

The first Australian National Biobanking Summit

Renee Mantle, Amanda Rush, Jennifer Byrne

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In an important step for moving biobanking forward in Australia, the first National Biobanking Summit, was held on Monday 21st October 2019 at the University of Sydney.

The National Biobanking Summit was co-convened by Professor Jennifer Byrne (Director of Biobanking, NSW Health Pathology and Professor of Molecular Oncology, Faculty of Medicine and Health, The University of Sydney) and Professor Sunil Lakhani (Executive Director Research; Head, Breast Pathology Group, University of Queensland Centre for Clinical Research and Pathology Queensland) and organised by a National Biobanking Working Group. It brought together 90 experts at both state and national levels, to begin a national conversation about what we need in Australia.

Representatives from New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria, Tasmania, Western Australia, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory attended, with areas of expertise covering biobanking as well as policy, clinical care, health and medical research, data management and linkage and very importantly, consumer perspectives. The current ISBER President-Elect Associate Professor Dan Catchpoole attended as a delegate from New South Wales, as well as Pam Saunders, Vice President of the Australasian Biospecimen Network Association (ABNA).

"Inviting many key experts from different fields across the country was vital to encouraging broad conversations" said Professor Byrne. The focus of the summit was to discuss biobanking strategy in light of a two-year National Collaborative Research Infrastructure funded Scoping Study on national biobanking, which is scheduled to commence in July 2020. The summit was opened by Dr Tony Penna, Executive Director, Office for Health and Medical Research.

Professor Jennifer Byrne delivered a welcome and overview of the summit aims and planned conversations and activities, followed by a presentation by Professor Sunil Lakhani on 'Biobanking: building a sustainable infrastructure in Australia.' He talked about some of the biggest issues we face, remarked on the importance of pathology in biobanking and proposed a structured national biobanking approach.

"We wanted to get our delegates thinking early in the programme, so that their best ideas could come forward throughout the day" said Professor Byrne.



Professor Jennifer Byrne opens the Australian National Biobanking Summit

Summit attendees also heard a thought provoking presentation by Internationally renowned biobanking expert, Professor Peter Watson. Professor Watson gave 'The Canadian perspective in the biobanking landscape', speaking about the evolution of biobanking and the Canadian model of biobank harmonisation. The model is supported by an accessible and scalable certification program based on biobank and laboratory staff education. This certification program has been adapted for use by NSW Health Pathology and made available from 2016.

Professor Watson summarised that “what we need is an integrated, harmonised and responsive system.”

The final item in the morning program was a state overview, with brief presentations from state representatives to inform the group about what is happening at local levels and how that could inform a national model of biobanking.

For the afternoon sessions, representatives were grouped into their areas of expertise; health consumers, biobankers, researchers, clinicians, government and peak body representatives, and data specialists. Each group was tasked with discussing and then reporting their current view of biobanking, views on what needs to change, thoughts on what they could learn from other initiatives, and other stakeholders that should be involved in developing a national biobanking strategy.

“We were so grateful for the engagement that all delegates showed during the discussion session. People are really passionate about the importance of biobanking for future health and medical research”, said Professor Byrne.

In summary, despite the complex biobanking landscape and challenges with biobank sustainability and harmonisation, it was agreed that biobanking is an essential part of our health and medical research infrastructure.

The summit concluded with a common agreement and enthusiasm from attendees that a national framework for biobanking in Australia is needed.

A full report of the summit is being developed and updates will be made available on the NSW Health Statewide Biobank website [HERE](#). You can also subscribe to their newsletter for updates.



Discussion at the Biobankers group table



Co-convener Professor Sunil Lakhani in discussion with delegates during the summit

ABNA 18TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE
Biobanking – Blue Sky Horizons
28-30th October 2020, Pan Pacific Perth

