all the best in their future career. The Committee would like to welcome new members Stacie O'Brien (Committee Member), Wendy Walker (Joint Secretary), Anneliese Da Silva (Joint Secretary), Dennis Nguyen (Student Member, Griffith University) and Claire Wraith (Student Member, QUT).

In 2022, along with our regular meeting and activities, AIMS QLD Branch in collaboration with QLD Pre-analytical & Laboratory Staff (PaLS) Group have successfully organised a two-day meeting on the topic "Biomarkers of Disease" at Griffith University, Gold Coast. The event was attended by over 100 members and speakers from Australia and New Zealand. Furthermore, student committee members from QUT and Griffith University have successfully organised the AIMS Student Employability Fair on 17th July at the same venue, which was also attended by numerous industry partners and students from both the universities. On behalf of our Branch, I would like to thank our sponsors, speakers, volunteers, and committee members who made the meeting a success.

As for our regular events, in August 2022, we hosted our annual event the AIMS-HGQ (Histotechnology Group of Queensland) Combined Scientific Meeting at the Pineapple Hotel in Brisbane with a Theme "Respiratory System". In November 2022, the AIMS-AACB Combined Scientific Meeting was held online via Zoom on the topic "Paediatric Pathology". In March 2023, we have hosted the AIMS-AACB Quiz Night at the Botanic Bar in QUT, the event was MC'ed by Allan Hicks. This issue of the Analyser includes the list of various AIMS events in 2023 along with our regular newsletter inclusion "5 minutes with" featuring Sarah Just, the CEO of AIMS.

We are looking forward to seeing you all in our upcoming AIMS in-person or online events.

Yours sincerely

Avinash Kundur

# AIMS Qld Branch and PaLs Scientific Meeting

Trish Laube

The weekend of the 16th and 17th of July saw medical and preanalytical laboratory scientists and students descend on the Gold Coast on a sunny winters weekend, for the Bi-annual AIMS Queensland and PaLs scientific meeting. Many thanks for Griffith University for hosting us on their beautiful campus. The theme of the meeting was Biomarkers of Disease, and we were fortunate to benefit from the knowledge and experience of many wonderful speakers. We learned about how different things can be performing tests out in the field, with speakers from the ADF and doctors without borders. We glimpsed a snapshot of Biomarkers of Disease from the differing perspectives of the many departments of the medical laboratory science workforce.



The dinner function was held at the Uni Bar, and a fun night was had by all. Delicious dinner, a few drinks with friends, and a bit of a Boogie to the tunes of Elephant Rock rounded out the evening. A big thank-you to all our sponsors, without whom we would not have had an event. Thank-you to our wonderful speakers, some travelling from interstate and overseas to bring us the benefit of their knowledge. Thank-you also to all of you who gave up your weekend to join us, we hope that you enjoyed this event and learned a little or a lot. Thank-you to the organizing committee and the MLS student members, who gave up many hours to make this event the success that it was.



# AIMS

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## Pre-analytical and Laboratory staff (PaLs)



### Biomarkers of Disease

AIMS Qld State Branch & PaLs Combined Scientific Meeting

16 & 17 July 2022 – Griffith University Gold Coast

Pre-analytical programme report by Deborah Orr (PaLs Chair)

The pre-analytical programme consisted of nine speakers covering topics relevant to both specimen collection and specimen reception laboratory staff. The pre-analytical challenges in the field presentation provided an insight into the difficulties of determining patient identification, as well as logistical issues including sourcing supplies and maintaining cold storage during overseas deployment.

A series of case studies were presented demonstrating the effects of IV contamination and inappropriate centrifugation that cause erroneous results. The specimen collection issues of WBIT and an effective retraining program were explored as was the importance of the optimal collection requirements for Neonatal Screening cards. Essential requirements for the collection and handling of cytology specimens were discussed, and the importance of a dedicated sample for genome testing was explained.

