

## 2020/2021 ABNA Committee

**PPRESIDENT:** Anusha Hettiaratchi

**VICE PRESIDENT:** Cassandra Griffin

**TREASURERS:** Valerie Jakrot,  
Catherine Kennedy & Helen  
Tsimiklis

**SECRETARY:** Ussha Pillai

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Nina D'Vaz, Samantha Higgins,  
Daniel Kilmartin, Wayne Ng,  
Georget Reaiche-Miller, Leanne  
Wallace, Li Zhou.

## Membership & Management Committee update

Following on from our Annual General Meeting and in preparation for the launch of our new website, ABNA is in the process of reconciling organisational memberships with mailing lists.

We recognise that for many, registration for our yearly conference is what instigates membership renewal and that without that impetus many may not have renewed for 2021. Unfortunately, it is a requirement that those who wish to remain on our mailing list retain status as an ABNA member so please be aware that if you have not renewed your membership for 2021, you'll be removed from all ABNA communications including monthly newsletters, industry updates, conference updates and future employment opportunities.

If you have not yet renewed your membership and would like to do so, please click [HERE](#). Alternatively, if you are not sure as to whether your membership is current, or are waiting on payment from your institution, please contact the ABNA Treasurers Valerie Jakrot (Valerie.jakrot@melanoma.org.au), Cath Kennedy (c.kennedy@sydney.edu.au) or Helen Tsimiklis (Helen.Tsimiklis@monash.edu) to discuss.

For anyone choosing not to renew their membership, we're sad to see you go and wish you all the best in your future endeavours.

This year's ABNA Management Committee includes two new members, Sam Higgins and Dan Kilmartin. Welcome to you both and we look forward to your contributions.

Samantha is currently the Quality Manager of the Victorian Cancer Biobank (VCB), a network of five Tissue Banks together with a Central Operations node located across Metropolitan Melbourne. Samantha uses her 14+ years of experience working as a Scientist in ISO-accredited forensic laboratories and donor tissue banks in Australia and USA to oversee the Quality and Improvement program across the VCB Network.

She holds a BSc (Pathology) and MSc (Biomedical Science) from The University of Melbourne and has extensive experience with ISO-accredited laboratory and building redevelopment, document management and building and evaluating Quality Management Systems.



Daniel is the Project Coordinator for the Australian and New Zealand Children's Haematology/Oncology Group Biobanking Network (ANZCHOG-BN). Prior to this he coordinated the Queensland Children's Tumour Bank for 12 months.

Following his Bachelor of Medical Science, he worked as a multidisciplinary pathology scientist before moving on to the Queensland Tissue Bank. His five years of experience there encompassed supervision of tissue donation, recovery, and production of therapeutic grafts. Dan is interested in a robust and reliable framework for paediatric biobanking, whereby the ANZCHOG-BN informs and influences the sector.

## ISBER Indo-Pacific Rim Regional Ambassador

Introducing the newly appointed ISBER Indo-Pacific Rim (IPR) Regional Ambassador (RA) from Vietnam, Dr Hanh Vu.

Dr Vu started her work as a biobank manager of the Vietnam National Hospital for Tropical Diseases in 2016. She was an invited speaker of the session “Expected to deliver: biobanking responses to emerging global threats for and in LMICs” at the ISBER 2017 meeting in Canada. Since 2018, she has been a member of the ISBER Scientific Program Committee.

Dr Vu bridges the gap between biobanking in Vietnam and the world by actively contributing to the networking activities and applying international standards in biobanking. ISBER helped introduce many Vietnam biobanks into the network of international organizations and access experts worldwide. She is leading the project translating the ISBER Best Practice in Repository 4th Edition into Vietnamese and along with her team of biobankers from Vietnam, involved in disseminating these best practices nationally.



In the upcoming ISBER 2021 meeting, a special session “Rising stars: highlight the next generation of biobankers” will be organized by Debra Garcia, Zisis Kozlakidis, and Hanh Vu. The session aims to promote new biobanking players, including young biobanks, newbie biobankers, and recent achievements in biobanking. The idea of this exciting session came up from as Dr Vu describes “the beautiful journey of her biobanking career”.

