

JUNE 2026

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A STEM CELL SCIENTIST

VALE DR JOSEPH MANITTA

MEDICAL SCIENTISTS TAKE ACTION

VIRTUAL MORPHOLOGY WEBINAR

The Global Winner: "Induced pluripotent stem cell-derived neurospheres" by Katie Holden, United Kingdom

BENCHPRESS

The official newsletter of The Australian Institute of Medical and Clinical Scientists
(Victoria Branch)

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A NOTE FROM THE CHAIR

It has been a strong and productive first half of the year for the AIMS Victorian Branch, with a great mix of educational opportunities across a range of disciplines.

So far this year, we've delivered a number of well-attended events, including the Biochemistry Discussion Group (BDG) webinar, Quality in the Pathology Laboratory, our digital haematology morphology webinar, and something a little different for us - Unlock Your LinkedIn Potential - where we momentarily stepped outside the laboratory to learn tips for improving professional profiles, online visibility, and networking opportunities. It's been fantastic to see such engagement across both traditional scientific topics and broader professional development areas.

These events wouldn't be possible without the ongoing support of our dedicated committee members, speakers, sponsors and you - our attendees. Thank you to everyone who has contributed their time, knowledge and enthusiasm - it's what continues to make our branch events so valuable.

We are also pleased to welcome new student members to the committee this year, including Juan Arevalo, our first ever CQU representative, and Ben Dichiera from RMIT. It's great to see student involvement in the branch, and we look forward to the perspectives and ideas they bring.

Looking ahead, we're excited to continue building on this momentum in the second half of the year, with more opportunities to learn and share knowledge across the profession.



Patricia Szczurek
Chair
AIMS VIC Branch

INTRODUCING YOUR NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS VIC BRANCH



Ben Dichiera (Student Representative, Master of Laboratory Medicine, RMIT)

Hello, my name is Ben. I am a first year Master of Laboratory Medicine student at RMIT with a passion for the medical field. I hope to specialise in microbiology and anatomical pathology but have not fully decided yet. I did a Bachelor of Medical Science at ANU in Canberra and took a study break to work in the federal government at the AIHW with hospital statistics. I now work part-time in that role whilst studying here in Melbourne.

In my free time I enjoy gaming, which includes mostly indie games with unusual concepts. These range from running a nuclear reactor to running a video rental store or being an airport x-ray technician. I infrequently revisit the piano when I am in the mood and enjoy science fiction and non-fiction history books. I also foster a small board game collection with my partner.

I have had some experience planning events as the AIHW Social Club Secretariat in the past and hope to apply these at the AIMS VIC Branch Committee. I look forward to the networking and learning opportunities we will bring about.



Juan Jose Arevalo-Ferrin (Student Representative, Master of Laboratory Medicine, CQUniversity)

Hi everyone, my name is Juan. I recently joined the AIMS VIC Branch as the student representative for CQUniversity. I am currently in my final year of the Master of Laboratory Medicine at CQUniversity and will soon complete my placement at Epworth Pathology in Core lab.

I currently work as a Research and Development Scientist in the development biosensors for fertility hormones, which has been a great opportunity to understand how diagnostic tools are built and refined, not just used. It has made me more interested in how different parts of the lab connect and contribute to the overall clinical picture.

Outside of the lab, I enjoy cooking and experimenting with new recipes, going on hikes around Victoria when I can, and spending time with friends.

I'm excited to be part of the AIMS VIC community and look forward to contributing to initiatives and events that bring students and professionals together across medical science in Victoria.



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A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A STEM CELL SCIENTIST

By Diana Kolar, Nullisa Bobares, Ye Mon Than and Blerime Zeneli (Austin Health Pathology)

Can you tell us about your current role as a Stem Cell Scientist?

The Austin Health stem cell laboratory, accredited by NATA and NPAAC, plays a crucial role in supporting the ONJ Clinical Haematology Transplant Unit. It also delivers services to Eastern Health Hospital, the Stem Cell Donors Australia registry, and various external treatment facilities both locally and internationally.

Stem cell laboratory (SCL) scientists play a vital role in supporting the haematology laboratory services within the facility. Our key responsibilities include the sterile handling and processing of both autologous and allogeneic Haemopoietic Progenitor Cells, HPC(A), as well as the cryogenic storage of these products when required. We coordinate and facilitate the infusion of autologous, allogeneic, and donor lymphocyte cells, ensuring adherence to the highest quality standards and prompt delivery to patients. In addition, we are actively involved in the processing of CAR-T cell products for clinical trials and investigational therapies, including cytotoxic T lymphocytes.

What sets the stem cell lab apart from other medical science disciplines?

Stem cell laboratories differ significantly from other medical science disciplines in both their focus and practices. Stem cell scientists are mainly responsible for processing and delivering Haematopoietic Progenitor Cells (HPCs) to treat patients with predominantly malignant haematological disorders. This contrasts with other areas of medical science, which are primarily concerned with diagnosing diseases rather than being directly involved with treatment.

We actively participate in delivering life-saving treatments, working closely alongside the clinical team. Our involvement follows the entire journey of the HPC product—from

apheresis collection and laboratory processing to the final infusion at the patient's bedside on the ward.

What does a typical day look like for you?

A day in the stem cell laboratory is often unpredictable and can vary significantly from one day to the next. Typically, it involves a combination of tasks such as handling and processing cellular products, cryopreservation, data entry and reporting, meticulous documentation, quality control procedures, and maintaining laboratory cleanliness and organization.

The day begins with routine housekeeping tasks, including checking oxygen levels upon arrival, monitoring the temperature of the Liquid Nitrogen (LN2) tanks, and assessing the performance of both tanks and cylinders.

Following this, we review the schedule for upcoming stem cell collections and infusions, carefully planning the day's workflow.

Processing including cryopreservation and/or the infusion of HPC products typically occurs later in the day.

The main processes we perform include:

- Autologous Collection: Processing, cryopreserving, and storing the HPC product in LN2 tanks until the product is required for infusion.
- Allogeneic Collection: Processing and directly infusing the fresh HPC product, with cryopreservation carried out if requested.
- DLI Collections and Infusions
- Cellular Therapy Product Infusion: Verifying in advance that the HPC product meets all release criteria, transporting it to the infusion site using a validated dry shipper, and administering the product at the patient's bedside on the ward.

- Processing CAR-T Trials and Other Investigational Products: Handling and processing of CAR-T therapy products and other investigational treatments.

Other tasks performed include:

- Transfer/Transport of HPC Products: Safely transporting HPC products to infusion sites using a validated dry shipper or transport carrier.
- Quality Control: Conducting quality checks throughout the process, including reference viability testing, microbiology sterility testing, reviewing engraftment data, performing preventative maintenance on equipment, and conducting pre-analytical testing on critical reagents.
- Education and Professional Development: Committing to ongoing learning and professional growth to stay current with emerging processes and advancing therapies.

What are some of the challenges you face in your role?

Firstly, this role requires a high level of accuracy and attention to detail. With multiple processes often taking place in a single day, ensuring that patients receive their HPC cells on time, is critical. The HPC cells collected from donors are invaluable, unique and precious, as they cannot be easily replaced so we handle them with the utmost care and precision.

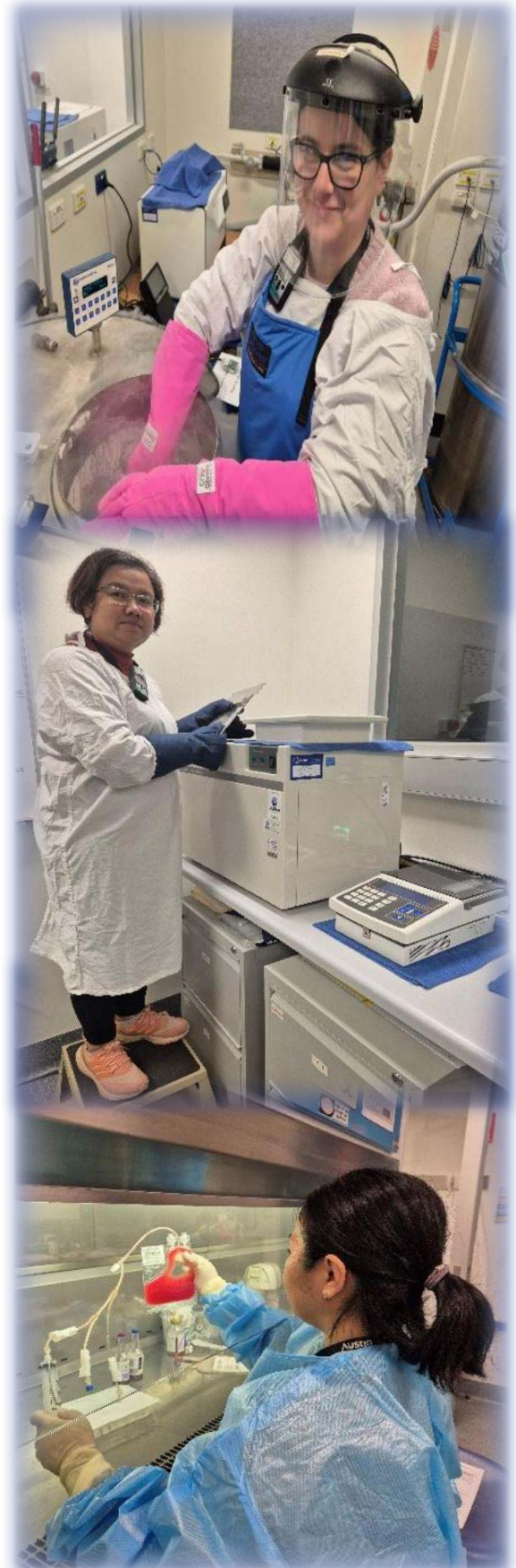
Secondly, the work is highly unpredictable, as donor cells arrive from various locations worldwide at different times. HPC collections are also dependent on sufficient CD34+ counts requiring us to remain flexible in our work place.

