



From the Director

Hello all,

Once again, the following has good news about awards to faculty and students and the very successful HDR conference, and also highlights an opportunity to engage in the “clever cockies” project led by Lucy Aplin and her team. As always, the breadth and quality of research in RSB is an inspiration to me and all involved in keeping the wheels turning in RSB.

I do want to emphasise the value of awards and other sources of recognition, whether for research, teaching or service. Awards benefit development of individual careers, and also reflect well on RSB as a whole. The value is especially high for EMCRs – including PhD students – as one award can lead to others. I encourage all of you to consider opportunities to nominate yourself or others and to discuss with your supervisor how to go about it. For staff, this should be part of the annual PDR discussion – which we all need to do!

It has been a quite month on the school administration front, in part because I was away for 2 weeks on a much-needed field trip - bothering lizards in WA. I am really pleased to welcome Ben Schwessinger as RSB’s new Associate Director for Research. Ben has previously contributed to RSB in many ways, including as Chair of the IDEA committee and of the IT User Group. His research blends fundamental and translational research in plant pathogens, cutting-edge genomics, and much more. As such he is superbly equipped to take up the reins following Adrienne’s move to college-level service.

More next time,

Craig

Grants Awarded

Alison Bentley (PS) was awarded a Charitable Grant from the New Phytologist Foundation valued at \$3,830.

Alan Vincent (Cardillo Group, E&E) was awarded a Research Top-up scholarship from the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate of the ACT Government worth \$24,000.

Congratulations

Paul Cooper (E&E) who is listed amongst the finalists for the Cozzarelli Prize, from the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, for his contributions to the paper “Horizontal gene transfer underlies the painful stings of asp caterpillars” of which former RSB student **Andrew Walker** (Cooper Group, E&E) is lead author.

Congratulations to **Suyan Yee** (Chan Group, PS) who received an Australian Society for Plant Scientists (ASPS) travel grant to attend the International Plant Molecular Biology (IPMB) conference in Cairns, where she will give an oral presentation.

We are pleased to formally congratulate Associate Professor **Ana Sequeira** (E&E) on her highly deserved **Fenner Medal 2024** from the Australian Academy of Science, which was announced on the 3rd of April. The Fenner Medal recognises outstanding contributions to science in biology (excluding the biomedical sciences) by researchers up to 10 years post-PhD.



Associate Professor Ana Martins Sequeira is a world-class researcher in marine ecology, focused on the development and application of innovative analytical methods to assist conservation of marine megafauna species. Her research has helped to change the conservation status of vulnerable species, driven international efforts that shaped the discipline of marine biogeography, and championed data sharing of marine megafauna tracks. Her translation of academic science to practical outcomes has deep implications for how we sustain biodiversity in our oceans.

Be sure to check out “Associate Professor Ana Micaela Martins Sequeira - Fenner Medal 2024” from Australian Academy of Science on Vimeo at <https://vimeo.com/922716769>.

Congratulations to **Weliton Menario Costa** (Kruuk Group, E&E) whose **Dance your PhD competition** winning video “**Kangaroo Time (Club Edit)**” has been reported over 238 times across media platforms including TV, radio, print and social media. This is not accounting for the numerous reports in languages other than English, that are currently not recorded by the ANU Media Team.

Media highlights include coverage across the European Broadcasting Union wire service, BBC radio, Canadian Broadcasting Service, the US’ NPR radio & widespread international coverage, 10’s The Project, 7 Sunrise, ABC News Breakfast TV & RN Breakfast & ABC Online, The Guardian, The Australian and other News Corp papers, Daily Mail UK & Australia, AAP, commercial radio, and more. It’s also set to feature on a German quiz show.

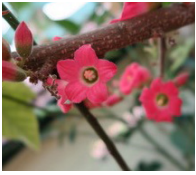
Congratulations to **Beth O’Sullivan** (Co-Supervisor Jennie Maella and Scott Keogh) for winning the poster award at the **Asia Pacific Workshop on Engineered Living Materials**.

PhDs awarded

Stephanie Henkel (Saliba Group, BSB) successfully

defended her thesis entitled: "The metabolic role of the ferredoxin redox system in apicomplexan parasites". Stephanie was part of the Berlin-Canberra International Research Training Program (IRTG 2290) and will be awarded a dual PhD (ANU and Humboldt University).

News



Dave Rowell (E&E) gave a talk to the Friends of the National Botanic Gardens entitled "A whirlwind tour of *Brachychiton*: Kurrajongs, Flame Trees, Queensland Bottle Trees and their relatives."

Congratulations to all 31 HDR students who presented at the RSB HDR student conference on 9 April 2024. The attendance was truly amazing and the short-format talks again provided a highly engaging showcase of the diverse and high calibre research being undertaken across the School. A special thanks to the student organizers of the event, who not only organized the schedule, but were also responsible for organizing the amazing catering! The food was delicious! So thank you to **Marvin Jin** (Djordjevic Group, PS), **Ciara Wallis** (Corry Group, BSB), and **Wendy Lee** (Peakall Group, E&E) for making this happen. We are also grateful to all our helpers: **George Cavic** (Fahrer Group, BSB), **Hosna Nisha** (Linde Group, E&E), **Dinithi Rajapaksha** (Adamska Group, BSB), **Salma Sarker** (Linde Group, E&E), **Vrinda Gupta** (Spry Group, BSB), **Jay Nicholson** (Nicotra Group, E&E), **Roy Ebel** (Keogh Group, E&E), **Nils Kreuter** (Sequeira Group, E&E), **Jack Wess** (Rathjen Group, PS), **Brenda Nyagah** (Farine Group, E&E), **Heber Dias de Oliveira** (Mathesius Group, PS), **Rita Tam** (Schwessinger Group, PS) and **Alex Williams** (Brock Group, PS).