The full day programme finished with an update on the latest research being conducted in the early prediction of adverse pregnancy outcomes. The traditional model of prenatal care with increased clinical surveillance late in gestation was developed over 90 years ago. New research is providing consistent evidence that many obstetric disorders have their origin early in pregnancy. An early risk assessment has proven to improve pregnancy outcomes and new ways of predicting pregnancy complications are being developed.

# AIMS Student Employability Fair

Eshwin Rangesh & Andre Jones-Dorr (Griffith)

The AIMS Student Employability fair was held on 17th of July at the Griffith University Gold Coast campus. This was the first time the event was run by AIMS and aimed to give both newly graduated and soon to graduate medical laboratory science students an opportunity to meet future employers and ask questions. As students ourselves, the opportunity to simply ask questions about employment and what can be expected does not come often. As such, we wanted to create an event where students within the discipline would have that opportunity.

The event was a success with over 40 students from across Griffith University and QUT in attendance keen and eager to learn about what the future could potentially hold for them. Students were able to talk to representatives from Lifeblood, NSW Pathology, Q Path, the ADF and many more. The session itself was split into two components, the first half giving students the opportunity to walk to respective company stalls and the second half an open panel discussion where representatives were able to give students an insight to working life and some of the challenges they have faced throughout their career. It was wonderful to see students being actively engaged, asking questions as well as learning a lot from these companies.



## AIMS Student Employability Fair



As a third-year medical laboratory science student at Griffith University, I was also able to gain a lot from this experience and I found the panel discussion to be particularly insightful. I enjoyed listening to the challenges faced within respective discipline, but more importantly how these challenges were overcome. This was both inspiring and made me realise the potential future challenges that I could face within the laboratory setting.



## AIMS Student Employability Fair



We would like to thank all the companies that were involved within the employability fair as well as the students in attendance for their enthusiastic engagement with our presenters. Andre and I are excited for upcoming AIMS employability fairs and cannot wait to see more students engaged in these future events.

# AIMS & AACB Quiz Night

Written By Allan Hicks

The 2023 AIMS/AACB quiz was held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March 2023 at the Botanic bar in the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) City Campus. The trivia event was conducted in 5 rounds including various themes such as Science, Sports, Geography, Entertainment and Current Affairs and a Table round asking them to name the state of Australia some of the "BIG" monuments can be found.



Team – Beer Pods



Team – We Really Should be studying

The title was hotly contested over the evening with "Beer Pods" made up of 2 lab managers and a lecturer emerged victorious and "We really Should be Studying" as runners-up. The most debated question of the evening was the age of Tom Cruise who will turn 61 in a couple of weeks.

The final act of the evening was for "Beer Pods" to donate their movie pass prizes to the last place team of students from QUT. Overall, it was a great evening with special thanks to Dr Allan Hicks for acting as the MC for the event.



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## Emerging education for Cut-up Scientist in Histology

Allan Hicks

For a while now the topic of formal education for scientists conducting cut-up in histology laboratories has been discussed with no real solution being offered. There are currently moves afoot to address this with two discrete groups working on two levels of qualifications for this under recognised skilful cohort of technicians.

The foundational documents describing cut-up in a Histology laboratory are described in the NPAAC document "Requirements for the Performance of Anatomical Pathology Cut-up" (4th Ed. 2013) and describe 3 levels of complexity, Simple, Non-complex and Complex specimens. This document mandates that Technicians or Scientists may only cut up Simple and Non-complex specimens. Experienced Scientists may conduct cut-up of Complex specimens if deemed competent. How this competency assessed or maintained is the responsibility of the individual laboratory.

In an effort to standardise this level of skill and allow better recognition and possible remuneration for these scientists a formal qualification would need to be developed. Prompted by this need IBSA consulting have been engaged to develop modules to be included in the Diploma of Laboratory Operations conducted by Registered Training Organisations (RTO) under the Australian Vocational Education and Training (VET) qualifications umbrella. The addition of two new modules which can be used to upskill technicians or formal recognise cut-up scientists is in the last stages of development and consultation and should be available in early 2023. Laboratory Operations - IBSA - Innovation & Business Skills Australia

In regard to cut-up of Complex specimens, this is a much more difficult proposition, but just as urgent as this has already been practiced within the Industry. This type of qualification will necessarily be much more tightly controlled and structured in order to meet the Royal College of Pathologists strict guidelines. To this end a small group of highly skilled individuals have been brought together from academic, clinical and industry to begin work on it. Using international best practice, it is hoped that a formal qualification will be developed in the not too distant future.