Finally, working with liquid nitrogen can be dangerous and presents with risks, so it's important to adhere to strict safety protocols to prevent burns and asphyxiation. Proper handling and use of protective equipment are essential to ensure a safe working environment.

Highlights of the position you'd like to share?

The most rewarding aspect of being a stem cell scientist is being part of the patient's journey from collection to infusion. We first meet the patient during Apheresis, process their cells

in the laboratory, and then meet them again on the ward, assisting with the infusion. Engaging with patients and following their treatment journey is deeply fulfilling, constantly reminding us why we value this work and are committed to delivering our best quality performance at all times.



VALE DR JOSEPH MANITTA

By Patricia Szczurek (Austin Health Pathology)



It is with great sadness that we acknowledge the passing of Dr Joseph Manitta, a highly respected and influential figure in medical laboratory science, whose contributions spanned decades of service, teaching, and leadership within the profession.

Dr Manitta commenced his career at Fairfield Infectious Diseases Hospital in 1972 as a qualified haematologist and was rapidly promoted to Senior Haematologist in Charge by 1974. Over his career, he played a pivotal role in expanding the scope of haematology to include immunohaematology, haemostasis, immunology, and microbial serology, reflecting both his depth of expertise and forward-thinking approach to laboratory medicine.

He was instrumental in the establishment and management of several key reference services

in Victoria, including the State Reference Laboratories for Syphilis Serology and Legionella Serology in 1975 and 1978 respectively, and the National High Security Laboratory in Diagnostic Clinical Pathology in 1982. In 1985, he attained recognition for the State Reference Laboratory for Malaria Speciation and Allied Blood Parasites in Victoria. With the advent of AIDS in 1984, he expanded the Immunology department and introduced lymphocyte subset analysis by flow cytometry for the monitoring and treatment of HIV patients.

Dr Manitta was deeply committed to quality and professional standards, serving as a National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA) assessor from 1986. He was also a member of the Australian Institute of Medical Scientists and the Australian Society of Microbiology, and a foundation member of the Venerology Society of Victoria.

A passionate educator, Dr Manitta contributed to teaching programs at RMIT University for over 40 years and was a long-standing contributor to the RCPA Haematology teaching program. He taught and mentored generations of scientists and haematologists, particularly in malaria and blood parasitology. His engaging teaching style, generosity with his time, and commitment to student success were widely recognised. At RMIT University, Joe was known for running “Round Robin” revision sessions to support students in preparation for final examinations, and for creating a supportive and encouraging learning environment. Many remember him not only for his expertise, but also for his kindness, humour, and genuine interest in helping others succeed.

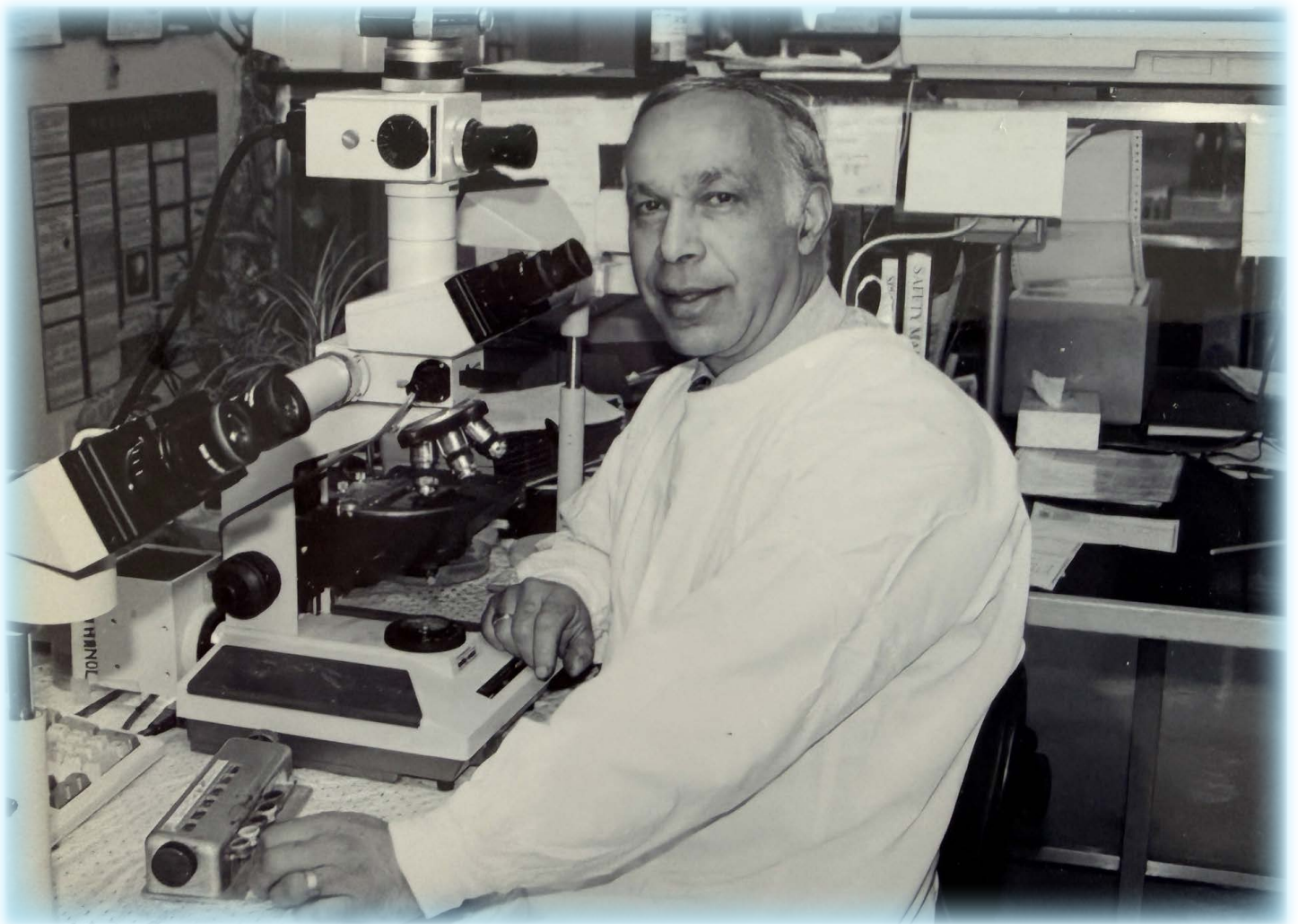
Beyond his clinical and teaching contributions, Dr Manitta was actively involved in the Medical Scientists Association of Victoria (MSAV), serving as Honorary Treasurer from 1980 to 2000. During the 1990s, he played a key role in establishing the current bursary student program in collaboration

with RMIT and the Department of Health, further demonstrating his commitment to supporting future generations of laboratory professionals.

Dr Manitta's longstanding dedication to the profession was recognised through numerous awards. In 2009, he was awarded the George Swanson Christie Memorial Award by AIMS for being an inspiration to others through his commitment to excellence in medical laboratory science. In 2021, he received the RCPA Professor Konrad Muller Outstanding Teaching Award for Scientists, acknowledging his decades of selfless contribution to education, mentorship, and training.

Dr Manitta's legacy is one of excellence, generosity, and enduring impact. He will be remembered not only for his significant professional achievements, but also for the countless individuals he taught, mentored, and inspired throughout his career.

The AIMS Victorian Branch extends its sincere condolences to his family, friends, and colleagues.



MEDICAL SCIENTISTS TAKE ACTION

By Teresa Abajo (Alfred Health Pathology)



On Wednesday, 1 April 2026, medical scientists from public hospitals across Victoria rallied and marched to Parliament House in a strong show of unity.

The Medical Scientists Association of Victoria (MSAV) — the union representing medical scientists, hospital pharmacists, psychologists and dietitians — estimated that more than 1,100 members attended the march.

The steps of Parliament House became a sea of orange shirts as members chanted, waved placards and called on the Victorian Government to address key concerns around pay, professional development and career progression.

MSAV Branch Secretary Matt Hammond highlighted the essential role medical scientists play in the healthcare system.

“These people are incredibly skilled health professionals without which, just like doctors and nurses, the health system would fall apart.”

