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***The Transplantation Society of  
Australia and New Zealand Inc***

145 Macquarie Street Sydney NSW 2000 Australia

Phone +61 2 9256 5461: Fax +61 2 9241 4083

Email: [tsanz@racp.edu.au](mailto:tsanz@racp.edu.au) Website: [www.tsanz.com.au](http://www.tsanz.com.au)

# Newsletter

## August 2007

### In this Issue

<b>Editorial Comment</b>	<b>2</b>		
<b>President's Message</b>	<b>2</b>		
<b>Secretary's Report</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Membership</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Treasurer's Report</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Society Awards &amp; Grants</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Standing Committees Report</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Other Awards Available</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Postgraduate Training Course &amp; Annual Scientific Meeting 2009</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Calendar of Events</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Annual Scientific Meeting 2007</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>TSANZ Council</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Travel Grant Reports</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Standing Committees</b>	<b>14</b>
		<b>2008 World Transplantation Congress</b>	<b>15</b>

## **EDITORIAL COMMENT**

Welcome to our first newsletter for 2007. Rather than being frustrated by a lack of news, our excuse for the delay in getting this to you is a period of action and change. Indeed, were it not for the persistence of our Rock of Gibraltar, Aviva Rosenfeld, this newsletter may have reached you in Christmas wrap. Issues occupying the Society have included changing the guards on Council, organising the 2008 World Transplantation Congress to be held in Sydney, running the 2007 ASM in Canberra (was this the last time we would inhabit the Academy of Science?) and dealing with the usual issues including the lack of deceased donors, expanding our options for living donation, relationships between our society and the Colleges, and striking a balance in our activities to fit with the makeup of our membership. I urge you to read on to get a feel for the directions and philosophies of our new President and Secretary, the state of our finances, a wrap of the 2007 ASM, reports from the globe-trotting recipients of our travel grants and a rundown of the key dates for your diary. Should anything within tickle your fancy or prompt you into action, please let us know about it at [tsanz@racp.edu.au](mailto:tsanz@racp.edu.au).



## **MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT**

**Josette Eris**

The Annual Scientific Meeting in Canberra was again very well attended. The meeting continued the tradition of strong science and increasing clinical presentations across a range of solid organ and cellular transplant fields. On behalf of Council I would like to once again formally thank the organisers of the meeting, Martin Gallagher and Shane Grey for their hard work in putting together this meeting. Similarly our thanks go to Karen Dwyer and John Kanellis for expertly organising an excellent programme for this year's postgraduate course.

There is no doubt that the organisation of the Annual Scientific Meeting has become more onerous and complex as the number of attendees at the meeting and the number of abstracts submitted continue to grow. This is clearly a healthy sign for the relevance and viability of our Society. TSANZ gathers many different interest groups across the clinical and basic science

arenas of transplantation. This mix of membership results in much of the strength of TSANZ and its ability to represent views on transplantation issues comprehensively. The annual meeting not only consistently provides high quality but also enables excellent opportunity for networking, cross fertilisation of ideas and formulation of consensus views in an informal and friendly setting.

It is the success of the meeting and its resultant increasing size and complexity that now pose a number of challenges. Over recent years there has been recurrent discussion at the Annual General Meeting of the Society as to the appropriateness of the venue and the mix between basic science and clinical components of transplantation. There have been a growing number of competing demands of sessions and individuals. Council appreciates that some of these issues need to be specifically addressed and undertook to report back to the membership the ways in which we could progress.

I then discovered the ambivalence many feel about changes to the current format given the successful nature and history of both the meeting and membership. I had as many people come up to me and voice concern of the impact of any potential changes on the tone and impact of the meeting as I had previously people point out the need for change. The overwhelming message was that issues need to be addressed but that the changes should not be at the cost of losing the intimate, informal and affordable nature of this meeting which sets it apart from many of the others we attend.

First the issue of venue. The society has been well served by being at the Academy of Science at the ANU over many years and certainly part of the appeal of the meeting has been the familiarity and the uniqueness of the site. It is clear however that the Academy of Science no longer meets the physical needs of the meeting beyond the plenary sessions. The lack of local breakout rooms for concurrent presentations both oral and poster have resulted in frustration and some fragmentation of sessions across University House and as well as the Academy of Science. A number of council members recently did a site visit to Canberra to evaluate alternatives. Alex Sharland will detail further below but there is another site within the ANU that may meet our needs better at comparable cost. This however will mean a significant change to the timing of the meeting to semester break in June. At least this

will eliminate any uncertainty about what the weather in Canberra is likely to be like.

Council has also decided to introduce two initiatives to support the Annual Scientific Meeting. The first of these is the establishment of a Scientific Advisory Committee which will have representation from different sectors of clinical transplantation as well as the basic sciences. This committee will act in an advisory and oversight capacity to assist the local organisers thereby introducing continuity, forward planning and increasing spread of content across different sections of transplantation. The committee will be appointed over the next few months. In addition formal conference organiser will be hired to assist the local organisers in aspects of the meeting such as abstract submission, programming details and registration. We are in the process of evaluating quotes from conference organisers based within the ACT for the 2009 meeting.

Given that there will be no local TSANZ General Annual Meeting in 2008 there is ample opportunity for feedback and input from the membership on these proposals. Council is confident that the above initiatives to be trialled in 2009 should address some of the identified limitations of recent years. The changes do need to be introduced gradually in order not to change the tone of what is a successful meeting that needs improved logistics and facilities.

As the membership is aware the 2008 World Transplantation Congress will be in Sydney in August and many of our members are already heavily involved in the organisational aspects of this venture. The World Transplant Congress is a great opportunity for our members to present original work in an international forum and thus we will not be having separate TSANZ based sessions. We will however maintain local awards for young investigators including the President's Prize. The top scoring abstracts submitted to the WTC from Australia and New Zealand will be presented at an additional session to enable judging for the President's Prize. Please note the presenters will make their primary presentation within the main body of the meeting. The Annual General Meeting and the prize giving session will be held at lunchtime of the final day of the 2008 meeting.