Dr Vu joins Wayne Ng from Australia, Tatsuaki Tsuruyama from Japan, Birendra Yadav from India, and Jajah Fachiron from Indonesia as IPR RAs. ABNA congratulates Dr Vu on this appointment and looks forward to working alongside both her and the other IPR RAs in 2021.



Above: Dr Vu presents at the education workshop “The Ethical, Legal, and Social Implications (ELSI) in Asia Oceania Biobanks” at ISBER’s 2019 meeting in Shanghai, China along with Dr Tatsuaki Tsuruyama and A/Prof Daniel Catchpoole.

Left: Dr Vu (far right) with members of the panel discussion “Expected to deliver: biobanking responses to emerging global threats for and in LMICs” at the ISBER 2017 meeting in Toronto, Canada.

## Curing Cancer, One Tissue Sample at a Time

Gavin Higgins, Lingzhi Cao, Qiuyan Fu, Sii Kim Lau, Sithira Jayasinghe, Shumin Yu, Yasmin O'Brien

While the Victorian Cancer Biobank (VCB) and the rest of Victoria has been in a COVID-19 induced lockdown these past 4 months, the VCB has remained active in supporting researchers. During this time the VCB was also involved in the Innovation Practice Program (IPP) that is offered by the Melbourne School of Engineering at the University of Melbourne. The program allows a team of Masters students across multiple disciplines to gain some industry experience through undertaking a project to create and propose an innovative solution for a business challenge facing an organisation with a mentor from that organisation. The VCB's Project Manager Dr Gavin Higgins participated in the program as a student mentor for the project with the VCB.

Gavin viewed the IPP program as an opportunity to not only enhance his communication and leadership skills, but as a means of building community awareness of not just the VCB but biobanking in general. Many of the masters students were unaware of what biobanking is, making the IPP an excellent platform to introduce these concepts in an academic setting.

The VCB set out an ambitious challenge that is a universal conundrum for many biobanks: To develop a "sustainable" service model and marketing strategy that would enable it to build the value of the VCB to its stakeholders that includes researchers, funders and donors, while promoting high impact cancer research through greater utilisation of VCB biospecimens.

Over the course of 12 weeks the students developed a strategy centred on user driven workshops to improve stakeholder engagement and foster greater research collaborations. The students gained insights through a series of interviews with key external stakeholders and consortium staff including Dr Wayne Ng, VCB Manager, Ms Angela Mountain and Ms Zdenka Prodanovic, two of our biobank managers. The students found this experience invaluable as it gave them some exposure to develop their professional communication skills and build their understanding of challenges biobanks face.

Likewise, Gavin learnt to effectively lead adaptive teams through change, which was invaluable during these uncertain times. The VCB intends on adopting the students' strategy in future business plans. The VCB would like to thank our fantastic team of students for their efforts, our key stakeholders who agreed to be interviewed and Dr Peter Cebon and his team of educators at the University of Melbourne for putting together this incredibly engaging and thought provoking program.

For any other biobanks that may wish to consider taking part in the IPP in the future please contact Peter for further information at either [pceb@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:pceb@unimelb.edu.au) or [IPP-team@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:IPP-team@unimelb.edu.au)



*Snapshot from one of our many Zoom meetings during lockdown:*

*1st row: Yasmin O'Brien, Gavin Higgins (mentor), Sii Kim Lau;*

*2nd row: Sithira Jayasinghe, Qiuyan Fu, Shumin Yu and Lingzhi Cao*





## Biobanking - The Next Level: event report

Shirley Wee

The "Biobanking – The Next Level" eWorkshop was very successful, featuring seven speakers from Queensland, Melbourne and Sydney, as well as speakers from the United Kingdom and India. The event attracted over 160 registrations however on the day we had over 180 attendees from around the globe joining in. The attendees came from Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom, USA, Canada, France, Finland, Japan, India, Czech Republic, Egypt and British Indian Ocean Territory.

This audience represented over 13 research institutes and biobanks, 15 universities, and 3 accreditation and regulatory bodies from all over the world. Immediate feedback from the event has been very congratulatory and positive.

"Great and contemporary program."

"The session regarding Biobanking in Space was absolutely fantastic - please thank the speaker and wish him the very best of luck from the UK!"