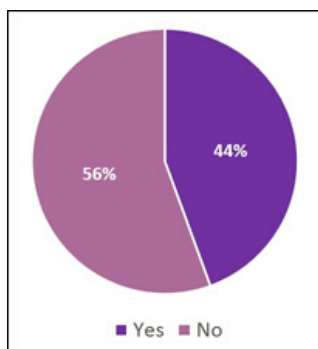


ABNA 2019 Conference Attendees Survey Result

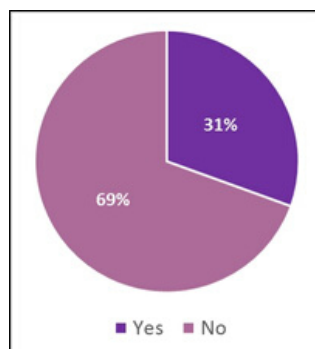
Thank you to the attendees who completed the survey following ABNA's Annual Conference in Cairns last month the FNQ of Biobanking: Futureproof, Network, Quality. The Conference Organising Committee appreciates the opinions shared and looks forward to implementing some of the suggestions put forward for 2020. See below for a snapshot of some of the survey results.

Survey responses were given by a mix of Biobankers, Researchers, Clinicians, Pathologists, Policy Makers and one Ethics/Database specialist.

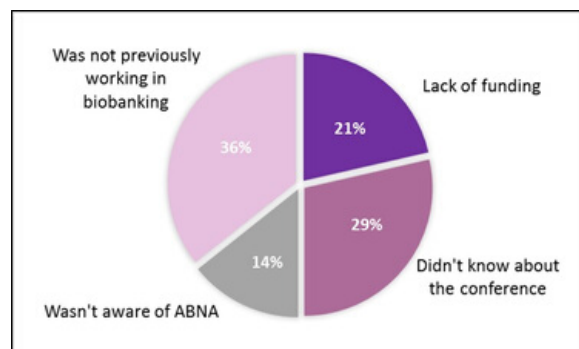
Are you a member of ISBER?



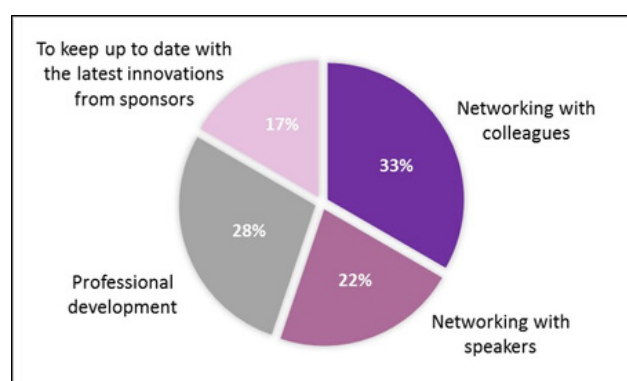
First ABNA conference?



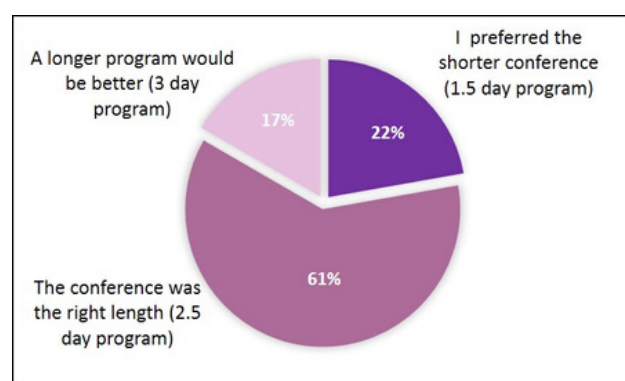
Reasons for not attending ABNA previously



Reasons for attending ABNA 2019



How was the length of this year's conference?



Other reasons given for attending ABNA 2019 included "To see what I could bring back and use to improve/expand our biobank" and "To get information on what other biobanks are using/doing. There were topics suggested for the 2020 conference and the Perth Conference Organising Committee will be looking into suitable presenters for these suggestions.

About ISBER

ISBER is the only global forum that addresses harmonization of scientific, technical, legal, and ethical issues relevant to repositories of biological and environmental specimens. ISBER fosters collaboration; creates education and training opportunities; provides a forum for the dissemination of state-of-the-art policies, processes, and research findings; and provides an international showcase for innovative technologies, products, and services. Together, these activities promote best practices that cut across the broad range of repositories that ISBER serves.