On a more general TSANZ level, the Standing Committees continue to function well under the chairmanship of Peter McDonald. The strength of our Standing Committees is particularly important

at present when there are a number of groups considering the appropriateness and robustness of organ donation and organ allocation. The membership would be aware that there is a ministerial task force chaired by Jeremy Chapman due to report at the end of the year on many aspects of transplantation. The discussions with TGA will be ongoing although the recent lack of integration of the regulatory authorities between Australia and New Zealand has resulted in a slowing and re-evaluation of implementation timelines. Certainly it would appear that regulation for cellular and tissue therapies at level II will proceed as previously discussed although solid organ level I regulation for transmission of infectious diseases has been put on hold at present. I will keep members apprised of progress with TGA issues.

As will be detailed by our treasurer, Jonathan Fawcett, the Society continues to be able to support its younger members and scientists both for attendance at meetings and for travel to progress research links or to acquire new skills. We remain grateful to our industry sponsors and partners for their ongoing funding of the Society without which we would not be able to carry on many of these core activities. Finally I would like to encourage all members to continue input to members of Council regarding their views and suggestions.



### **SECRETARY'S REPORT – Frank Ierino**

Members will note that there have been changes to the TSANZ Council. I would like to thank Phil O'Connell for his steady leadership as President and significant contributions to the Society during his time on Council. Amongst the many contributions, Phil's negotiations with The Transplantation Society in preparation for the 2008 meeting on behalf of TSANZ, and his work with the TGA on the proposed national regulatory framework for human tissues and emerging biological therapies, have been significant. Josette Eris moves to the President's seat and will supported by an enthusiastic Council. We should pass on our congratulations to Peter Cowan who was elected to Council and I have handed over the Honorary Secretary position to Peter. His experience will be a welcomed addition to Council.

The Annual Scientific Meeting was once again a successful event and the quality of this meeting remains a high standard. Balancing the meeting to provide for the spectrum of TSANZ Membership is always difficult and both Martin Gallagher and Shane Grey should be commended for their efforts. The Postgraduate Course preceding the Scientific Meeting remains a major feature of our annual events and was well attended. Karen Dwyer and John Kanellis organised an excellent educational program.

Clinical tolerance continues to be focus in transplanted and it is becoming apparent that clinical trials in this area are evolving. With this in mind, I would like to announce to all members that a "Tolerance Interest Group" is developing which is an inclusive group of members with the aim of facilitating collaborative laboratory research in tolerance and developing a framework for clinical trials in tolerance in Australia. Establishing links with overseas groups such as the Immune Tolerance Network will be important. While the group will be an informal interest group in the short term, the long-term plans will be to establish a formal "Tolerance Standing Committee", however, this development will depend on the success of the interest group. As indicated, this will be an inclusive group and anyone who would like to contribute, or has any comments, should contact me.

An important development over the next 12 to 18 months will be a review of the future direction of TSANZ. The major challenge for the Society is continually assessing the role and needs of TSANZ, and Council is currently reassessing the structure and educational aspects of our Society. Key aspects of this review is the multi-disciplinary needs of all our members (multi-organ specialties, scientists, physicians, surgeons) and ensuring that TSANZ provides for the advancement of Transplantation in Australia at a clinical, scientific, advisory and educational level. Currently under review are the Annual Scientific Meeting and its structure, Postgraduate Course and the Society's relationship with many other organizations such as College of Physicians and Surgeons and specific transplant-related organizations. The Membership can be assured that any proposal will require approval from the Membership and there will be sufficient opportunity for Members to contribute to any change. I am mentioning this at early stage to encourage Members with any vision for change or suggestions, to contact Council. You will be hearing more about this in the near future.

Finally, there is no need to remind everyone that the 2008 meeting in Sydney is the next major event and we are all looking forward to contributing and assuring a successful outcome.



### **TREASURER'S REPORT – Jonathan Fawcett**

There are no significant financial events to report except the difficulty retrieving funds held on deposit at Citibank. These were locked in until this year and Council decided they should be withdrawn when the term was up because the interest being returned was only 3%, about half (or less) of the society's other investments. In the period since the money was invested, though, the signatories to the deposit account have moved on, having served their terms on Council. Citibank were reluctant to give up their funds to possible impostors but this has now been resolved and the extra funds will be held in the current account until sometime next year in case extra funds are needed to underwrite the preparations for the TTC world congress in Sydney in 2008.

Members will be relieved to hear that no hike in subscriptions is planned for next year. Next year, of course, is the Sydney meeting so there will be no annual scientific meeting to charge registration for. I would urge members, as I am sure the President and Secretary have, to join the TTC, if they aren't members already - it is one of the best value societies going. We look forward to a really strong local presence at the Sydney meeting. The strength of the work being done "down under" is world class, as our ASM shows, and this will be a big chance to show it off - without suffering the usual jet lag that international meetings are associated with.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Josette Eris as our new President and I wish her every success in steering the TSANZ over the next couple of years. There will be significant change possibly including a "makeover" of the ASM. Discussions are starting again about a venue change in Canberra because the Academy of Science seems too small. If we do move, any other venue will be more expensive and we may also have to look at moving the meeting to another time of year. This will have some implications for registration fees - just an early warning.



## **STANDING COMMITTEES REPORT** **Peter Macdonald - Chair**

Active issues are under consideration by individual committees include TGA regulation of tissues and organs, reimbursement of organ retrieval costs (including surgical and transport costs), the establishment of a National Small bowel Transplant Program and the development of criteria for combined deceased organ transplants. In addition, as mentioned in his Secretary's report, Frank Ierino is trying to set up a "Tolerance Interest Group". Any interested members should contact Frank directly.

### **Clinical Practice Guidelines**

Since the last newsletter, a number of guidelines relevant to the clinical practice of transplantation have been published. These include the long awaited revision of the NHMRC guidelines for ethical practice in relation to organ and tissue donation. The original guidelines were first produced in 1996 and were badly out of date. Four documents have been produced: two dealing with cadaveric donation and two dealing with living donation. Separate booklets have been developed for health professionals and the general public. The documents are available in electronic format:-

(<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/subjects/organ.htm>) and as booklets which can be ordered from the NHMRC. Some topical issues considered in the new guidelines include DCD organ donation, deceased directed donation, living donation for dependent adults and children, paired donation and list exchange. The documents should provide a useful resource for members of TSANZ.