The runner up awards went to **Christine Liu** (Saliba Group, BSB), and **Alice Shin** (Brock Group, BSB).

The Hirota Naora Travel Grant Awards for best presentation were awarded to **Abigail Graetz** (Schwessinger Group, PS) *Characterising the phyllosphere of wild grasses with long-read metabarcoding* and **Jeremias Ivan** (Lanfear Group, E&E) *Assessing the accuracy of non-overlapping windows analysis in phylogenomic studies*. A hearty congratulations to all.

Thanks also go to Sam Jahromi (BTLC), the session chairs: **Eric Pereira** (Schwessinger Group, PS), **Kasimir Gregory** (Corry Group, BSB), **Carl McCombe** (Williams Group, PS), **Samantha McGaughey** (Byrt Group, PS), **Julia Penndorf** (Aplin Group, E&E), **Hannah Calich** (Sequeira Group, E&E) **Emily Furlong** (BSB), **Ruitao Jin** (Corry Group, BSB) and **James Klarevas** (Farine Group, E&E). A further thank you to our HDR convenors who adjudicated-**Scott Keogh** (E&E), **Spencer Whitney** (PS) and **Giel van Dooren** (BSB); **Celeste Linde** (Associate Director HDR); **Marilyn Ball** (PS) and **Eldon Ball** (E&E)

for donating pumpkins for dinner, and **Scott Keogh** (E&E) for managing the barbeque superbly!



As a special event, the conference was followed by a dance performance by WELI -**Weliton Menario Costa** (Kruuk Group, E&E), and some of the amazing dancers -**Rachael Remington** (BTLC) and sons included, who were part of the winning "Kangaroo time" performance in the 2024 Dance Your PhD Contest, a global contest organized by Science Magazine. WELI's performance at the HDR conference was sponsored by E&E and was a nice event to cap off the talks.



The LI-COR Gas Exchange Workshop 2024 on the 3rd and 4th of April had great attendance! Over two days, the course covered the beginner basics on how to use the LI-6800 and included some tips on using the LI-6400. With wonderful presenters such as **Nicole Pontarin**, **Xingyu Hu** and **Chin Wong** (Farquhar Group, PS), and **Danielle Way** (PS), students were given hands-on experience and the opportunity to speak with **Elizabeth Gordon**, a LI-COR senior support technician. The workshop covered everything from turning on your LI-COR to performing measurements and extracting data. **Mary Stuart-Williams**, **Hilary Stuart-Williams** and **Haydon Siiteri** (Farquhar Group, PS), did a wonderful job organising and running these two intense days!



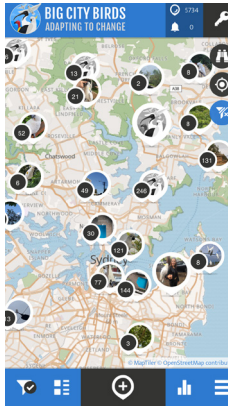
The **Aplin Group** (E&E) is back in the field for the 'Clever Cockie' project, and it needs your help.

You will probably start seeing soon, if you haven't already, coloured cockatoos around Canberra. This is because we give study birds temporary paint-marks on their back using non-toxic dye. These can be applied by our researchers without needing to catch birds, and

last 2-4 months before fading. You might see two types of colour-marks: "single colours", which denote a roost-group (where birds spend the night), and "three colour combinations", which are individually unique. These might be vertical (down the back, first colour is the one nearest the neck), or horizontal (across the back, first colour is on the bird's left shoulder).

This data allows us to track the movement of cockatoos between roosts, as well as to examine how they exploit the urban area.

How can you help us?



1. Download the 'BigCityBirds' app from the App Store (<https://www.spotteron.com/bigcitybirds/info>).

2. Create an account.

3. Start reporting the coloured cockatoos you see around the city! It's pretty straight forward: report any paint-marked birds you see on BigCityBirds with a photo, so we can identify the individual. Location and time will be automatically extrapolated from the photo data.

4. Have fun trying to recognize the colour combinations and discovering funny names, like MOM (Maroon, Orange, Maroon) or LOL (Lime, Orange, Lime). If you can't recognize all the colours it doesn't matter, the disposition (vertical vs horizontal) and the first colour are what matters! Here is our naming system: Red = R | Blue = B | Black (noir) = N | | Brown (maroon) = M | Pink = P | Purple (violet) = V | Light blue (azure) = A | Orange = O | Green = G | Light Green (lime) = L.

Would you like to know more? Visit the [Clever Cockie Project website](#), or contact us at clevercockies.rsb@anu.edu.au

Papers

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