

Gene Technology Technical Advisory Committee, 2020-2023



John Rasko AO, GTTAC Chair

BSc (Med), MBBS (Hons), PhD, MAICD, FFSc(RCPA), FRCPA, FRACP

Professor Rasko is an Australian pioneer in the application of adult stem cells and genetic therapy. He directs the Department of Cell and Molecular Therapies at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and heads the Gene and Stem Cell Therapy Program at the Centenary Institute, University of Sydney.

John Rasko is a clinical hematologist, pathologist and scientist with an international track record in gene and stem cell therapy, experimental haematology and molecular biology. In over 170 publications he has contributed to the understanding of stem cells and blood cells, gene transfer technologies, cancer, human genetic diseases and non-coding RNAs.

He serves on Hospital, state and national bodies with contributions to scientific organisations include co-founding (2000) and past-President (2003-5) of the Australasian Cell & Gene Therapy Society; ANZ Vice President, International Society for Cell & Gene Therapy (2008-12); founder (2009) ISCT-ANZ; President ISCT (2018-20); Scientific Advisory Committees and Board member for philanthropic foundations; and several Ethics Committees. As a science communicator, in 2018 he was honoured by the Board of the ABC at the 60th Boyer Lecturer. He is the recipient of national (RCPA, RACP, ASBMB) and international awards in recognition of his commitment to excellence in medical research, including appointment as an Officer of the Order of Australia.



Graham Bonnett

Dr Graham Bonnett has been a research scientist with CSIRO since 1993. Prior to that he held a post-doctoral position at the University of Melbourne after finishing a PhD (in 1989) at the University of Leeds. He is currently a Research leader in CSIRO Agriculture and Food. His research expertise is in the physiology and development of crop plants and more recently the science underpinning the regulation of genetically modified sugarcane cultivars. In 2009 he was awarded a Queensland-Smithsonian Fellowship and spent 5 months in Panama (Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute) researching the reproductive biology of the weedy sugarcane relative *Saccharum spontaneum*. In 2013 he was appointed to the Independent Science Panel advising on the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan.

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Fiona Cameron



Fiona Cameron

Prof. Cameron is a molecular geneticist with a PhD on gene regulation from Macquarie University. Prof. Cameron had a productive research career with the CSIRO of over 20 years in the areas of gene regulation, gene delivery, drug formulation and gene therapy. Prof. Cameron has published in the field of antibiotic resistance. She has also worked in research management of the CSIRO Nanotechnology Emerging Science area and the CSIRO National Flagship for Food Futures, before running the Innovation and Consulting unit at the University of Western Sydney.

Her subsequent role was Executive Director for Biological Sciences and Biotechnology at the Australian Research Council, where Prof. Cameron was additionally responsible for the major grants schemes (Centres of Excellence, Industrial Transformation Research Program, Special Research Initiatives). She now sits on a number of advisory boards of ARC and other research Centres based at the Universities of Western Australia, Sydney and La Trobe.

Prof. Cameron works as a consultant in the higher education sector and has completed the Australian Institute of Company Directors course.



Michael Considine

Dr Considine is a plant biologist and currently holds an ARC Future Fellowship at the University of Western Australia. He studies the genetics and genomics of development and stress biology, particularly of fruit and tree crops. His primary biological expertise is oxidation/reduction metabolism, and the role this has in developmental transitions, as well as acclimation to stress and climate change. He has worked in both academic and industry institutions and brings a unique perspective of bridging academic and agricultural R&D. He has had great success establishing international and multidiscipline teams to address industry challenges. Dr Considine is primarily laboratory-based but also contributes to undergraduate and postgraduate teaching in genetic and genomic disciplines. He has also served on several industry, institutional and cross-institutional boards.

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Paul Downey

Dr Paul Downey has BAppSc from the University of Canberra (UC) specialising in resource and environmental management, a BSc (Hons) in plant ecology from the Australian National University and a PhD in plant invasion biology/ecology in natural ecosystems from the University of New England. Dr Downey's post-doctoral work was on agricultural weed ecology at North Dakota State University, USA.

Dr Downey has worked on invasive plant species for over two decades, spanning a range of roles both within government and academia as well as with NGOs. He worked for NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service managing major weed programs for conservation outcomes across NSW. He then held the position of Associate Professor in Plant Ecology at the UC until 2018 and now holds an Adjunct Associate Professor position.

Dr Downey has 120 publications on plant invasions. His research spans many different areas of invasion biology, including understanding the impacts to biodiversity, how climate change might alter invasions, adaptive management, biological control, biosecurity, legislation and policy, improved monitoring practices, prevention and risk assessment. Dr Downey's work has been at the interface of research, management and policy. He has worked on plant invasions in South Africa, France, United States, Bhutan, Iran and Australia.

Recently, he has been working as an environmental consultant, advising government to improve management outcomes for invasive species, providing strategic advice on policy and strategies, adaptive management, risk assessment and biosecurity.