In addition, the NSW Department of Health has recently published its own clinical practice guideline for donation after cardiac death (DCD). The guideline outlines the applicable setting for DCD in NSW, donor selection criteria, donor management (including decision-making and consent processes, surgical requirements, criteria for declaration of death, and care of the donor and family leading up to, and after the donor's death), subsequent organ allocation, and the relevant ethical and legal considerations applicable to this organ donation practice in NSW. The guideline is available on the Department's website:-

([http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/gl/2007/pdf/GL2007\\_012.pdf](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/gl/2007/pdf/GL2007_012.pdf)) and provides an excellent resource on DCD for health professionals.

Finally, a clinical practice guideline dealing with living donor liver transplantation has been developed by the federal Department of Health & Ageing in consultation with the Liver Standing Committee. This guideline is close to completion and should be published within the near future.

### **Review of Organ & Tissue Donation**

A number of processes which are aimed at increasing Australia's low deceased organ donation rate are underway. These include a National Taskforce which is chaired by Jeremy Chapman as well as a national collaborative under the auspices of Australians Donate. The Taskforce has broad representation from all stakeholders and has been meeting regularly over the last 8 months. An interim report has been provided to the Health Minister with a final report and recommendations due at the end of 2007. The national collaborative has been running for approximately 12 months and has been modelled on the highly successful breakthrough collaborative that is being undertaken in the US and which has led to a 33% increase in the deceased organ donation rate over the first 3 years of the collaborative. It is hoped that the combination of these two initiatives will see a sustained and substantial increase in Australia's organ and tissue donation rate.



## **ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC MEETING & POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION COURSE 2009** **- Alex Sharland**

### **New Venue for TSANZ ASM and PG course 2009**

It has been increasingly apparent during the last few years that we are outgrowing the Academy of Science as the venue for our ASM. Nonetheless, it is critical that we keep the meeting affordable, especially given the heterogeneity of our Society, and our wish to encourage as much student participation as possible. With this in mind, several members of Council (JE, FI, AS) and Aviva visited Canberra recently to try and find the most appropriate site for our 2009 meeting. We looked at several venues on the ANU campus, two hotels (Rydges Lakeside and Realm) and the National Convention Centre, currently being refurbished. Of these options, the Manning Clark Centre on the ANU campus would meet our needs very well. The centre has 6 rooms, ranging in size from 490 seats down to about 80. All have tiered seating with excellent sightlines from all

seats to the podium and screen, and the largest has ceiling microphones which would eliminate the need for the roving mike during plenary sessions. We would have exclusive use of the foyer area, and there are adjacent classrooms which we could also use for breakout sessions. The arrangement of rooms will give us much more flexibility in programming than we have had before. Movement between concurrent sessions at the Academy of Science and the rooms at University House has always been difficult; however, the Manning Clark Centre has all the lecture theatres co-located around a single foyer area which will allow individuals to move between concurrent sessions easily. Council has been very mindful of maintaining the meeting costs affordable to all members and will ensure that any increase in cost (if at all) is minimal. The venue remains within walking distance of both University House and Rydges Lakeside, although Novotel on Northbourne Ave would be slightly closer than either. The main limitation of the Manning Clark Centre is that we can only use it outside University term time. Essentially, this means moving the meeting from March-April to the first half of June and we have booked the Centre for the week commencing 15 June, 2009 (10 months after the 2008 meeting in Sydney). We are also looking for a PCO firm to work with us each year on abstract submission and programme compilation. Whilst in Canberra, we interviewed three PCO's, two of whom were Canberra-based. We are awaiting quotations before proceeding further.



#### **ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC MEETING 2007** Shane Grey & Martin Gallagher

The annual scientific meeting held in Canberra in March of 2007 had an excellent array of local and international speakers, covering the broad range of scientific, laboratory and clinical areas that reflect our membership. It wouldn't be an annual scientific meeting without a minor disaster, but thankfully this year's was pretty modest, with Professor Stephen McMahon getting caught in the Canberra fog and circling the city for two hours at 10,000 feet rather than give his excellent talk on the future of epidemiological study design. The ATCA Session, with Marvin Weinman and Aimee Cunningham as the keynote speakers, was very topical and initiated a lot a spirited debate around the issue that probably exercises the membership most,

that being organ donation rates and how to improve them. The presentations by the members were excellent with the top prizes going to Kylie Webster of the Garvan Institute (Young Investigator Award), Martin Gallagher of the George Institute (Kidney Health Australia Best Clinical Study) and Stacey Walters of the Garvan Institute (Kidney Health Australia Best Basic Science Study). The social programme proceeded smoothly with an excellent dinner at the Australian Institute of Sport, despite the pre-dinner tour of the facility dashing the hopes of many of the Society's potential Olympians.

The TSANZ Meeting next year will be subsumed within The Transplantation Society Congress in Sydney, so we won't be back in Canberra for two years. In the coming months, Council will be considering a lot of issues surrounding the ASM and how it should be organised into the future. In particular with the annual meeting growing in size the issue of how we can best accommodate the needs of the society at the present site is looming. Another important issue regards the potential for electronic presentations of posters. Any members with strong views on these or other issues would be well advised to liaise with the TSANZ Council to put their views on the table.

Overall the meeting was a great success and the organizers would like to thank all participants for their excellent and enthusiastic participation in the meeting.



#### **TRAVEL GRANT REPORTS**

##### **8<sup>th</sup> International Congress of the Cell Transplant Society 2006**

I would like to express my appreciation to the Society for the TSANZ Travel Grant supporting my attendance at the 8<sup>th</sup> International Congress of the Cell Transplant Society (CTS) and presentation of our data on T regulatory (Treg) cell responses during haemopoietic stem cell mobilisation. It turned out that on the Congress, Treg cells were in the focus of the Opening Plenary Session that reflected the growing appreciation of the role that CD4+CD25+ Treg cells play in various diseases and conditions, including graft rejection and tolerance.