The campaign has been going for more than a year. With no acceptable offer yet received from the government, the union says industrial action will continue.

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JOIN NOW!



If you are interested in joining the union, scan the QR code and Join Now!

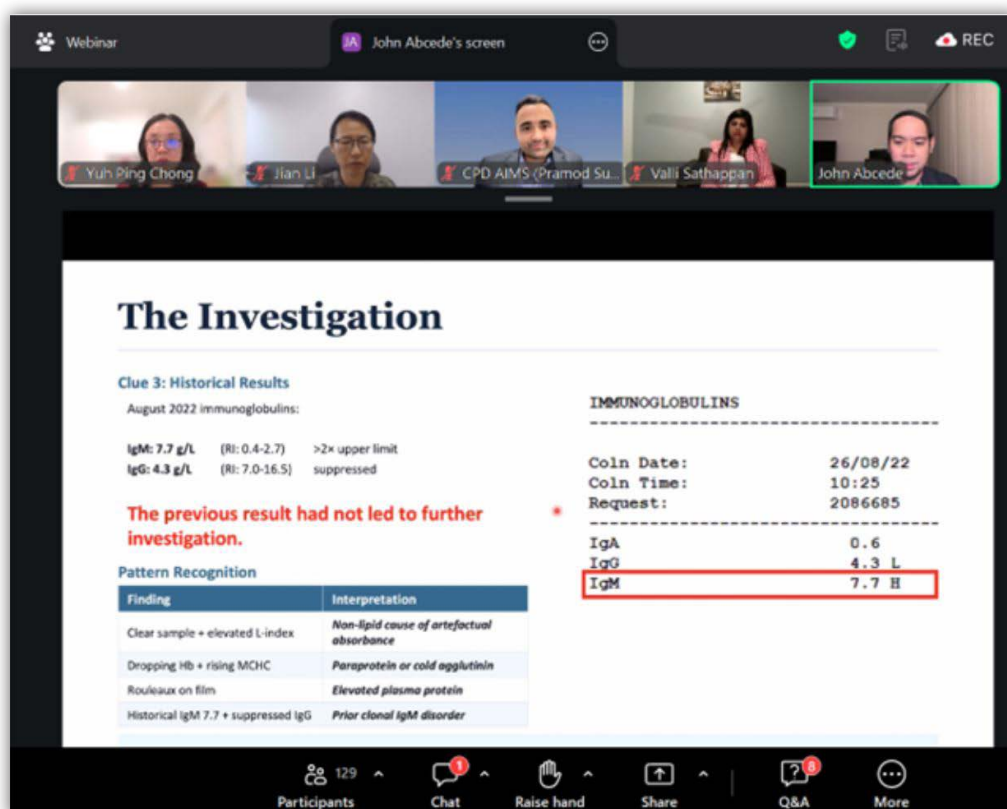
BDG 2026 WEBINAR REPORT

By Yuh Ping Chong (Flinders University) and Pramod Subedi (La Trobe University)

On 15 April 2026, the Biochemistry Discussion Group (BDG) hosted an online webinar titled “Translational Biochemistry: From Biomarkers to Better Clinical Decisions.” The session was hosted by Dr Pramod Subedi and co-hosted by Dr. Yuh Ping Chong, featuring presentations from international, interstate, and local speakers who shared clinically relevant case studies highlighting the role of laboratory medicine in patient care.

The first presentation by Jian Li Cui (Sichuan Taikang Hospital, China) explored advances in Alzheimer’s disease (AD) biomarkers, including amyloid-beta ratios, phosphorylated tau proteins, neurofilament light chain (NfL), and GFAP. The talk highlighted the growing importance of biomarker-based diagnosis in the early detection and management of AD, as well as current challenges in assay standardisation and diagnostic accuracy.

The second presentation by Valli Sathappan (NSW Health Pathology) focused on quality and accuracy in point-of-care testing (POCT) within rural hospitals. Through practical clinical examples, the presentation demonstrated how pre-analytical errors and analytical interferences can affect POCT results, emphasising the importance of proper sample handling and result verification in rural healthcare settings.



The final presentation by John Gabriel Abcede (Northern Pathology Victoria) described an intriguing case where analytical interference from IgM paraproteins caused a falsely elevated lipaemic index, ultimately leading to the discovery of monoclonal gammopathy. The case reinforced the importance of recognising assay interferences and the critical role laboratorians play in clinical diagnosis.

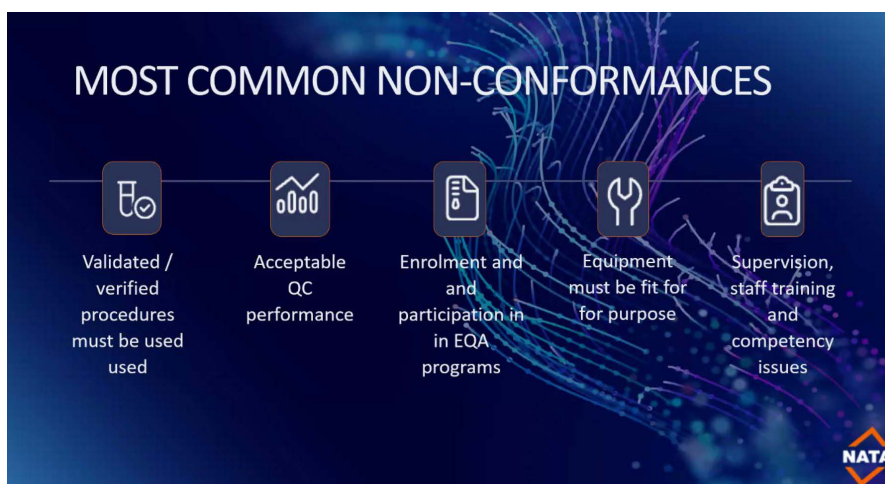
Overall, the webinar provided valuable insights into translational biochemistry and demonstrated how laboratory investigations contribute significantly to clinical decision-making and patient outcomes.

QUALITY IN THE PATHOLOGY LABORATORY WEBINAR

By Teresa Abajo (Alfred Health Pathology)

Our annual webinar dedicated to the topic of quality was held on 13th May 2026. We were fortunate to have five talks on various aspects of quality.

The first talk was given by Andrew Griffin from NATA. Andrew gave a review of the previous year in assessments, including the most commonly encountered non-conformances. Each of these was explored using examples of where laboratories did not meet NPAAC and ISO 15189 guidelines.

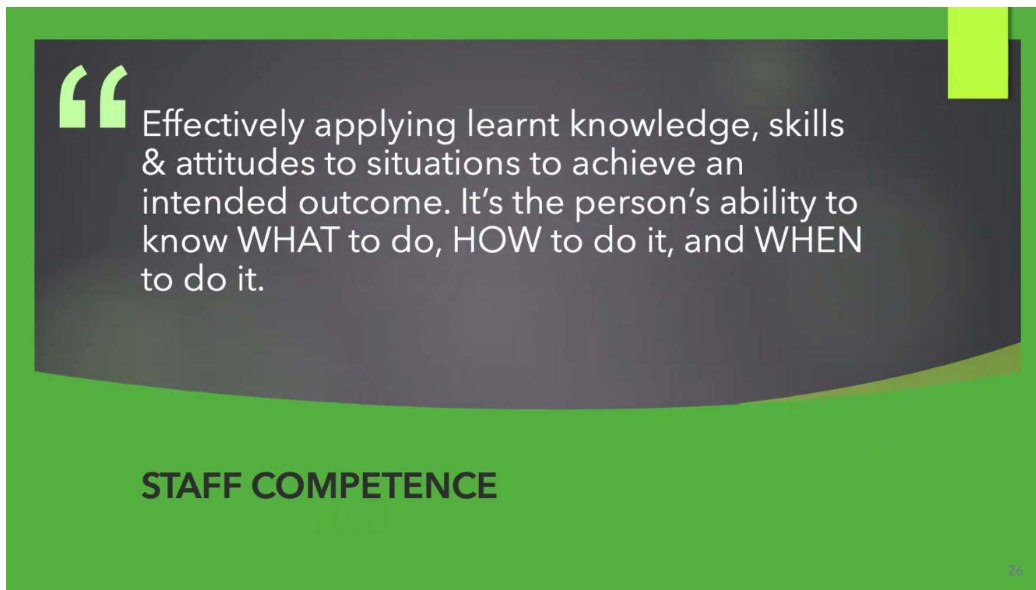


The next presentation was titled Introduction of an Independent External Quality Assessment for Digital Cell Morphology Systems. This was delivered by Loriza Kahn from RCPAQAP and was a timely reminder that quality must be a consideration especially when introducing new technologies. As laboratories move from manual microscopy to digital workflows, external quality assessment (EQA) is needed to ensure accuracy, reproducibility, safety, and trust across laboratories and AI platforms.