Dr Downey has been appointed to both the Gene Technology Technical Advisory Committee and Gene Technology Ethics and Community Consultative Committee.



Tessa Gargett

BA. BSc(Hons) PhD(Medicine)

Dr. Gargett is an immunologist currently working at the Royal Adelaide Hospital. Her research interests include cell and gene therapies to treat chronic diseases and T cell biology. She is based at the Translational Oncology Laboratory (Centre for Cancer Biology) where she is the project manager for a Phase I Clinical Trial of Chimeric Antigen Receptor (CAR) T cell therapy in patients with advanced melanoma, in collaboration with researchers at the Baylor College of Medicine, Texas.

She also performs basic research investigating CAR T cell biology and combination therapy approaches to treat solid tumours. She received her PhD in 2013 from the University of Adelaide for a project investigating T cell-targeted DNA vaccines for HIV. She is a member of the SA Pathology Institutional Biosafety Committee, the Australian Society for Immunology, and the American Association of Cancer Research and helps to run International Day of Immunology and Science in the Pub public events for her local community.

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Grant Logan

Dr. Grant Logan is a scientist at the Children's Medical Research Institute, Westmead and a conjoint senior lecturer at the University of Sydney. He has over twenty-five years' experience in the design and application of viral vector systems for gene transfer in medical research and more recently in the biotechnology therapeutics sector. Many of Dr. Logan's research papers reflect his strong interest in the use of gene therapy to modulate immunity or the immune system's response to virus vector systems and how this influences gene transfer. Dr Logan commenced his career in diagnostic virology and public health environmental science, including the detection and monitoring of viruses and pathogens in the environment. Dr Logan sits on the Scientific Advisory Committee to the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Sydney Children's Hospital Network. He also maintains an interest in beekeeping and is a member of the Amateur Beekeepers Association of NSW.



Michael Michael

Assoc. Prof. Michael completed both his B.Sc. (Hons) and Ph.D. in genetics at the University of Melbourne. He was a founding scientist at one of Australia's first biotechnology companies, Florigene Pty Ltd (formerly Calgene Pacific Pty Ltd), where he contributed to the company's post-harvest and colour modification programs. The use of co-suppression (RNA interference) in commercial products led to an interest in RNA-mediated gene silencing. Now, Assoc. Prof. Michael leads the Gene Expression Laboratory in the Flinders Centre for Innovation in Cancer, Flinders Medical Centre, Adelaide. He currently studies the altered gene expression that is associated with cancer progression and a variety of other human diseases. With an interest in the epigenetic regulation of cancer-associated genes, he has been a pioneer in studying the associations between non-coding RNAs and solid tumours.

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Geraldine O'Neill BSc (Hons1), PhD

Professor Geraldine O'Neill is Acting Head of the Children's Cancer Research Unit at Kids Research, The Children's Hospital at Westmead and Academic Leader, Basic Research, University of Sydney Faculty of Medicine and Health (Western Precinct). In addition, she coordinates innovative new Cancer units of study at Westmead within the School of Medical Sciences, University of Sydney. Geraldine has a long-standing interest in the role of the tumour microenvironment in cancer progression and response to therapy, with a particular focus on the development of improved preclinical models for brain cancer. She completed her PhD at the Kolling Institute of Medical Research, University of Sydney and then undertook post-doctoral studies at Fox Chase Cancer Centre in Philadelphia, USA, returning to Australia with award of an NHMRC Howard Florey Post-doctoral Fellowship and then NSW Cancer Council Career Development Fellowship. She is Deputy Director of the Kids Cancer Alliance Translational Cancer Research Centre and member of Scientific Advisory Committees of the Clinical Oncology Group – Neuro-oncology (COGNO) and the Queensland Children's Hospital Foundation. Geraldine Chaired the Children's Medical Research Institute/Children's Hospital at Westmead Institutional Biosafety Committee from 2014-2020.



Gabrielle O'Sullivan

BSc (Hons) PhD MPH (Hons)

Dr Gabrielle O'Sullivan is the Executive Officer of Royal Prince Alfred Hospital Institutional Biosafety Committee. She has a BSc in microbiology (major) and chemistry (minor) from University College Dublin and a PhD in biochemistry and immunology from London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. Her post-graduate work was in medical microbiology and biochemistry. Her PhD was in the area of acute phase reactants, lectins and amyloid formation. Her post-doctoral research was at the University of Sydney focusing on cellular immunology and cell migration, specifically Langerhans cells, cytokines and glycosaminoglycans. She has a Master's degree in Public Health from the University of Sydney and has made contributions to genetics and public health education, epidemiology, public health and the ethics and biosafety of gene technology. She co-developed and co-ordinated a very successful short course on genetics and public health at the University of Sydney and co-authored a book on the ethics of inheritable genetic modification. Dr O'Sullivan has extensive experience in science-based risk communication and risk assessment of gene technology, particularly in the contexts of biomedical research, clinical trials and gene, cell and molecular therapies. She has contributed to many gene technology reviews and is a co-chair of the Australia and New Zealand Legal and Regulatory Affairs Committee of the International Society Cell and Gene Therapy and a cross-member of the Gene Technology Technical Advisory Committee and the Gene Technology Ethics and Community Consultative Committee.