One of the four plenary talks was given by Dr Maria-Grazia Roncarolo from Milan's San Raffaele University that was hosting the Congress. Dr Roncarolo's group had been investigating the ways to induce Treg cells for provision of graft tolerance. It was shown recently that Treg cells could be selectively expanded in vitro in the presence of rapamycin. Dr Roncarolo was able to dramatically expand T reg cells in vitro and also in vivo in mice receiving IL-10 and rapamycin. The latter resulted in tolerance of transplanted allogeneic splenocytes and pancreatic islet cells. In their in vitro protocols Dr Roncarolo's group was able to expand human Treg cells as much as up to 1000 times.

Another speaker, Dr Robert Lechler of King's College, London, also presented his data on expansion of allospecific Treg cells in vitro using rapamycin. His group was able to expand Treg cells specific to donor tissues and demonstrated that those cells induced donor-specific tolerance in experiments.

Being a relatively small meeting, compared for instance to American Transplant Congresses, the CTS Congress concentrated on several specific topics with islet transplantation being mostly represented. A team of TSANZ members working in this field was also attending the Congress (reviewed in the previous TSANZ Newsletter) and it was nice to meet them in Milan.

On the down side, one day during the Congress there was a public transport workers' strike in Italy, which made it quite difficult to move around the city. But on the up side, the great La Scala is in Milan and, amazingly, you can get a ticket just 15 minutes before the beginning of performance!

The next CTX Conference will be held in September 2007 in Minneapolis, MN, jointly with the International Pancreas and Islet Transplant Association and the International Xenotransplantation Association, thus it is going to be a bigger and even more interesting forum.

*Vladislav Rozenkov*

### **World Transplant Congress 2006**

I would like to thank the Society for the generous travel grant provided for travel to the World Transplant Congress in Boston, August 2006. The conference was the First International Joint Transplant meeting for the Transplantation Society and the American Transplant Association.

It was held at the Hynes Convention Center between the 22<sup>nd</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> of July, 2006.

The grant provided was sufficient to cover the accommodation costs while staying in a small lodge in Boston, a short train ride away from the congress centre. During the Congress I was able to attend a pre-meeting postgraduate educational update course run by the joint societies. The course was thorough and comprehensive making it extremely well worth paying extra money to attend. The content was both useful from a clinical as well as a research point of view in both solid organ and islet cell transplantation, which is what my PhD is concerned with

I presented a poster at the meeting entitled "Differences in the Responses to Recombinant Human Activated Protein C Against Allogeneic and Xenogeneic IBMIR". This was accepted as abstract number 2845. This afforded an opportunity to talk with other investigators working in the field of xenotransplantation from the unit in Sweden which first proposed the concept of the instant blood mediated inflammatory reaction or IBMIR. I spoke in particular to one of the leading islet cell researchers in the world, Olle Korgren. The pioneering work he has done is the basis of my PhD work and he is always a brilliant and intelligent mind to converse with. I was in particular able to discuss the role of tissue factor as a mediator of inflammation and coagulation in a reaction it appears we both regard as being essentially the same as an exaggerated ischaemia reperfusion phenomenon in an intravascular cell transplantation scenario.

Also presenting at the meeting were the European group which was reporting the outcomes of the same drug I am working on (namely rhAPC) in the same xenotransplantation situation. The trial data was interesting to scrutinise. The meeting further brought together other collaborators from Melbourne thus providing another opportunity to discuss our project in a stimulating academic environment. While in Boston I was further invited to a laboratory which I was considering as a potential destination for a post-doctorate, from a researcher who is a collaborator in the research we are currently undertaking into the role of CD39 mediated platelet activity in xenogeneic IBMIR.

Once again I would like to sincerely thank the Society for affording me with these educational opportunities.

*Satoshi Akima*

## Keystone Symposium

I would like to thank the TSANZ for providing me with a travel grant to participate as an oral presenter at the Keystone Symposia, held in Vancouver Canada in February. The goal of the meeting was to present the most up to date information on the development, function, mechanism of action, and homeostasis of Regulatory T cells and so it was a great experience for me to present my research to a world stage. My presentation was "BAFF promotes the expansion of FoxP3+ T regulatory cells" and included novel evidence that the TNF-family cytokine BAFF promotes the peripheral expansion of Treg cells that allow allograft acceptance whilst maintaining normal T cell functions. The format of the meeting is that oral presenters still have the opportunity to present their data in a following poster session which allowed me to have more informal discussions with the world leaders in Treg biology.

Shimon Sakaguchi from the Institute for Frontier Medical Sciences, Kyoto University opened the symposia with an extremely interesting address entitled "*The Rebirth of Suppressor/Regulatory T Cells*". Although immune regulation by T suppressor cells was first proposed more than 30 years ago it seemed to be placed in the "unbelievable basket" and has remained there until fairly recently. He gave an overview or timeline of studies that now provide a solid basis for the role of T cells in immune regulation, allowing Tregs to break free and be explored!

Presentations were varied however there was a distinct trend towards cementing the theories that both naturally occurring and adaptive Tregs play major roles in the control of all immune responses and that they do in fact have distinct cytokine profiles (many of which were new to me and something I definitely now intend to delve into). The second major take home message was that there are various ways of producing adaptive Tregs. Several presentations addressed approaches used and the results obtained from preclinical and clinical trials involving the manipulation of regulatory T cells, all of which were very informative and interesting.

On a tourist note, Vancouver was a wonderful city and in many ways much like Sydney in the relaxed lifestyle and friendliness of the locals, however the cold weather left a little to be desired.

Overall the meeting has vastly improved my general knowledge of Regulatory T cells and I made many unique contacts that will only further my endeavours into the world of Tregs. Thank you for this wonderful opportunity.

*Stacey Walters*

## American Transplant Congress 2007

I would like to thank the TSANZ for providing me with the opportunity to attend the American Transplant Congress. I presented two posters, one on the outcome of expanded donor criteria kidneys and the other on a survey of skin cancer surveillance in Australian renal transplant recipients. Almost 90% of Australian centres responded to the survey and fortunately virtually every patient at some stage has pre and post transplant skin cancer prevention education. Nearly all centres performed annual skin cancer surveillance. Two-thirds of centres performed full body skin examinations as part of the initial screening process. This is important as around 20% of skin cancers occur on non sun exposed sites. I thank all those TSANZ members who responded to the survey.

Key areas at the meeting that interested me were: the relationship of non donor specific allo antibodies and MICA antibodies and graft survival; the complexity of co-stimulation pathways and finally the increasing understanding of Regulatory T cell function.