"Thank you to everyone on the team that made Biobanking - The Next Level eWorkshop a reality. Our biobank team were all very impressed with the event and look forward to your future events."

For those whom have missed the event, you can still access the recordings to the workshop:

To access the Main page where you will find the following talks:

- "Keynote Address" by Prof Nigel McMillan, Menzies Health Institute Queensland, Griffith University
- "Biobanking In Space" by Dr Joshua Chou, University of Technology, Sydney
- "Cybersecurity/Data security" by A/Prof. Vallipuram Muthukkumasamy, Griffith University
- "Blockchain in Biobanking" by Steve Vallas, CEO, Blockchain Australia
- "Legal Issues In Biobanking" by Michael Bacina, Piper Alderman

Click [HERE](#)

To access Paul Lomax's presentation titled, "Small Steps, Giant Leaps – Moving to Automated Sample Storage".

Click [HERE](#) with the password: arktic

To access Srikanth Adiga's presentation titled, "Adopting eConsents"

Click [HERE](#) using the password: LIMS



### Professor Nigel McMillan - Director, Gold Coast Biobank

Professor McMillan is a cancer biologist whose research has focused on the viral causes of cancer. He discovered the receptor for the human papillomavirus, has developed novel treatments for cancers caused by HPV, and has designed a range of novel nanoparticle delivery systems for gene silencing and editing technologies. His laboratory was the first to show that cancer could be cured in vivo using CRISPR technology in 2019. He is Professor in the School of Medical Sciences and Program Director in the Menzies Health Institute Queensland as well as being the Director of the Gold Coast Biobank.

Prof McMillan has had continuous NHMRC grant funding since establishing his laboratory in 1996 and has published 109 papers including papers in PNAS, Clinical Cancer Research, Oncology, Journal of Virology, Nature Nanotechnology and Nature Communications. He is past president of the Australasian Virology Society. His laboratory is currently developing therapies to treat COVID19.

## ISBER On-Demand Educational Content

Available for Purchase



**Weren't able to attend the ISBER 2020 Virtual Symposium?  
We have you covered! Purchase access to the session recordings now.**

We know that virtual meetings can be difficult for those in different time zones than where the meeting is taking place. As an international organization, it is important to us that all of our educational activities are available to our members around the world. Thus, all of our sessions continue to be available for purchase and viewing at your leisure.

**Register now:** <https://www.isber.org/page/ISBER2020Symposium>

**More information** (session descriptions, speaker bio's, and abstract book):

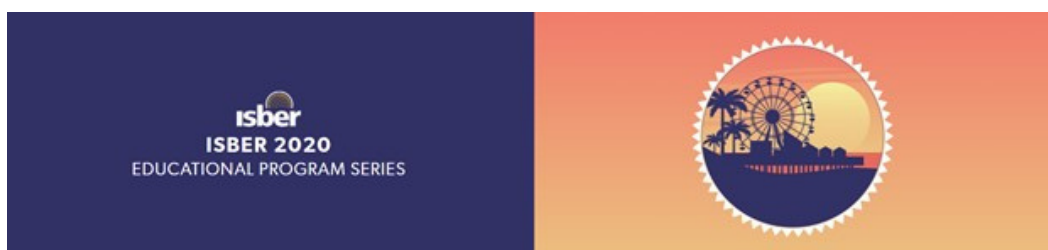
<https://www.isber.org/page/ISBER2020Symposium>

### **Pricing:**

Regular: \$75 USD - ISBER members, \$125 USD - Non-member

Student/Technicians: \$50 USD - ISBER members, \$100 USD - Non-member

Low and Middle Income Countries: 25% - 50% Discount



**Did you know all sessions in the ISBER 2020 Educational Webinar Series were recorded and available for on-demand viewing?**

Biobanks have been portrayed as having the promise to unlock biological processes and promote a better tomorrow. Following the advent of the human genome project, biobanks have become the bedrock to accelerating scientific discoveries. Stemming from the success stories is a blueprint that places the biobank community at the forefront of research infrastructure for many generations to come.

In 2020, global leaders from the broad spectrum of scientific communities were brought together via the ISBER 2020 webinar series to address the impact of biobanks on science and how the related discoveries are establishing a roadmap to extend our knowledge network. Experts highlight critical advances in biobanking, such as artificial intelligence and 3D printing.