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Kelly Pearce

BSc (Hons), PhD, GAICD

Dr Kelly Pearce is a Grain and Prime Lamb Producer from Yealering in Western Australia along with her young family. Dr Pearce has had a 16-year career in Agricultural Research and continues to coordinate a number of regional science and innovation projects through her regionally-based business Wheatbelt Science Pty Ltd. Dr Pearce has recently taken up a position as a Research Fellow with the Australian Farm Institute. She is also a Director of the Western Australian Meat Industry Authority, Biosecurity Council of WA, Grower Group Alliance, Farmers Mutual Limited and the WA Sheep & Goat Industry Funding Scheme Management Committee. Dr Pearce is a 2012 Nuffield Scholar and Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Dr Pearce has been appointed to both the Gene Technology Technical Advisory Committee and Gene Technology Ethics and Community Consultative Committee.



Jason Smythe

BSc (Hons), PhD, Grad.Cert.Mgmt. FIML, FAICD

Dr Jason Smythe has over 30 years research and senior management experience in the biotechnology sector in Australia and USA. He holds a B.Sc. (Hons) degree in Immunology from Monash University, a Ph.D. from The Walter and Eliza Hall Institute for Medical Research, and performed his postdoctoral studies as an NHMRC C.J. Martin Fellow at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda (USA). Dr Smythe has held senior R&D Management positions at Johnson & Johnson; the Children's Medical Research Institute; CSIRO; Monash University and The University of Melbourne and as Chief Scientific Officer at the Australian Tissue Engineering Centre Limited; Benitec Limited, and Horizon Science Pty Ltd. He has published over 30 manuscripts and numerous professional reports, been granted 5 patents and awarded 4 International Fellowships. He was an Editor of the Journal Expert Opinion on Biological Therapy for over 10 years and was a Member of numerous NHMRC Grants Review Panels. Dr Smythe also holds a Graduate Certificate in Change Management (Grad.Cert.Mgmt) from the AGSM and a Company Directors' Diploma from The Australian Institute of Company Directors. He is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (FAICD) and a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Management (AFAIM). He has been a Director of several successful Biotechnology Companies and Professional Associations and has been a Member of GTTAC since 2004.

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Jane Visvader

BSc (Hons), PhD

Jane Visvader is Joint Head of the Division of Cancer Biology and Stem Cells at The Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research. She carried out PhD studies in the Department of Biochemistry at the University of Adelaide, and held subsequent positions at the Salk Institute and Children's Hospital/Harvard Medical School, as a Research Associate/Instructor. In 1998, she was appointed to the Victorian Breast Cancer Research Consortium as a group leader at WEHI. She is the recipient of an Australia Fellowship and a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Science. Her primary research interests are directed towards understanding the breast epithelial hierarchy, identifying pathways that modulate its function, and elucidating cells susceptible to breast oncogenesis.



Calum Wilson

Professor Calum Wilson is a Plant Pathologist and teaching academic working within the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture (TIA) at the University of Tasmania. He completed his PhD in Plant Virology from the University of Western Australia in 1992, worked briefly with the Department of Primary Industry in the Tasmanian State Government before taking up an academic position at the University of Tasmania in 1994. He is currently Research Leader for vegetable crops and previously held the role of Centre Leader for the Perennial Horticulture centre within TIA.

His research portfolio is diverse with work across a range of crops and plant pathogens (viral, bacterial, fungal). Major research interests include development and characterisation of host plant resistance and elucidation of the epidemiology and ecology of pathogens. His group has contributed toward the basic studies of crop genetics, physiology and chemistry associated with disease development and resistance, and notably, the novel development of disease resistant varietal clones. He has served on the Tasmanian Government, The University of Tasmania and private industry Institutional Biosafety Committees and contributed to discussions around the Tasmanian Moratorium on release of GMOs into the Tasmanian environment.

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Paul Young

B.Sc (Hons), PhD (London), FAHMS, FASM

Paul Young is Professor of Virology and Head of the School of Chemistry & Molecular Biosciences at The University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia. He gained his PhD from the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine in 1986 and returned to Australia in 1989 to join the University of Queensland. His laboratory's broad research agenda is aimed at understanding the molecular basis of virus induced disease, developing new and improved diagnostics as well as vaccine and therapeutic control strategies for a number of viral pathogens of both human and animal origin. Molecular biology, including recombinant DNA and protein technologies are at the core of his research activities. Prof Young is the Chair of the Virology Division of the International Union of Microbiological Societies and has been the President of the Australian Society for Microbiology (2012-2014), the Australasian Virology Society (2001-2011) and the Asia-Pacific Society for Medical Virology (2012-2015).