There were several presentations relating poor graft outcome not only of donor specific allo antibody but also non donor specific allo antibody and MICA antibodies. Most studies were retrospective. It was also shown that previously negative patients can become positive for these antibodies months after CNI minimization. Thankfully such antibodies can disappear when immunosuppression is increased. It seems that such test may help targeted immunosuppressive minimization in the future.

Mohamed Sayegh gave presentations highlighting the complexity of the immune response and that differing costimulation pathways predominate at the instigation and prolongation of an immune response. He suggested that these issues need to be fully elucidated before a costimulation blockade protocol without conventional immunosuppression can be developed.

Indeed Larsen gave a brief mention on the long term outcomes of the Belatacept (costimulation blockage) trial showing that although patients were not on a CNI they still required conventional immunosuppression and infusions of the costimulation blockage antibody. Interestingly there were suggestions that Belatacept may be used in trials involving patients with chronic allograft nephropathy.

From a basic science point of view, my interest is in Regulatory T cells (Tregs). These cells seem to be key regulators of immune responses and high levels of these cells and their associated transcription factor FOXP3 have been linked to long term graft survival and resolution of acute rejection episodes. I am currently investigating the effect of differing immunosuppressive regimens on Tregs.

There were interesting presentations of how DNA is unwound from histones to allow FOXP3 transcription factors to mediate their effects. Robert Lechler's lab presented animal model data on the development of antigen specific Tregs using HLA-Tetramers technologies.

*Robert Carroll*



I wish to thank the TSANZ committee for the opportunity to attend the American Transplant Congress 2007. This was held in San Francisco and allowed me to see many of the new advances in transplantation.

I went one day earlier to attend the basic immunology course which was invaluable in providing an opportunity to hear a number of speakers on rapidly evolving fields in the area of transplantation, including T cell activation, alloantibodies, regulatory T cells, co-stimulatory pathways in rejection and tolerance, memory T cell responses and the role endothelium as a target of injury

I was involved in 3 posters related to the mixed chimerism work of my part of PhD thesis, the OX40 co-stimulatory pathways work of Dr Wang, and the IL-6 receptor blockade work of Dr Zhang. These presentations attracted many visitors.

My PhD is currently investigating a number of areas of tolerance. I am using the pruning technique in cardiac allografts and islet allografts to see whether this would prolong allograft

survival. I am using mixed Chimerism model by bone-marrow (BM) transplantation with co-stimulation blockade to achieve transplantation tolerance across a major MHC mismatch in skin and heart transplantation. I have used the transduced CD4 foxp3 cells to achieve transplantation tolerance across a major MHC mismatch in heart transplantation

I was able to attend sessions about heart transplantation in broad aspects of the area. Dr Molitor's group presented data that Treg cells play an important role in a heart allograft tolerance model. I was also able to attend Dr Pavlovs talk titled bone marrow cells decay accelerating factor (DAF) regulates alloreactive T cells immunity and cardiac allograft rejection. I also was very interested in clinical data presented by Dr Hiemann's group on heart transplantation titled prognostic impact of microvasculopathy on survival after heart transplantation-evidence from 9,713 endomyocardial biopsies. I was able to discuss many features of the analysis of this model with the members of these groups. In particular I was able to get some understanding of the issues of chronic vasculopathy seen in cardiac transplants.

I am also doing a number of studies related to chimerism. I had the opportunity to attend early morning workshops chaired by Dr Sykes and Dr Strober about mixed chimerism induced tolerance update. Dr Sykes presented her work on models of mixed chimerism and the initial human studies. I am using a unique model of induced chimerism using the MGMT transgenic mouse and understanding their models has greatly assisted in the design of these experiments.

I also had great interest in the advancing field of islet transplantation and manufacturing and assessment of islet cell products. I was able to hear the work of Dr Wang and Dr Thomas about the role of Toll-like receptor 4 in islet allografts survival, Treg and dendritic cell in islet allograft transplant by Dr Zhang and Dr Bromberg. The data from Dr Tian and Dr Iacomini suggests that gene therapy could prevent type I diabetes in NOD mice.

In summary the ability to attend this meeting allowed me to learn about the "cutting edge" studies in my area, to learn more broadly about immunological mechanisms, and to meet with people who were able to offer new ideas related to my current studies.

I hope to present some of my works including mixed chimerism and Islet allo-transplant in international transplantation meeting 2008 in Sydney and again thank the committee for their support for my attendance at the meeting.

*Min Hu*



I would like to thank TSANZ for offering a travel award for my attendance at the American Transplant Congress held at San Francisco at the Moscone Centre from 5-9 May 2007. This opportunity allowed the presentation of our poster entitled "Dendritic cells modified by Sirolimus show changes in the expression of ILT4 and HLA-G and induce FoxP3 expression in CD4+CD25+ T cells". There were supportive comments of our data from Prof Angus Thomson who also showed similar effects of Sirolimus in his murine model.

As expected by many of us the general standard of the scientific and clinical content of the presentations was superb and indeed fulfilled its role as "The Premier Meeting in the field of Transplantation Science and Medicine". As a basic scientist I found it an intellectual treat to listen to the leaders in the field present their overview particularly in the sunrise symposia which included highlights in "Innate to Adaptive Immunity, Effect of Complement and its Inhibitors on T-cell Responses, Tolerance and T regulatory cells".

The presentation in the plenary session by Dr Xiufen Zheng was noteworthy due to the demonstration of the clinical potential of siRNA in the transplantation setting. Dr Zheng's approach involved the use of multiple siRNA-containing organ preservation solution to protect donor organ from reperfusion injury. The siRNAs that were specifically directed to suppress TNF (inflammation), Fas (apoptosis) and C3 (complement) showed significant improvement in graft function and reduced reperfusion injury in their syngeneic BALB/c mouse model of cardiac transplantation. The other outstanding paper was presented by Dr Tatsuo Kawai who reported on stable renal allograft function for up to 3 years of HLA-mismatched combined kidney and bone marrow transplant recipients after complete withdrawal of immunosuppression, signifying that tolerance induction protocols are achievable in the clinics.