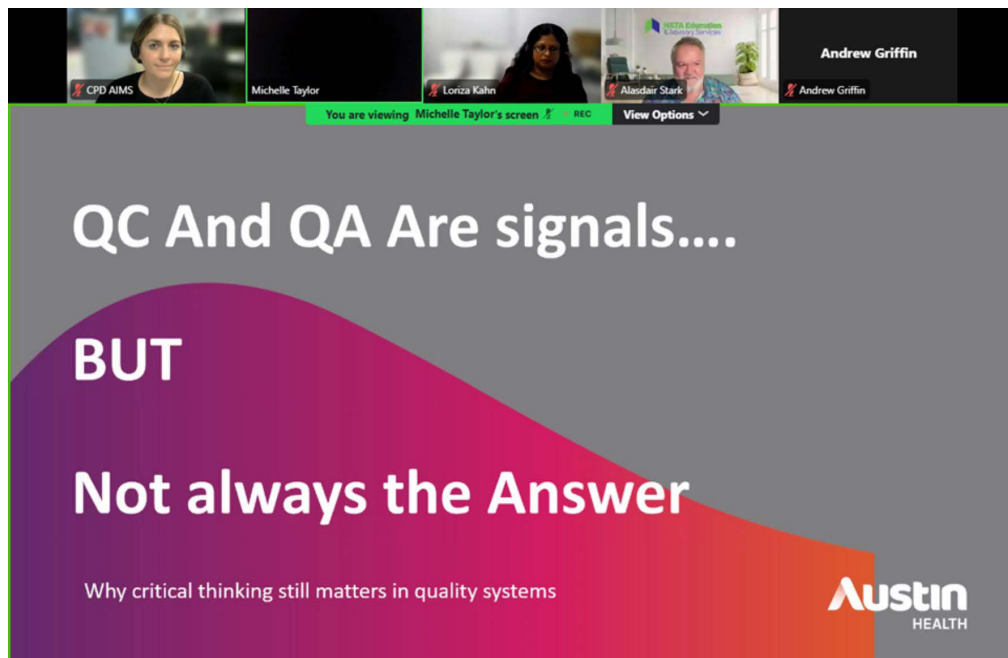
Loriza delivered the next presentation as well, and we learned all about the challenges in assessing paediatric cases in an EQA program. One of the main challenges is low case frequency, compounded by logistical issues of limited specimen volumes.

The next talk covered training and assessing competence. This was delivered by Alasdair Stark from NATA Education and Advisory Services who is a learning and development specialist. He explained what competence is, why it's important in laboratories and how to assess staff competence.



Alasdair described the Laboratory Competency Assessment Framework in use in New Zealand, which resulted in improved assessment consistency and a cultural shift toward continuous learning.

Our final talk of the evening came from Michelle Taylor from Austin Health Pathology. Her talk was titled QC and QA are Tools, but don't be Fooled reminding us that while QC and QA are important, they do not automatically guarantee quality, competence, or patient safety. Michelle gave a fascinating example of how she deep dives into the RCPA QAP results beyond reading concordant or discordant.



All in all, a thought provoking offering of quality topics. Many thanks to the speakers for sharing their knowledge.

RCPAQAP 2026 PARASITOLOGY MASTER CLASS

By Teresa Abajo (Alfred Health Pathology)

The RCPAQAP Parasitology Master Class took place over the weekend of 23rd and 24th May at the Doherty Institute in Melbourne. It was well attended by medical scientists and clinicians from around Australia.

The program included lectures and hands-on microscopy sessions delivered by experts from Australia and the USA. Topics included blood, tissue and faecal parasites, both common and rare and presentations were an excellent mix of clinical and laboratory aspects of parasitic disease.

The faculty included Melbourne's own parasite king Dr Harsha Sheorey from St Vincent's Hospital, A/Prof Richard Bradbury from James Cook University, Mr Blaine Mathison from ARUP Laboratories in Salt Lake City, Ms Franca Azzato from VIDRL and many other experts from around the country. Also present were blasts from the past Mr Stephen Neville and Dr Graham Robertson, both now enjoying retirement, who used to run the week-long parasitology conferences in Sydney many years back some of us were lucky to have been able to attend.



We looked some pre-stained slides and then had the opportunity to examine several unknown iodine wet preparations, one of which contained this little *Ascaris lumbricoides* trying to make an escape:

There were many wet specimens of worms for us to inspect to match up with the eggs we were seeing down the microscope. Some of the worms even had interesting stories to accompany them (Hello George!).

On the second day we heard about the histopathology and serology of parasitic infections, then headed back to the lab to learn about malaria morphological diagnosis.

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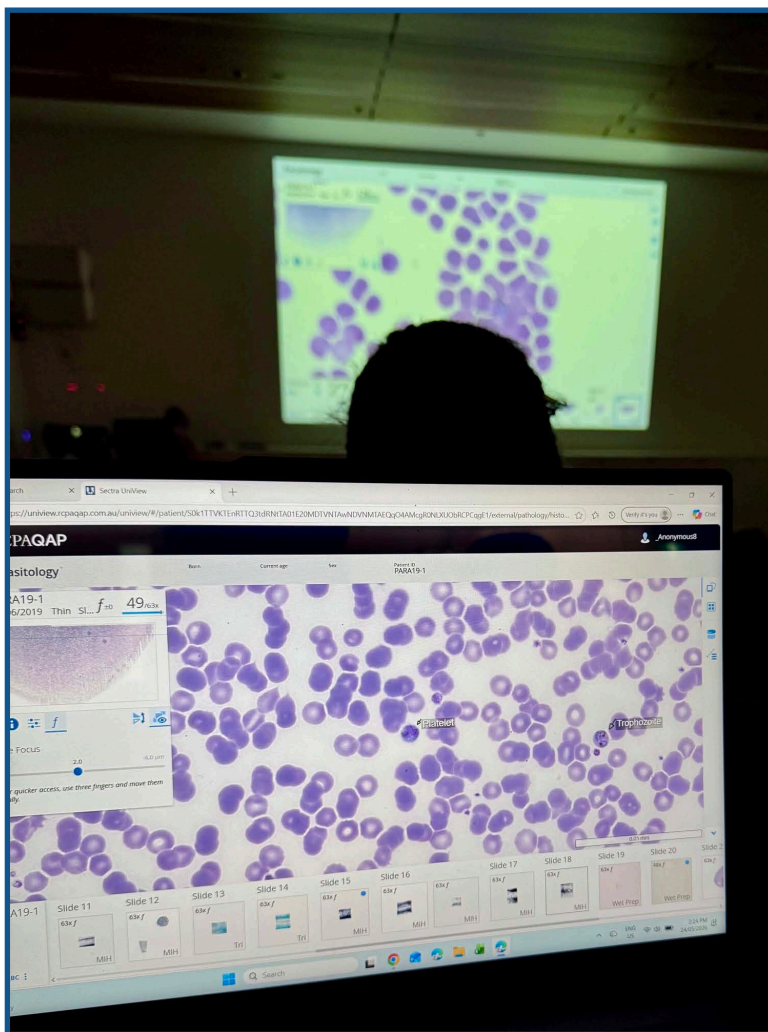
After another tasty lunch and opportunity to catch up with colleagues and network with new friends, we returned to the lecture theatre to learn about AI and Virtual Microscopy. This was an eye-opening session where Blaine Mathison showed us what his lab is doing with AI to help cut down the time spent screening negative slides. We then got our own laptops out to explore some virtual images ourselves.



After only a short time playing with virtual microscopy, we could tell what a valuable tool it will be for diagnosis as well as teaching and training.

A very high stakes quiz ended proceedings, with Dr Sadid Khan from the Alfred Hospital taking the flag (or hoodie).

The weekend came to an end all too soon. We left excited and eager to apply our new knowledge and thankful to have had the opportunity to attend a well-organised and very relevant workshop.



Submit Your Interest Article Ideas to
secretary.aims.vic@gmail.com

BUILDING PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY: LINKEDIN WEBINAR

Pramod Subedi (La Trobe University)

The banner features the Australian Institute of Medical and Clinical Scientists logo at the top left. A central orange box says "Registrations Now Open!". Below it, the text reads "AIMS VIC BRANCH WEBINAR" and "UNLOCK YOUR LinkedIn POTENTIAL:". A list of topics includes "Optimise Your Profile", "Build Your Network", "Create Engaging Contents", and "Job Search & Opportunities". The date and time are "Wednesday 11th March 7:00 - 9:00 PM (AEDT)". The speaker is "Dr Fung Lay", a Senior Lecturer at La Trobe University and LinkedIn expert. The "Apac" logo and "Professional development with CPD points" are at the bottom.

On 11th March 2026, the AIMS Victoria Branch Committee welcomed professionals from across Australia and overseas for a special webinar on LinkedIn. The session featured Dr Fung Lay, Senior Lecturer and LinkedIn expert from La Trobe University, who shared his insights on how LinkedIn can be a powerful tool for building a digital identity and professional profile.

Dr Fung made the session highly practical by demonstrating how to create a “10-star” LinkedIn profile, providing participants with clear examples to enhance their own profiles. His guidance offered actionable strategies for building visibility, understanding the

workplace landscape, and connecting meaningfully with others. He highlighted how LinkedIn allows professionals to showcase their often invisible yet highly credentialed contributions in medical and clinical laboratory settings.