## QUT Student Awards

Queensland University of Technology (QUT) AIMS Awards for 2023 were presented to the Bachelor of Medical Laboratory Science Students at the award ceremony held on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2023. Branch members Dr Avinash Kundur and Patricia (Trish) Laube attended the QUT Student Awards Night held at the Gardens Point campus. This annual event brings QUT staff and students, along with industry, and professional representatives to celebrate outstanding student achievements. As AIMS representatives, It was our pleasure to see Michelle Seeto awarded the Barbara Bain Prize for Haematology, the S. Walsh Memorial Prize for Blood Banking, and the Prize for Quality in Pathology Service. Caitlin Devonport being awarded the JR Saal Award for Outstanding Performance in Medical Laboratory Science. Again, our congratulations to both students who received awards on the night. Here are pictures of Prize-winning students Michelle Seeto and Caitlin Devonport photographed with Dr Avinash Kundur (Chair, AIMS QLD Branch).



Michelle Seeto being awarded The Barbara Bain Prize, The S. Walsh Memorial Prize, and The Prize for Quality in Pathology Service by AIMS.



Caitlin Devonport being awarded The JR Saal Award by AIMS.

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## Five minutes with.... Sarah Just

**What inspired you to become a medical scientist?** I have always been curious about how things work in nature and enjoyed science at school. I was fortunate to discover med lab science as an undergraduate degree and have loved the diverse career it has offered me working in diagnostic pathology labs across Australia and overseas. Continued learning and making a difference to patients' lives as a result of our work is what makes every day exciting as a med lab scientist.



**Where do you currently work and what do you enjoy about your position?**

I am the chief executive of AIMS and am based at the National Office in Brisbane, and have been in the role since February 2022. I have been a member of AIMS since graduating from QUT in 1989 and have been an advocate for the profession throughout my career. I am enjoying getting to know more of our members across Australia supporting them in their careers and promoting the medical science profession.

**What future developments for pathology and medical scientists are you excited about?**

I am excited about the future for pathology and medical scientists now more people understand what we do behind the scenes to support health care outcomes of the community. Harnessing the spotlight, we have been under in recent years with COVID testing to show the value of pathology and medical science as a profession and a career pathway.

**If you could have any superpower, what would it be and how would you use it?**

The superpower I would like is the ability to heal others from disease and illness. Particularly in cases where there is no current medical cure, until medical scientists can discover one.

**If you could invite anyone to dinner, alive or dead, who would it be and what would you talk about?**

Neil Armstrong – first man who walked on the moon. What was this historic space mission like? I was born a few days after this historic spacewalk. Marie Curie – pioneering scientist and physicist and first person to win two separate Noble Prizes. What adversity she faced in her career and tell her how influential she is today.

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## 2023 planner – what's happening next ?

### **November**

- AIMS/PaLs Networking Meeting
- NSW North Coast Division Conference 2023

### **December**

- AIMS/AACB Combined Scientific Meeting

For more information on other AIMS events check...

<http://www.aims.org.au/services/related-meetings-webinars>





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## Student membership application forms

The one-page form is currently for full-time students only and has to be signed by the Course Coordinator or an officer of the university. The two-page membership form is for all other applicants. Both are available at <http://www.aims.org.au/membershipinformation/join>

### History of AIMS

Written by Ian Stanger, Bruce Munro, Jim Ruxton, Emeritus Professor Tony Webber, Tom Bell and Len Lawler. The book is [available for purchase](#) in the online store and gives a detailed and rich recount of the history of AIMS over 100 years. AIMS members also have access to the [electronic version](#), and it can be accessed and read in the Members Centre of the AIMS website.



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