



## Ralph Slatyer Medal ceremony

Earlier this month we honoured Professor Slatyer's achievements by presenting the Ralph Slatyer Medal to a distinguished scientist. Congratulations to Professor Edward C. Holmes who was awarded the 2021 Slatyer medal. Professor Holmes is in the Sydney Institute for Infectious Disease, School of Life and Environmental Sciences and the School of Medical Sciences at The University of Sydney. He is known for his work on the evolution and emergence of infectious diseases, particularly the mechanisms by which RNA viruses jump species boundaries to emerge in humans and other animals. Professor Holmes gave a seminar on his work on the origin and ongoing evolution of COVID-19. The Slatyer family attended the ceremony, together with the Vice Chancellor Brian Schmidt and the Dean of the College of Science Kieran Kirk, and the medal was presented by Mrs Slatyer to Professor Holmes. This was the fifth time the medal has been awarded and Professor Holmes was a well deserving recipient.



## HDR conference

Congratulations to all 35 PhD students who presented at the April 2022 RSB HDR student conference. The half day short-format talks were again a highly engaging showcase of the diverse and high caliber research from across the School. The conference this year incorporated the inaugural RSB Visual Media Competition with 12 entries submitted with attendees able to vote for their favorite. The most popular picture (\$100 prize) was from **Julie Leroux** (Pogson Group, PS) *Flower or leaves?* and the runner up **Roy Ebel** (Keogh Group, E&E) with *Varanus rosenbergi*.



Michael Taleski, Marvin Jin, Katia Taylor, Sarah Shafik, Vicky Zhang. Photo: Sharyn Wragg

The quality of the presentations were yet again extremely high, but there were only two Hirota Naora awards (\$500) up for grabs and these were awarded to **Merryn Fraser** (Maier Group, BSB) *Antimalarial Trojan Horses*

and **Murray Lane** (Foley Group, E&E) *Analysing leaf chemistry changes over time in a burnt and unburnt landscape*. Congratulations to both.



Merryn Fraser, Jiwon (Joanne) Lee, Melanie Rug, Greg Gauthier-Coles, Kwong Sum (Sam) Shea and Angus Rae. Photo: Sharyn Wragg

## Welcome

Welcome to **Tomas Fuenzalida** who has begun a Post-Doctoral appointment in the Ball Lab to continue his research on the dynamic water relations in plants.



Welcome to **Trina Merrell** who has joined the Plant Sciences Division as Assistant Divisional Administrator.

This month, the team for the ARC Training Centre for Future Crops Development has officially started at RSB. The Centre will train the next generation of future leaders in socially responsible genetic and field technologies for future crops. Commencement is planned by 31 July. The Centre will run for five years and will train 20 new PhD students across ANU and the University of Adelaide in conjunction with the Centre's research, government and industry partners.

**Lauren DuFall** has joined us as CEO for the Centre. Lauren comes from Innovation ANU in a natural progression from her involvement in the bid for the ARC Training Centre for Future Crops Development. Lauren completed her PhD in the Solomon Group in 2013. Since then Lauren's career has been driven by successes in research management, business development and commercialisation, primarily in Plant Sciences/Agriculture. Her track record in creating strategic partnerships and leading growth and achievement in complex research environments will contribute to the success of the Centre.



You may already be familiar with **Derek Collinge**, he's been an awarded and esteemed RSB professional staff member since joining the Pogson Group as a Lab Manager in 2008. Now, he's shifting gears part-time, as a Project Officer, to lend his extensive expertise to the Centre. His knowledge of the science, lab management, finance and all things ANU will be significant in the commencement and ongoing success of the new Centre.

**Alisha Duncan** may be another familiar face to many in the School. Alisha returns to RSB, having worked in the ARC Centre of Excellence for Translational Photosynthesis.

Alisha is thrilled to be back, as a Project Officer, working on communications, professional development, and mentoring, among other things, for the newly formed Centre. Alisha has a background in Resource and Environmental Science and returns from a two year stint at the Research School of Earth Sciences.



## News

**Paul Cooper** (E&E) gave a talk to viticulturists and Department of Primary Industries NSW regarding the effects of scales and mealy bugs on vines.

## Congratulations



Congratulations to **Cal Bryant** (Ball Group, PS) whose paper was awarded an Honorable Mention by Plant, Cell and Environment for Best Paper Published in 2021 by a PhD student.

Samsara (Jackson Group, BSB) won the Banksia Ignite award for startups at the Banksia Foundation awards earlier this month. Banksia awards are the main Australian awards for innovation in the sustainability space. You can read about the award ceremony [here](#).

## Farewell

Sadly, **Ben Long** (Price Group, PS) will be leaving in mid-May to take up an executive level position in the Defence Science Technology Group (DSTG) here in Canberra. He joined the Price and Badger Groups in 2003, and soon became an international expert in the analysis of carboxysomes (the cyanobacterial version of a life support system for Rubisco). He has been a major player in the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation funded RIPE program since 2013. His high-profile in these fields is underpinned by breakthrough research contributions published in Nature, Nature Communications, and PNAS, among other contributions which have had a major impact on the course of photosynthesis and CCM research. Ben's humour, integrity and organisational roles in helping direct a team working on milestone-driven applied research will be greatly missed. He intends to keep in close contact with the Price Group as several projects are completed. We convey our very best wishes for his new career move and thank him for all the excellent science and comradery he provided over the past 19 years.



Congratulations to **Alonso Zavaleta** (Ball Group, PS). Years of hard work have turned his dreams into a reality. He will begin a new chapter in his academic life in June 2022 as Assistant Professor of Biosensors with a joint appointment in the Engineering and Biology Departments at Brock University in Canada. We wish him well in his new



adventures in Canada. We won't be saying "Farewell", but "See ya later" as he is already planning to return in Jan-Feb 2023 to continue collaborative research using Raman spectroscopy to explore dynamic water relations of plant vascular systems.

## Papers

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Holleley CE, Grieve AC, Grealy A, Medina I & Langmore NE. Thicker eggshells are not predicted by host egg ejection behaviour in four species of Australian cuckoo. *Scientific Reports*. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-022-09872-9>

Howard I, Head M, Youngentob K et al. Helping wildlife beat the heat: Testing strategies to improve the thermal performance of nest boxes. *Australian Zoologist*.

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Wong G, Millar A. TRUEE; a bioinformatic pipeline to define the functional miRNA targetome of *Arabidopsis*. *The Plant Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/tbj.15751>

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