The webinar attracted 38 engaged participants, who actively asked questions and shared experiences throughout the session. Attendees were awarded 2 CPD points for their participation. The session was moderated by Dr Pramod Subedi, AIMS Vic Branch Biochemistry Convenor, ensuring a smooth and interactive flow. The event concluded with warm thanks from Sarah Just, AIMS CEO, and Patricia Szczurek, Vic Branch Chair.

For those who could not attend, the webinar is available to watch on demand, allowing all members the opportunity to gain these valuable insights at their convenience.

MARCH HDG BY EASTERN HEALTH

By Nao Shimada Ramos (The Royal Children's Hospital)

Eastern Health delivered four excellent presentations for our Haematology Discussion Group (HDG) on 17th March.

The evening opened with Dr Elizabeth Todorova, who discussed dual TRBC1 and TRBC2 staining for identifying T-cell neoplasms by flow cytometry. She provided a clear overview of the principles behind TRBC1 and TRBC2, as well as the assay validation process, highlighting the potential value of incorporating dual TRBC1/TRBC2 staining into routine workups for T-cell lymphoma assessment and disease monitoring.



Introducing Dual TRBC1 and TRBC2 Staining for the Identification of T-cell Neoplasms by Flow Cytometry

Dr Elizabeth Todorova

Jenny Morris then presented on bicytopena. At Eastern Health, first presentations of bicytopenia require immediate blood film review. Through discussion of potential causes and case studies that revealed significant haematological malignancies, she emphasised that bicytopenia can be an important diagnostic clue for serious underlying disease.



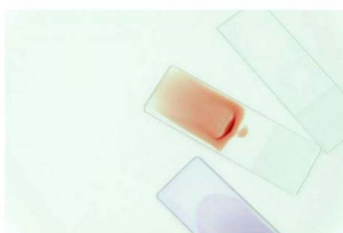
BEYOND THE COUNT:

**DECIPHERING
BICYTOPENIA**

Jenny Morris

Eastern Health Pathology

Box Hill Hospital



The third presentation, Melvyn Magiaza, focused on a complex case involving very low haemoglobin, low fibrinogen, high D-dimer, and no haemolytic changes on the blood film on admission. By the following day, red cell fragments were present, with biochemistry showing sudden renal and liver dysfunction, ultimately leading to a diagnosis of atypical HUS. This case highlighted the importance of careful film examination and the need to distinguish atypical HUS from DIC, particularly as treatment pathways differ and exceptions to typical presentations can occur.

**DESTRUCTION BEFORE
THEIR TIME:
A HAEMOLYTIC MYSTERY**



Melvyn Magiaza

The evening concluded with Johanna Bustillos, who presented a case of anti-IH with transient anti-i. She explained how the EBV infection can cause produce non-specific IgM antibodies and transient anti-i, while also reinforcing the key serological principles of anti-I, anti-H, and anti-IH. Her case demonstrated the importance of investigating blood group discrepancies thoroughly and ensuring that clinically significant antibodies are not masked by benign antibodies.

**Detection of Anti-IH and
Transient Anti-i
in Infectious Mononucleosis
Secondary to Alcoholic
Cirrhosis**

Potentially Masking Other Red Cell Antibodies

Johanna Bustillos

Overall, the presentations showcased the importance of combining strong technical knowledge, careful laboratory investigation, and clinical context to support accurate diagnosis and patient care.

APRIL HDG BY AUSTIN HEALTH

By Patricia Szczurek (Austin Health Pathology)



On April 21st, Austin Health Pathology had the pleasure of hosting the monthly AIMS Haematology Discussion Group (HDG). The session was run in the popular hybrid format, allowing those unable to attend in person to join via Microsoft Teams, while also welcoming attendees onsite for an opportunity to connect with colleagues face-to-face.

The evening was generously sponsored by r-biopharm, with everyone treated to a delicious dinner and thoughtfully prepared goodie bags.

The program featured three engaging presentations, followed by an interactive quiz to round out the evening.

Anita Le presented on next generation sequencing (NGS)-based measurable residual disease (MRD) testing in acute lymphoblastic leukaemia (ALL). She highlighted the increasing adoption of NGS-based MRD testing in routine clinical care and shared Austin Pathology's experience since its implementation in 2018, demonstrating its clinical utility in disease monitoring in B-ALL.

This was followed by Mehdi Seberi, who delivered an engaging and highly informative morphology tutorial focusing on haemopoiesis and myeloid differentiation. The session clearly highlighted the subtle but critical morphological differences required to distinguish neutrophils from their precursors, providing practical insights directly applicable to routine practice.

It was an excellent session for scientists new to morphology, while also serving as a valuable refresher and reinforcement of key principles for more experienced staff.

Michelle Taylor presented "QC and QA are tools, but don't be fooled". The presentation was thought-provoking effectively challenging the assumption that QC and QA systems alone guarantee accurate results, highlighting instead their limitations when underlying assumptions are not questioned.

The use of real-world case studies, particularly the Diesse example, was impactful and clearly demonstrated how QC and QA can sometimes reinforce incorrect assumptions, emphasising the need for ongoing scientific questioning and interpretation. The presentation reinforced the importance of scientific judgement and encouraged a more questioning approach to routine practice.

Overall, this was an insightful and relevant session, with strong practical value for scientists at all levels of experience.

The evening concluded with a lively quiz hosted by James Ng and Sandra Naluzze, testing attendees across a mix of haematology, coagulation, and transfusion topics.

Once again, this was it was a well-attended and enjoyable event! Thank you very much to Michelle Taylor and the Austin team for their incredible efforts in organising and we are looking forward to it again next year!

VIRTUAL MORPHOLOGY WEBINAR

By Patricia Szczurek (Austin Health Pathology) and Heng Yau Sua (St. Vincent's Pathology)



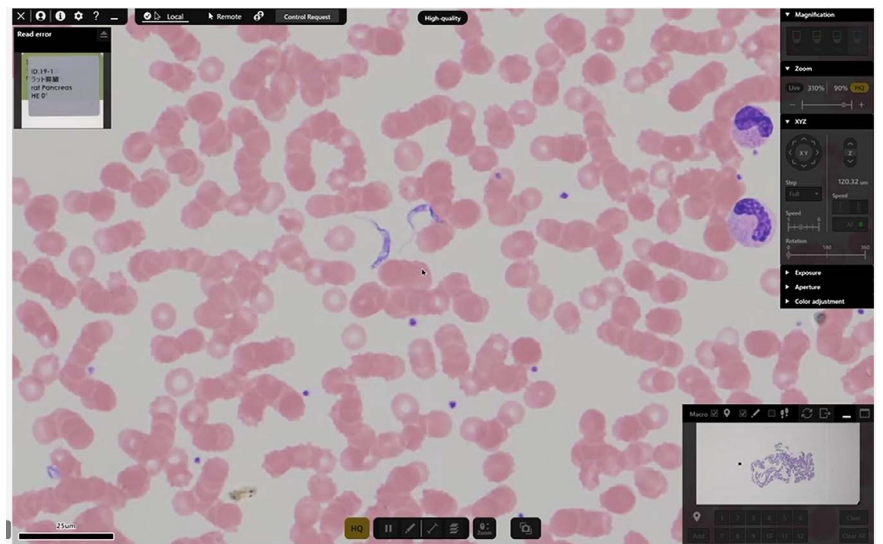
The AIMS Vic Branch Virtual Morphology Webinar returned this year following overwhelming positive feedback from the inaugural event, with close to 200 attendees joining online from across Australia and beyond.

Held in collaboration with Abacus dx, the webinar utilised the Nikon Eclipse Ui digital microscope platform to allow presenters to demonstrate morphology cases live in real time. This interactive format gave attendees the opportunity to view blood films remotely while presenters navigated and highlighted key morphological features throughout each case discussion.

From Left: Steve Schischka, Michelle Taylor, Boris Zhang, Cathy Durkin, Heng Yau Sua (host), Clare Shugg

The evening commenced with Clare Shugg from Royal Melbourne Hospital, who presented a “once-in-a-lifetime” case of *Trypanosoma*. *Trypanosoma* are flagellated blood parasites transmitted by biting insects.

In blood films, they appear as elongated extracellular organisms with an undulating membrane, a single flagellum, central nucleus, and a kinetoplast.



Our lab was like a Beyonce concert....standing room only....