There were several cutting edge studies centred on the role of the recent negative costimulatory

molecules such as PDL1 and PDL2 in tolerance induction in experimental models of allograft rejection which are also currently being pursued in our laboratory.

*Ravi Krishnan*



I wish to thank the TSANZ committee for giving me the opportunity to attend the American Transplant Congress May, 2007 in San Francisco, USA. It allowed me to learn many of the new advances in transplantation and renal diseases. I have presented my work as a poster in the meeting, which is the OX40 co-stimulatory pathways work involved in a novel costimulatory blockade in chronic renal injury. I was also involved in another 2 posters related to the IL-6 receptor blockade work by Dr. Zhang, and mixed chimerism work by Dr. Hu. These presentations attracted many enquiries.

I have attended the Pre-Meeting Symposia in the session of the immunology course which was invaluable in providing an opportunity to hear a number of speakers in the area of transplantation and renal diseases, including T cell activation, alloantibodies, regulatory T cells, co-stimulatory pathways in rejection and tolerance, memory T cell responses renal injury.

My current research work was involved with the areas of regulatory T cell function, costimulation pathways and TH17 cells in glomerulonephritis and transplantation. In the present meeting I attended the sessions of regulatory T cells and costimulation pathways in broad aspects of the area. I was able to attend the Sunrise Symposia, which gave me an opportunity to hear many important topics by experts. Dr Michael Karin had introduced the linking microbial infections to chronic inflammation and allograft injury; Dr. Ed Medof had talked about effect of CD59 on T cells; Dr Nader Najafian had presented the CD8+ regulatory T cells and Dr. Claudja Kemper had presented the CD46 and T-reg induction.

There were many new experimental and clinical data presented in this meeting. Dr. Mohamed H. Sayegh had introduced the Pathways and New targets for costimulation between tolerances versus immunosuppression; Dr. Markus Gromp had presented the cell therapy for renal tubular diseases and Dr Burrell had presented the data regarding T-bet, Th17 and costimulation resistant allograft rejection.

Again, I thank the committee for their support for my attendance at the meeting, which allowed me to widen my knowledge of immunology, renal diseases and transplantation, and to meet with people who were able to offer new ideas related to my current research work.

*Yuan Min Wang*



I would like to thank the TSANZ for offering the travel grant to attend and present my work at American Transplant Congress (ATC) meeting, San Francisco May 2007.

This conference provided an excellent opportunity for me to attend presentations by leading research groups in a wide range of different fields in transplantation. The pre-meeting symposia on transplantation immunology provided me with recently updated knowledge, especially in the area of tolerance induction, regulation, co-stimulation and memory, which are all areas of great relevance to our work. The sunrise symposium on T regulatory cells was excellent and informative, of particular interest were new insights on CD4 foxp3 T regulatory cells as well as other newly characterised regulatory cells as CD8+CD28- cells, Double negative T cells in transplantation tolerance by Dr Hancock, Dr Strom and Dr Morelli' groups. The daily sessions were of an excellent standard, and many were of immediate relevance to my research, in particular the session entitled Tolerance: Regulatory T cells. Talks by X Li's group from Harvard demonstrated that OX40 is a negative regulator for T regs and blocking OX40 could be new strategy to induce tolerance. Talk by Dr Bromberg's group from New York showed IL-6 plus TGF- $\beta$  induces IL17 producing CD8 T cells. Presentation entitled Homeostasis and In Vivo Effector Function of Antigen-Specific CD4+CD25+ Regulatory T Cells in Experimental Transplantation by Dr Lechler's group from UK demonstrated that the suppression of graft rejection is an active process that involves the accumulation and persistence of allospecific Tregs in draining lymph nodes and within grafts. From a personal perspective, I found these talks to be most beneficial, as this area is of direct relevance to my interests in tolerance induction in the DST skin allograft model.

I benefited greatly from attending the ATC 2007 and again I would like to thank the society for its generous financial support towards my travel.

*Geoff Zhang*

## MEMBERSHIP



### New Members

Council welcomed the following new members:-

Dr Ishtiaq Mehmood Ahmed  
 Dr Abdulrahman Rashed Alsakran  
 Dr Jai Seema Bagia  
 Dr Richard Baer  
 Ms Susan Louise Blair  
 Mr Peter David Campbell  
 Dr Parvinder Chaal  
 Dr Carolyn Clark  
 Dr Duncan Richard Cooke  
 Dr Natalie Melissa Crowther  
 Dr Emmanuel Amakue D'Almeida  
 Miss Dieu Thi (Yilly) Dang  
 Mr Christopher John Drogemuller  
 Miss Hooi Sian Eng  
 Miss Yiling Fu  
 Miss Stephanie Gan  
 Dr Jenny Elizabeth Gunton  
 Dr Koroush Haghighi  
 Dr Munish Kumar Heer  
 Dr Russell Hodgson  
 Dr Jade Jamias  
 Ms Elvira Jimenez-Vera  
 Dr Melinda Kambouris  
 Mr Vijay Kanagarajah  
 Dr Frieder Kleemann  
 Mr Kwong Fei Eddy Lee  
 Miss Wen Xu Lin  
 Dr David Lockwood  
 Dr Thomas Loudvaris  
 Ms Sylvia Lui  
 Dr Peter Walter Madden  
 Dr Rahul Mainra  
 Miss Lena Mariana  
 Ms Eliana Marino  
 Dr Con Petsoglou  
 Miss Sandra Pommey  
 Dr Natasha Rogers  
 Mr Christopher Hugh Scott  
 Mr Graham Donald Starkey  
 Dr Kamal Sud  
 Dr Nancy Suh  
 Mr Nhut Quang Tran  
 Mr Vijayaganapathy Vaithilingam  
 Dr Hilary Anne Vaughan  
 Dr Giles Walters  
 Dr Gerald Waneck  
 Dr Kylie Elizabeth Webster  
 Dr Scott Wilson  
 Ms Doris Yip  
 Dr Kenneth Yong

Council also welcomed the following new ATCA/TSANZ members:-  
Miss Elizabeth Henness  
Ms Jane Mawson  
Ms Denyse Norman  
Ms Emma Van Hardeveld

### **Resignations**

Resignations were received and accepted from:-  
Dr Kirsten Armstrong  
Dr Simon Roger Berry  
Ms Sophia Dean  
Dr Michael Desmond  
Dr Stuart Dorney  
Dr John Dowling  
Dr Geoffrey Duggin  
Professor Pauline Hall  
Professor Anne Kelso  
Dr Natkunam Ketheesan  
Dr Helen Lammi  
Dr Jian Li  
Dr Nick Mabarrack  
Dr Caroline Milton  
Dr James Petrie  
Dr John Ryan



### **SOCIETY AWARDS AND GRANTS**

The Society, together with the generous support of Society sponsors, offers a number of awards and grants to attend the Annual Scientific Meeting and to attend relevant international meetings.