The series includes 14 hours of educational content and features 38 speakers from around the world.

**Register now:** <https://www.isber.org/page/isber-2020>

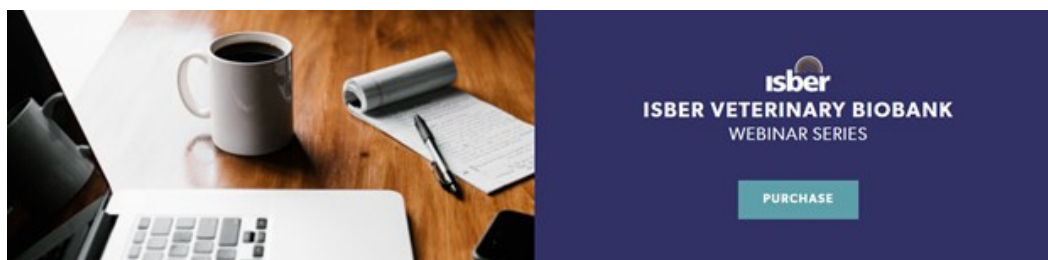
**More information** (session descriptions and speaker bio's): <https://www.isber.org/page/isber-2020>

### **Pricing:**

Regular: \$200 USD - ISBER members, \$350 USD - Non-member

Student/Technicians: \$120 USD - ISBER members, \$210 USD - Non-member

Low and Middle Income Countries: 25% - 50% Discount



As conservation and genomic research grows, it is becoming essential to manage frozen research collections (aka “biobanks”) that store quality samples for future use. However, not all researchers or staff are aware of existing practices to guide development of a frozen collection management system. This 9-part webinar series will provides a detailed discussion of the ISBER Best Practices for Repositories, with an emphasis on tips and advice for animal or small research collections.

Learn about specimen collection practices for frozen storage, planning for facilities and financial sustainability, why a quality management system is recommended, equipment and database considerations, staff training, and ethical/legal issues. Veterinary and animal researchers with frozen collections and/or researchers in the early stages of biobank development or collection integration will benefit from these webinars.

Join this webinar series to learn more about the how’s and why’s of biobanking and how to manage biospecimen collections for animal researchers or the small laboratory collection.

**Register now:** <https://www.isber.org/store/viewproduct.aspx?id=15009633>

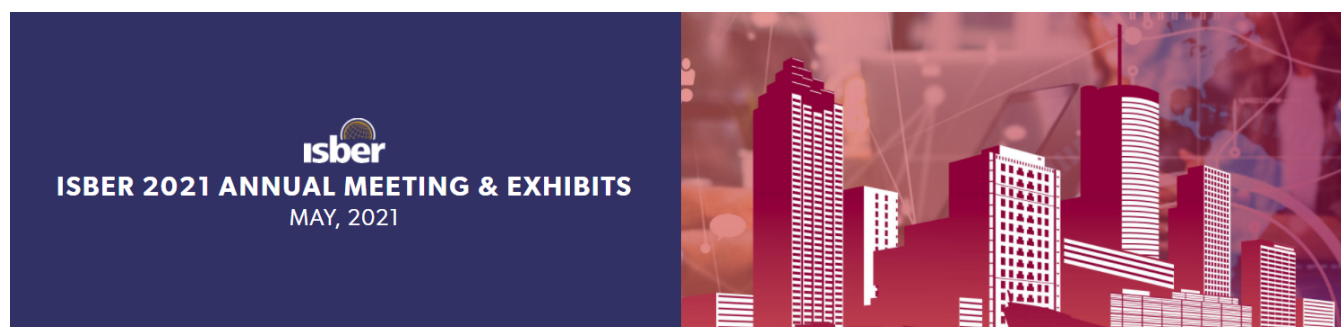
**More information:** <https://www.isber.org/store/viewproduct.aspx?id=15009633>

**Pricing:**

Non-Member: \$75 USD / series

ISBER Member: \$25 USD / series

Low and Middle Income Countries: 25% - 50% discount



The ISBER 2021 Annual Meeting & Exhibits is scheduled to take place in May, 2021. ISBER are currently in the process of determining the format for this meeting given the current situation. Please check [HERE](#) for further details in the coming month.