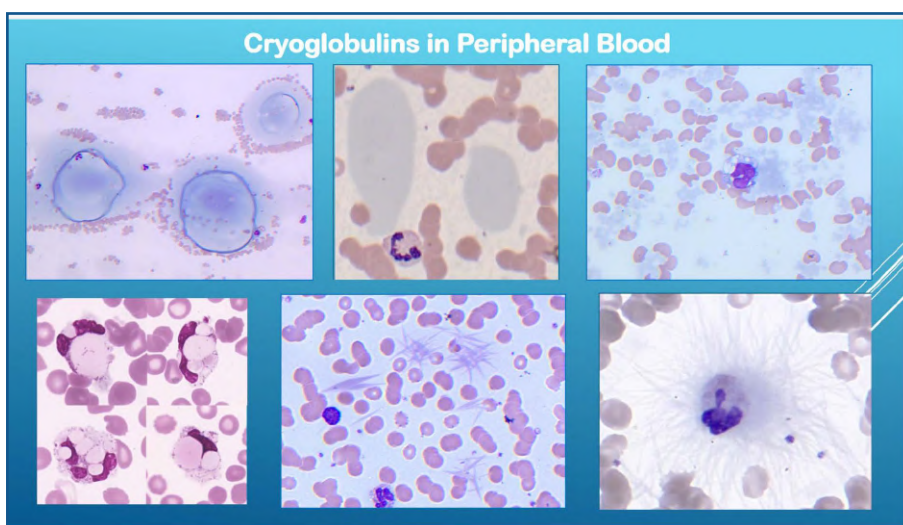
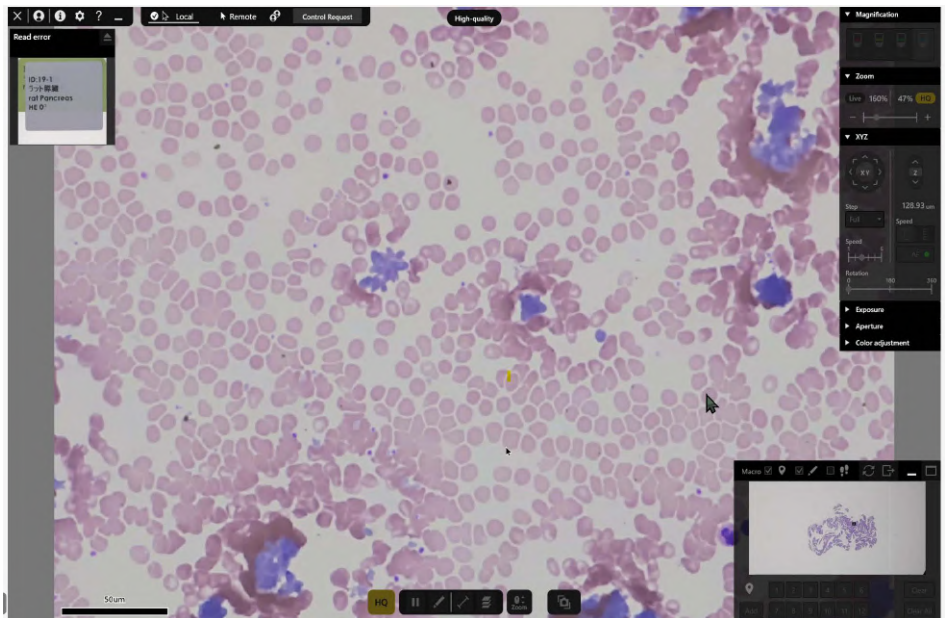


They are clinically important because some species cause African sleeping sickness or Chagas disease.

Everyone in her lab was like a Beyonce concert....standing room only....

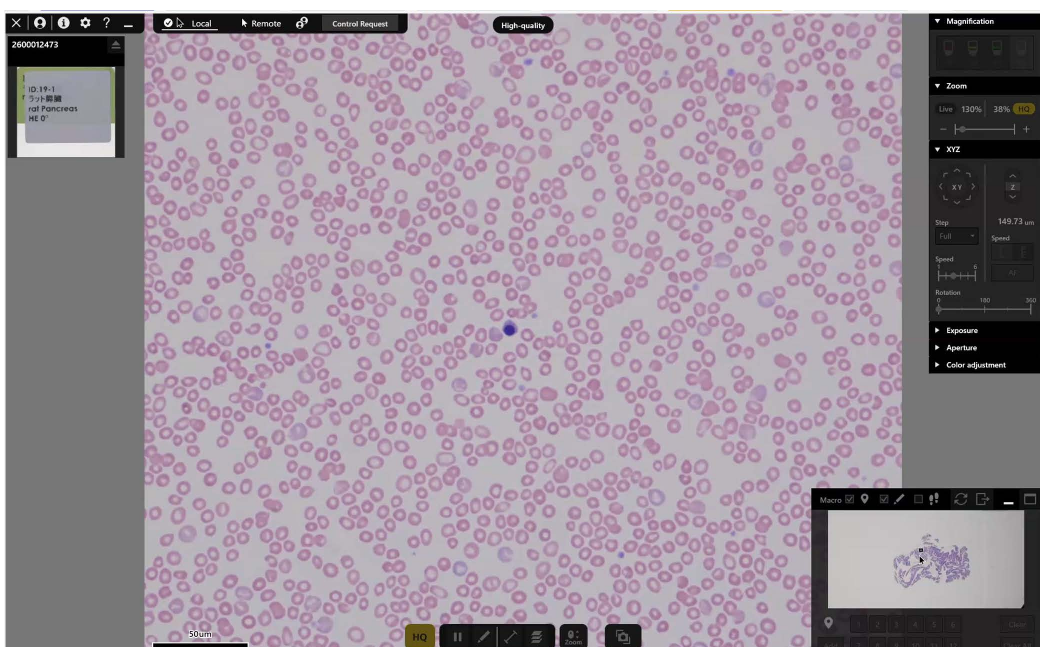
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Our next speaker was Cathy Durkin from Peter Mac, who presented Myeloma and crystalline cryoglobulin reminded us that paraproteins can produce striking and unusual appearances on blood films, including extracellular globules, crystals, or precipitated material. These findings should prompt correlation with clinical history, temperature handling of the sample, protein studies, and further haematology review.



- Pale blue/grey rounded deposits around red cells
- Needle-like or crystal-shaped material between cells
- Large amorphous cloudy areas
- Material that may be inside or around neutrophils/white cells, making them look unusual

We then had a change of pace with a red cell case from Boris Zhang from Dorevitch Pathology, who presenting cases of Familial sitosterolaemia with stomatocytosis reminded us that inherited lipid disorders can present with striking blood film abnormalities, including stomatocytes and macrothrombocytopenia. Recognition is important because it may mimic other haematological conditions and requires correlation with sterol studies and genetic testing.



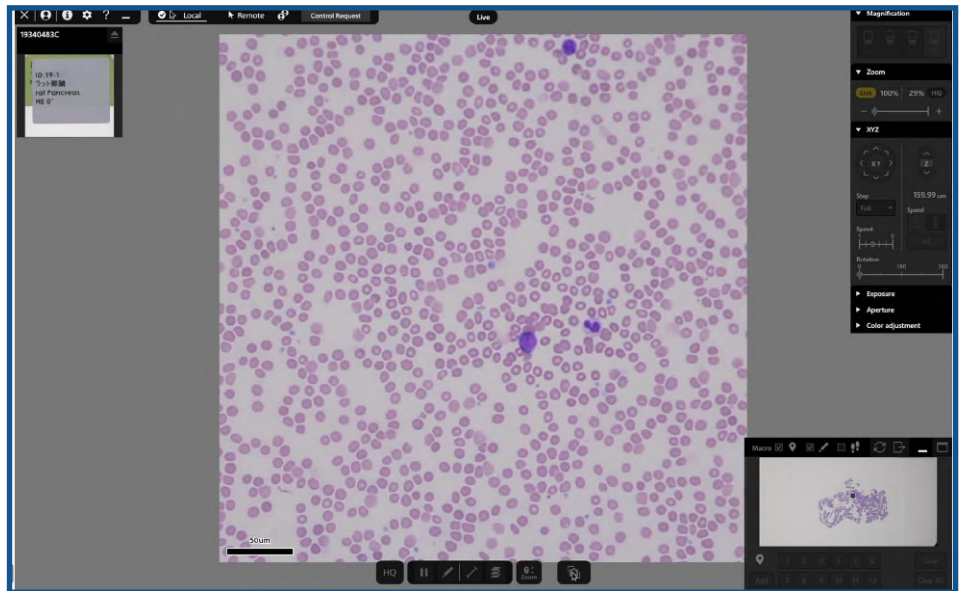
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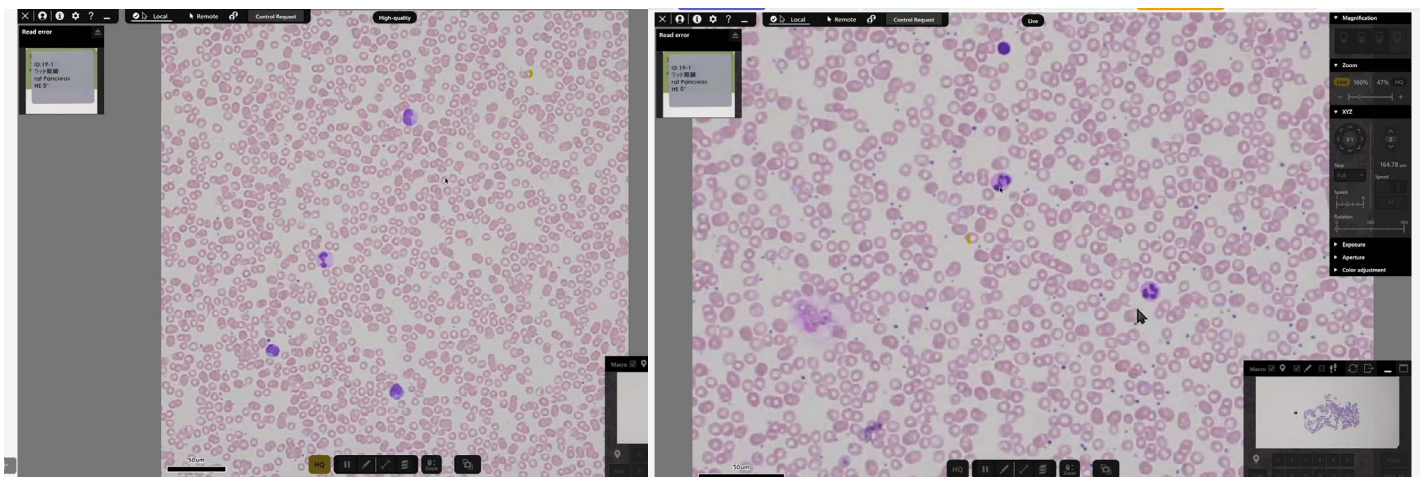
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Michelle Taylor from Austin Health Pathology presented a case of acute myeloid leukaemia and showcased the use of Nikon Eclipse Ui digital morphology.