The awards currently available are:

- ❖ President's Prize at the ASM
- ❖ Kidney Health Australia Awards for the best clinical & laboratory presentations at the ASM
- ❖ Novartis and Wyeth Young Investigator Awards at the ASM
- ❖ Amgen Young Investigator Book prizes at the ASM
- ❖ Janssen-Cilag Travelling Fellowship
- ❖ Novartis, Roche and TSANZ Travel Awards to attend International Meetings



### **OTHER AWARDS AVAILABLE**

#### **Juvenile Diabetes Foundation Australia**

The Juvenile Diabetes Foundation coordinates its research efforts through several types of funding grants, each contributing to the overall goal of eradicating diabetes and preventing its complications. Information regarding Program Project Grants, Research Grants, Career Development Awards, Postdoctoral Fellowships, Innovative Grants, Travel Grants and JDRF Summer Student Grants can be found on the JDRF Website [www.jdrf.org.au](http://www.jdrf.org.au) or by contacting Chanelle Stowers -  
Ph: (02) 9966 0400 ext 201; Fax: (02) 9966 0172  
or by email: [cstowers@jdrf.org.au](mailto:cstowers@jdrf.org.au)



#### **Kidney Health Australia**

Kidney Health Australia provides a variety of grants and scholarships to support individuals and groups in Australia undertaking research into the causes, prevention and treatment, including transplantation, of diseases of the kidneys and urinary tract. For information on all Grants and Scholarships contact Teresa Taylor Ph: (08) 8334 7555 Fax: (08) 8334 7540  
Email: [teresa.taylor@kidney.org.au](mailto:teresa.taylor@kidney.org.au)  
Website: [www.kidney.org.au](http://www.kidney.org.au)

#### **Free Information Line**

Kidney Health Australia hosts a free information line for people with kidney disease. The free call number is 1800 682 531. For further information, please contact Janine Bevan – National Health Programs Unit Manager.



### **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

#### **TSANZ MEETINGS**

##### **15 – 16 June 2009**

Postgraduate Training Course of the Transplantation Society of Australia and New Zealand. Manning Clark Centre, ANU Campus. For further information contact Aviva Rosenfeld  
Phone: (02) 9256 5461 Email: [tsanz@racp.edu.au](mailto:tsanz@racp.edu.au)



### **17 – 19 June 2009**

Annual Scientific Meeting of the Transplantation Society of Australia and New Zealand. Manning Clark Centre, ANU Campus, Canberra, Australia. For further information contact Aviva Rosenfeld Ph: (02) 9256 5461 Email: [tsanz@racp.edu.au](mailto:tsanz@racp.edu.au)

### **9 – 14 August 2008**

**International Congress of The Transplantation Society 2008.** Sydney, Australia.

For further information contact The Meeting Planners. Phone: +61 3 9417 0888 or +61 2 8221 8813 Fax: +61-3 9417 0899 Email: [ts2008@meetingplanners.com.au](mailto:ts2008@meetingplanners.com.au) Website: [www.transplantation2008.org](http://www.transplantation2008.org)

### **OTHER MEETINGS**

#### **5 - 8 September 2007**

**Xth International Small Bowel Transplant Symposium (ISBTS)**

Fairmont-Miramar Hotel, Santa Monica, California, USA

Email: [isbts@mednet.ucla.edu](mailto:isbts@mednet.ucla.edu)

Website:

<http://transplant.mednet.ucla.edu/isbts2007>

#### **7th - 8th September 2007**

**7th International Symposium on Composite Tissue Allotransplantation**

Interalpen Hotel, Tyrol, Austria

Email: [meetings.events@interalpen.com](mailto:meetings.events@interalpen.com)

Website: <http://www.interalpen.com>

#### **7 - 10 September 2007**

**The Southern African Transplant Congress**

Sibaya Conference Centre

Durban, South Africa

Phone: +27 31 309 1106 Fax: +27 31 309 1117

Email: [kamille@progressivepr.co.za](mailto:kamille@progressivepr.co.za)

Website: <http://www.sats.org.za>

#### **15 - 20 September 2007**

**Joint Meeting with IXA, IPITA, CTS**

Minneapolis, MN, USA

Phone: +1 514 874 1998 Fax: +1 514 874 1580

Email: [info@fa-events.com](mailto:info@fa-events.com)

Website: [www.cts-ipita-ixa-2007.org](http://www.cts-ipita-ixa-2007.org)

#### **23 - 26 September 2007**

**International Clinical Trials Symposium 2007**

Hilton Hotel, Sydney, Australia

ICTS 2007 Symposium Secretariat

C/- ICMS Australasia, GPO Box 3270

Sydney NSW 2001 Australia

Phone: +61 2 9254 5000

Email: [info@clinicaltrials.com](mailto:info@clinicaltrials.com)

Website: <http://www.clinicaltrials2007.com>

### **29 September - 3 October 2007**

**13th Congress of the European Society for Organ Transplantation (ESOT)**

Prague, Czech Republic

Phone: +420 284 001 444 Fax: +420 284 001 448

Email: [esot2007@guarant.cz](mailto:esot2007@guarant.cz)

Website: [www.esot2007.cz](http://www.esot2007.cz)

### **21 October - 23 October 2007**

**The Power of One Idea**

The Golden Anniversary of Burnet's Clonal Selection Theory

The Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research

Enquiries: [enquiries-burnet2007@wehi.edu.au](mailto:enquiries-burnet2007@wehi.edu.au)

Website:

<http://www.wehi.edu.au/burnetconference>

### **1 - 5 December 2007**

**47th American Society of Cell Biology Annual Meeting**

Washington Convention Center

Washington DC 20001 USA

Phone: + 301 347 9300

Email: [ascbinfo@ascb.org](mailto:ascbinfo@ascb.org)