ISBER's goals are to:

- Disseminate information on repository management issues
- Educate and share information and tools within the society and with stakeholders
- Act as the voice for repositories to influence regulations and policy
- Develop best practice guidelines
- Provide centralized information about existing repositories
- Bring members together to work on emerging issues

ISBER is governed by a Board of Directors elected by the membership which is made up of 5 Officers - the Society's President, President-Elect, Immediate Past President, Secretary, and Treasurer, and 4 Regional Directors-at-Large (one each representing the Americas, Europe-Middle East-Africa, China, and Indo-Pacific Rim). Each Director-at-Large is supported by their Regional Ambassadors.

There are 4 ISBER Standing Committees - the Executive, Finance, Nominating & Governance Committees in addition to 8 specialised Advisory Committees.

ISBER Working Groups are organised around timely, challenging issues related to biobanking. They are composed of individuals with expertise and experience in various subject areas and are committed to producing outcomes to the discipline. The purpose of ISBER Working Groups is to identify and address important, unresolved biobanking issues that could benefit from broader discussion. The ultimate goal is to develop position papers, journal publications, or tools that address the issues and provide strategies for addressing them.

ISBER Special Interest Groups (SIGs) encourage discussions and presentations on the chosen area of technical, legal, ethical, or managerial issues relevant to repositories of biological and environmental specimens. ISBER SIGs identify and tackle important, unresolved issues that could benefit from broader discussion through networking and meetings where member presentations and experiences may be shared.

For information about ISBER and how you can be involved in their committees, working groups or SIGs head **HERE**.



**Connecting Repositories
Globally through Best Practices**
Leading since 1999



ISBER Indo-Pacific Rim Regional Ambassador Wayne Ng

Wayne is the Manager for Victorian Cancer Biobank (VCB) based in Melbourne, with special interests in modernisation and sustainable biobanking operations as a consortium.

Recently he was appointed by the National Institute of Health, Malaysia to be the Strategic Advisor for formation of the Malaysian Nation Cancer Biobank Consortium.

Prior to joining the VCB, he was the Assistant Manager at the CONCERT Biobank in Sydney. He is also a molecular biologist by profession with a PhD in cancer molecular pathology from Western Sydney University.

Wayne is currently a member of the ABNA Management Committee and the Indo-Pacific Rim Regional Ambassador for ISBER.



The primary role of an ISBER Regional Ambassador (RA) is to serve as a regional contact working in conjunction with the relevant Directors-At-Large (DAL) and ISBER Marketing Committee to better serve a particular area of the region.

The RA provides localised advice and feedback on information dissemination, local networking and educational opportunities, circulation of ISBER materials at local meetings, effective tools and methodologies to engage communities within their area of the region.

Other responsibilities include identification of local/national biobanking meetings that ISBER should be represented at, assistance in publicizing the benefits of ISBER membership, identification and outreach to new biobanks to encourage ISBER membership and involvement & identification of organisations with whom ISBER may consider future collaborations and potentially serve as a liaison contact to initiate discussions.

To contact Wayne: wayne.ng@cancervic.org.au



Latest News

ABNA

Ask not what you can do for your committee but what your committee can do for you!

ABNA is a community committed to sharing experiences and expertise to help Australasian Biobankers establish and manage world class biobanks.

What would you like to see from ABNA in 2020?

Your committee are always looking for new ideas and topics for the monthly newsletter and annual meeting. So be it sustainability, best practice models, standardisation or something else entirely, if you're looking for information or have an area of interest you'd like us to focus on please send your suggestions through to: abna.biobabble@gmail.com.

ISBER

ISBER Membership for year 2020 is available for renewal or joining. Join or renew now to win a USD\$250 Amazon Gift Card!

For membership information, head to:
<https://www.isber.org/page/Membership>

ISBER is now welcoming the submission of Late Breaking Abstracts for the ISBER 2020 Annual Meeting and Exhibits in Anaheim, CA, USA. This is great opportunity if you missed the previous submission round for presenting your interesting work in the coming meeting. The submission remains open until 23rd December 2019.

For submission or more information, head to:
<http://meetings.isber.org/2020/abstract/>

ISBER 2020 Board of Directors are also currently open for nominations until 28th November 2019. Only ISBER members are eligible to submit nominations for the ISBER Board of Directors.

For more information, please head to:
<https://www.isber.org/page/2020BoardNom>