Highlighting the myeloid blasts morphology in the blood film.



Finally, Steve Schischka from Alfred Health took the reins of the Nikon Eclipse Ui microscope to demonstrate multiple blood film morphology cases. Including CAR-T cells, APML, etc.



The webinar format once again proved highly engaging and well suited to morphology education, with the live microscope component creating a practical and interactive learning experience for attendees.

A huge thank you to all of our presenters and their laboratories for generously contributing their time, expertise and interesting cases to the evening. We would also like to sincerely thank Abacus dx for their ongoing support of this event and for providing access to the Nikon Eclipse Ui microscope platform.

The continued enthusiasm for virtual morphology education has been fantastic to see, and we look forward to running more events like this in the future.



NEWS FROM THE HOSPITALS – MAY

By Teresa Abajo (Alfred Health Pathology)

The May 2026 Australian Society for Microbiology News from the Hospitals event was held at Monash Medical Centre on 27 May, attracting around 80 attendees in person and a further 20 online. Sponsored by the Medical Scientists Association of Victoria and chaired by Dr Nilanthy Vigneswaran, the evening featured a series of engaging microbiology case presentations from across Victoria.

Highlights included:

- Bridget Wood (Eastern Health) presenting a rare case of *Listeria monocytogenes* rhomboencephalitis diagnosed via multiplex PCR, enabling timely lifesaving treatment.
- Aideanna Seenarain (Dorevitch Pathology) discussing the misidentification of *Herbaspirillum* species as *Burkholderia cepacia* complex and the role of whole genome sequencing in accurate identification.
- Chelsea Williams-Lumley (Monash Health) sharing a case of imported coccidioidomycosis acquired in Arizona and the laboratory biosafety challenges involved.
- Claire Brown (Monash Health) presenting a case of multifocal brain abscesses caused by the neurotropic mould *Verruconis gallopava*.
- Koratt Sok (Monash Health) discussing a case of fever and arthritis caused by *Streptobacillus moniliformis*.



Speakers Bridget, Chelsea, Koratt, Aideanna, Nilanthy (chair) and Claire.



Claire and organiser Sara Sujansky (ASM Vic Branch).

Claire Brown received the Early Career Microbiology Scientist prize for her presentation.

The evening provided an excellent opportunity for scientists to network, learn and share interesting cases in a supportive environment. The next News from the Hospitals event will be held at The Alfred Hospital in October.

QUIZ TIME: HISTOLOGY



**HISTOLOGY GROUP OF
VICTORIA & TASMANIA**

Credited: Quiz provided by Histology Group of Victoria & Tasmania

1. What nationality was Gomori who developed the methenamine silver stain for fungus?

- a) Russian
- b) Hungarian (Gyorgy Gomori)
- c) Austrian
- d) Ukrainian

2. Where are Peyer's patches located?

- a. Stomach
- b. Large intestine
- c. Oesophagus
- d. Small intestine

3. Which type of epithelium is more than one cell layer thick?

- a. Cuboidal
- b. Simple
- c. Squamous
- d. Stratified

4. In which year did Dr George Papanikolaou describe identifying malignant cells in cervical smears?

- a) 1928
- b) 1938
- c) 1948
- d) 1958

5. Most stains used in histology (and biology and microbiology) come from which industry?

- a. The automotive industry
- b. The publishing industry
- c. The food industry
- d. The textile industry



GUESS THAT INSTRUMENT!

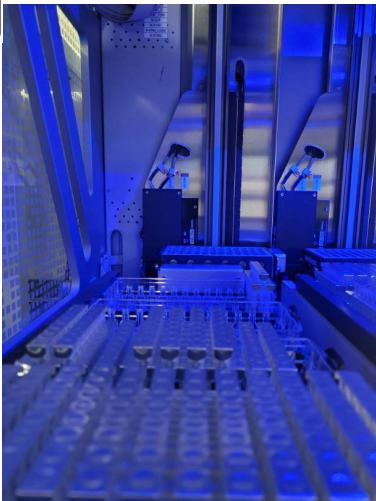
By Patricia Szczurek (Austin Health Pathology)

Think you know your analysers? We've zoomed in on sections of instruments from laboratories across Victoria and it's your job to work out what they are. From oddly familiar compartments to distinctive features you might see every day, some may be instantly recognisable... while others might look unfamiliar out of context.

We spend countless hours working alongside these instruments every day, but they can look surprisingly different when viewed up close.

How many can you identify correctly? Good luck and happy guessing.

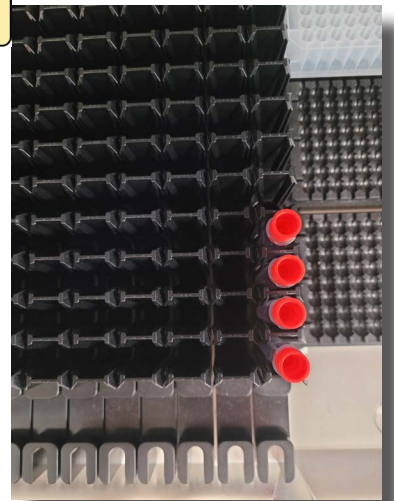
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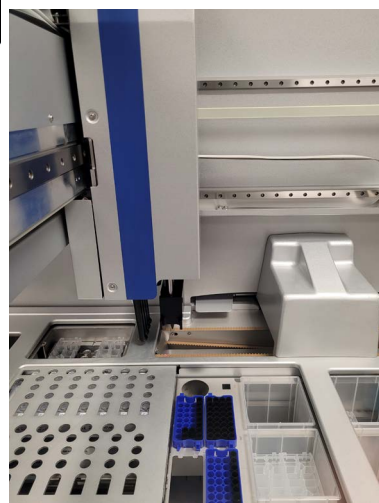
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3



4



5



GET YOURSELF CERTIFIED!



The Australian Council for Certification of the Medical Laboratory Scientific Workforce (CMLS) is a newly created not-for-profit company established to administer the voluntary certification scheme for clinical scientists, medical scientists and technical officers.

WHY BECOME CERTIFIED?

Your status as a certified medical laboratory professional is a public guarantee that you are qualified, competent and continuing your professional development.

- Recognition of scientific qualifications.
- Certification aligned with competency development and assessment processes.
- Acknowledgement of participation in continuing educational activities.
- Increased professional credibility and prestige in the industry.
- Support of industry standards.
- Demonstrated commitment to superior professionalism.
- Potential advantage in the recruitment process.

New applications for certification and renewals are processed by the professional bodies providing CPD. Please contact your relevant association for details.

If you encounter any problems or have any questions, please email: office@cmls.org.au.



Australasian Professional Acknowledgement Continuing Education (APACE) is a voluntary programme that recognises professional activities which contribute to professional growth.

WHY BECOME CERTIFIED?

- Participation in CPD activities demonstrates a commitment to ongoing continuing education and professional development.
- APACE provides formal recognition of activities that may have been pursued on personal basis without recognition – records for a professional development portfolio.
- An APACE Certificate enhances professional profile and is a bonus on a resume.
- Recognition of participation in activities provides encouragement to maintain, improve and extend knowledge and skills for scientific and professional duties.
- CPD is about extending your knowledge and keeping up with, or ahead of, current developments and practices.
- CPD participation ensures a competent workforce and enhanced quality of service for increased confidence of service users.

The programme is open to members of AIMS, AACB, ASM, THANZ, ANZSBT and FSA. APACE participants can lodge applications and activities using the online diary www.apace.org.au.

QUIZ ANSWERS

Quiz Time: Histology

- Answers:
- 1) b. Hungarian (Gyorgy Gomori)
 - 2) d. Small intestine
 - 3) d. Stratified
 - 4) a. 1928
 - 5) d. The textile industry

Guess That Instrument!