Website: <http://www.ascb.org/meetings>

### **9 - 12 April 2008**

**28th ISHLT (International Society for Heart and Lung Transplantation) Annual Meeting and Scientific Sessions**

Boston Marriott and Hynes Convention Center, Boston, MA, USA

Phone: +1 972 490 9495 Fax: +1 972 490 9499

Email: [lisa.edwards@ishlt.org](mailto:lisa.edwards@ishlt.org)

Website: [www.ishlt.org](http://www.ishlt.org)

### **30 May - 4 June 2008**

**American Transplant Congress**

Toronto, ON, Canada

Phone: +1 856 439 9986 Fax: +1 856 439 9982

Email: [atc@ahint.com](mailto:atc@ahint.com)

### **30 May - 3 June 2009**

American Transplant Congress

Boston, MA, USA Phone: +1 856 439 9986

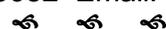
Fax: +1 856 439 9982 Email: [atc@ahint.com](mailto:atc@ahint.com)

### **30 May – 3 June 2009**

**The American Transplant Congress 2009**

Boston, MA, USA. Phone: +1 856 439 9986

Fax: +1 856 439 9982 Email: [atc@ahint.com](mailto:atc@ahint.com)



## TSANZ COUNCIL

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A/Professor Josette Eris  
[jeris@renal.rpsa.cs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:jeris@renal.rpsa.cs.nsw.gov.au)

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A/Professor Frank Ierino  
[frank.ierino@austin.org](mailto:frank.ierino@austin.org)

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[Peter.cowan@svhm.org.au](mailto:Peter.cowan@svhm.org.au)

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Dr Jonathan Fawcett  
[j.fawcett@mailbox.uq.edu.au](mailto:j.fawcett@mailbox.uq.edu.au)

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A/Professor Steve Chadban  
[Steve.chadban@cs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Steve.chadban@cs.nsw.gov.au)

### **Chair, Standing Committees**

A/Professor Peter Macdonald  
[pmacdonald@stvincents.com.au](mailto:pmacdonald@stvincents.com.au)

### **Postgraduate Education, Society Liaison**

Dr Alex Sharland  
[asharland@med.usyd.edu.au](mailto:asharland@med.usyd.edu.au)

### **ATCA Representative**

Ms Aimee Cunningham  
[Aimee\\_Cunningham@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:Aimee_Cunningham@health.qld.gov.au)

### **Executive Officer**

Mrs Aviva Rosenfeld  
[tsanz@racp.edu.au](mailto:tsanz@racp.edu.au)

## STANDING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

### **Chairperson – Peter Macdonald**

**Cardiac:** Peter Macdonald  
[pmacdonald@stvincents.com.au](mailto:pmacdonald@stvincents.com.au)

**Cellular Transplantation:** Kerry Atkinson  
[Kerry.atkinson@mater.org.au](mailto:Kerry.atkinson@mater.org.au)

**Cornea:** Con Petsoglou  
 Email: [con@eye.usyd.edu.au](mailto:con@eye.usyd.edu.au)

**Liver:** Stephen Munn  
[Smunn@adhb.govt.nz](mailto:Smunn@adhb.govt.nz)

**Lung:** Keith McNeil  
[Keith\\_McNeil@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:Keith_McNeil@health.qld.gov.au)

**Paediatrics:** Stephen Alexander  
[stephena@chw.edu.au](mailto:stephena@chw.edu.au)

**Pancreas:** Jeremy Chapman  
[Jeremy\\_Chapman@wsahs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Jeremy_Chapman@wsahs.nsw.gov.au)

**Renal:** Scott Campbell  
 Email: [scottb\\_campbell@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:scottb_campbell@health.qld.gov.au)

**Tissue Banking:** Steven Nailer  
[steven.nailer@imvs.sa.gov.au](mailto:steven.nailer@imvs.sa.gov.au)

**Transplant coordinators:** Aimee Cunningham  
[Aimee\\_Cunningham@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:Aimee_Cunningham@health.qld.gov.au)

**Transplant Surgery:** Richard Allen  
[rallen@med.usyd.edu.au](mailto:rallen@med.usyd.edu.au)

**Xenotransplantation:** Bernie Tuch  
[b.tuch@unsw.edu.au](mailto:b.tuch@unsw.edu.au)



[www.transplantation2008.org](http://www.transplantation2008.org)

The pace is hotting up – we are just over a year from the Congress and while we aren't yet laying out the welcome mats, the invitations are going out. We have the plenary program in great shape – 6 sessions which range from global issues in organ donation through examination of long term barriers in clinical transplantation and future immunosuppression, to stem cell transplantation and the science of the “omics”.

The “state of the art” program of around 120 or more leading reviews of all areas of transplantation is getting into its final form. Covering a very broad range of types of transplantation and topics there will be programs through the week that will attract interest from every discipline. The next challenges are to set in place the morning workshops and the postgraduate education programs.

You can help. Are you going to the ESOT Congress in Prague? If so we would like to ask for your help for a short period on the stand we are setting up there. We need to promote the meeting to our European colleagues – and there is no better way to do that than to speak to your colleagues. We have a slide or two which you could add to your next lecture. If you can help at ESOT, would like to take some brochures to a meeting or want a copy of the slide, please email Aviva at [tsanz@racp.edu.au](mailto:tsanz@racp.edu.au).

Organisational aspects of the meeting are falling into place – the congress venue, the hotels, sponsorship, the exhibition, IT and audiovisuals, the website abstract submission and CME processes. The social program has always been an important part of the congresses – informal communication is often more useful than the formal program – the plans are well underway. It is never too late to improve, so if you have a great idea or see something really good at a meeting that you think we should do here – then drop me an email: [Jeremy\\_Chapman@wsahs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Jeremy_Chapman@wsahs.nsw.gov.au)

Jeremy Chapman

Congress Office:  
**The Meeting Planners**  
Melbourne Office: 03 9417 0888  
Sydney Office: 02 8221 8813  
Email: [tts2008@meetingplanners.com.au](mailto:tts2008@meetingplanners.com.au)