- Answers:
- Photo 1. Grifols Erytra automated blood typing testing system
 - Photo 2. Beckman Coulter DxFLEX Flow Cytometer
 - Photo 3. werten QANTA-Lyser 3000 IFA/ELISA
 - Photo 4. QIAGEN QIAasympfony DNA/RNA Extraction System
 - Photo 5. BD BACTEC FX Blood Culture System



GOT NEWS TO SHARE?

We would be delighted to share the good things you are doing in the scientific world.

Contact us at secretary.aims.vic@gmail.com or via Facebook (@AIMSVictorianBranch) to let us know.



AIMS

NATIONAL SCIENTIFIC MEETING

16 - 18 SEPTEMBER 2026, PAN PACIFIC, PERTH

SCIENTIFIC PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

A comprehensive scientific program featuring international and national experts across keynote lectures, case studies, symposia, scientific sessions and poster presentations covering:



GENOMICS & MOLECULAR DIAGNOSTICS



LEADERSHIP, AI & FUTURE TRENDS



TRANSPLANT SCIENCE



FORENSIC SCIENCE



HAEMATOLOGY



IMMUNOLOGY



BIOCHEMISTRY



MICROBIOLOGY



AIMS RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS



TRANSFUSION

HEAR FROM GLOBAL LEADERS



Professor Allen Chan

The Chinese University of Hong Kong



Associate Professor Mandy Ballinger

Centre for Molecular Oncology at the UNSW Sydney



Paul Schneider

Executive Director, Operations at PathWest Laboratory Medicine WA



Kerry Weeks

Thalassaemia and Haemophilia Molecular Reference Laboratory, 2026 AIMS Travelling Orator



Professor Rakesh Veedu, Progenis Pharmaceuticals

WA Emerging Innovator of the Year 2025 Award Recipient

and many more

REGISTER NOW



EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION CLOSE 31 JULY



Bringing Together the Asia-Pacific Medical Laboratory Science Profession

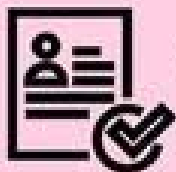


Australian Institute of
Medical and Clinical Scientists

AIMS Vic Branch

Join our committee

*Are you interested in contributing to the profession
and supporting VIC branch activities and events???*



Open to MAIMS, Intermediate,
Graduate and Fellow categories*

*At this time, there are no Student
Member vacancies available.

Please send your CV & nomination form to:
secretary.aims.vic@gmail.com

Closing Date: Friday, 3 July 2026



AIMS VIC BRANCH: AWARDS NOMINATIONS AND AGM NOTICE



Notice is hereby given that the 2026 Victoria Branch Annual General Meeting will be held on **Tuesday 21 July 2026**, commencing at 8:00pm (AEST) following the Haematology Discussion Group.

The Annual General Meeting will take place at St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne, 41 Victoria Parade, Fitzroy. **This is an in-person event only.**

Further details regarding the Annual General Meeting, including the agenda and Annual Report, will be distributed closer to the meeting date.

Nominations are now invited for the following Victoria Branch Awards:

- George Milsom Memorial Award
- George Swanson Christie Memorial Award
- AIMS Victoria Branch Young Scientist Award

Nominations for the Victoria Branch Awards **close at 5:00pm on Friday 3 July 2026.**

Completed nomination forms should be submitted to:

secretary.aims.vic@gmail.com

We encourage members to recognise and celebrate the achievements of their colleagues by submitting a nomination.

Kind regards,

AIMS VIC Branch Committee



Australian Institute of
Medical and Clinical Scientists

AIMS Victoria Branch 2026 Awards

The George Milsom Memorial Award

Legacy

The George Milsom Memorial Award was established at the end of 1982 upon the dissolution of the Medical Laboratory Scientists' Association of Victoria (MLSAV). An initial sum of \$2,500 was donated by the MLSAV to set up two \$100 annual awards in honour of the late Mr. George Milsom who had given outstanding contribution of service to Medical Laboratory Service in Victoria.

Eligibility for the Award

The awards are available to any Victorian resident with the exception of the Executive members of the AIMS Victorian Branch.

Purpose of the Award

The George Milsom Memorial Award is to be given for significant achievement or service in the field of Medical Laboratory Science in Victoria.

Examples of nominees for this award would be:

- A scientist involved in a major scientific breakthrough or achieving National recognition or International recognition for his or her work.
- Any person who has given significant service at either Committee level or outside Committee.

The George Swanson Christie Memorial Award

Legacy

The award was established in 2004 and had been made possible by a bequest given by Kok Chong Moey to commemorate the inspirational work of Professor Christie. An initial sum of \$20,000 was donated, half used for the annual award and the remaining portion to be invested with the interest to be added to the amount of this legacy.

Eligibility for the Award

The recipient must have links (either current or past) to medical laboratory science in Victoria and it is desirable (although not an absolute requirement) they have been a member of AIMS at some time during their career.

Purpose of the Award

The George Swanson Christie award recipient should be a person who has been an inspiration to others in the Medical Laboratory Science field.

Nominations can be put forward by financial members with voting rights to the AIMS Victoria Branch.

Nomination forms are on the following pages.



Australian Institute of
Medical and Clinical Scientists

2026 AIMS VICTORIA BRANCH GEORGE MILSOM MEMORIAL AWARD

NOMINATION FORM

We, the undersigned, being financial members with voting rights* of the Australian Institute of Medical and Clinical Scientists, nominate:

_____ (Name of nominee)

for the George Milsom Memorial Award to be presented at the Annual Meeting of the AIMS Victorian Branch on Tuesday 21 July 2026.

Proposed by: _____

Signature: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / 2026

Seconded by: _____

Signature: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / 2026

Supported by: _____

Signature: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / 2026

The nomination must be accompanied by a citation outlining the merits of the particular nominee for the Award and their CV.

Nomination forms should be returned to the Victorian Branch secretary at:

secretary.aims.vic@gmail.com

No later than 5pm (AEST) on Friday 03 July 2026

** Affiliate Members, Corporate Members and Student members do not have voting rights and are not eligible to complete a nomination form*



Australian Institute of
Medical and Clinical Scientists

2026 AIMS VICTORIA BRANCH GEORGE SWANSON CHRISTIE MEMORIAL AWARD

NOMINATION FORM

We, the undersigned, being financial members with voting rights* of the Australian Institute of Medical and Clinical Scientists, nominate:

_____ (Name of nominee)

for the George Swanson Christie Memorial Award to be presented at the Annual Meeting of the AIMS Victorian Branch on Tuesday 21 July 2026.

Proposed by: _____

Signature: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / 2026

Seconded by: _____

Signature: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / 2026

Supported by: _____

Signature: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / 2026

The nomination must be accompanied by a citation outlining the merits of the particular nominee for the Award and their CV.

Nomination forms should be returned to the Victorian Branch secretary at:

secretary.aims.vic@gmail.com

No later than 5pm (AEST) on Friday 03 July 2026

* Affiliate Members, Corporate Members and Student members do not have voting rights and are not eligible to complete a nomination form



Australian Institute of
Medical and Clinical Scientists

AIMS Victoria Branch Awards

Victorian Branch Young Scientist Award

History

The AIMS Victorian Branch Young Scientist Award was established in 2021. It is given to recognise scientific endeavours, which will likely benefit medical laboratory science in Victoria.

Eligibility for Award

The award is available to any AIMS Victorian member (with the exception of the AIMS Victorian Branch Committee members) who has less than 10 years' professional experience.

Purpose of the Awards

This award is given to recognise scientific endeavour in Medical Laboratory Science. Examples of nominees would be:

- A scientist who has shown exceptional leadership/mentorship.
- A scientist who has implemented innovative ideas
- A scientist who has written a paper for publication which has a significant merit at either National or International level.
- A scientist who has shown exceptional effort to continuing education.
- A scientist who has achieved the highest marks at Fellowship level.
- Any person who has shown a great deal of personal endeavour (e.g., setting up a new committee, discussion group).



Australian Institute of
Medical and Clinical Scientists

2026 AIMS VICTORIA BRANCH YOUNG SCIENTIST AWARD

NOMINATION FORM

We, the undersigned, being financial members with voting rights* of the Australian Institute of Medical and Clinical Scientists, nominate:

_____ (Name of nominee)

for the AIMS Victoria Branch Young Scientist Award to be presented at the Annual Meeting of the AIMS Victorian Branch on Tuesday 21st July 2026.

Proposed by: _____

Signature: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / 2026

Seconded by: _____

Signature: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / 2026

Supported by: _____

Signature: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / 2026

The nomination must be accompanied by a citation outlining the merits of the particular nominee for the Award and their CV.

Nomination forms should be returned to the Victorian Branch secretary at:

secretary.aims.vic@gmail.com

No later than 5pm (AEST) on Friday 03 July 2026.

** Affiliate Members, Corporate Members and Student members do not have voting rights and are not eligible to complete a nomination form.*

YOUR VICTORIAN BRANCH COMMITTEE



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