



The RACI at Science Meets Parliament



Science meets Parliament (SmP) 2008 marked the ninth event organised by the Federation of Australian Scientific and Technological Societies (FASTS) for Australian scientists to discuss issues of national importance with elected representatives of the Commonwealth Parliament. There were 164 scientists involved in approximately 100 meetings with parliamentarians. The RACI was well represented at the event with five attendees; namely Dr Peter Lye (Board Chair and North Eastern Representative), Dr Scott Watkins (Victorian Branch), Dr Greg Wilson (Victorian Branch), Dr David Beattie (South Australian Branch) and Dr Adam Cawley (New South Wales Branch).

The focus of SmP undoubtedly rests with meeting parliamentarians. FASTS, however, has recognised the need to 'value-add' with this activity by providing a professional development symposium aimed at scientists who have not had previous political communications experience. RACI members participated in discussions about policies to encourage science-based education degrees and the removal of financial disincentives for student teachers at University and the need for sufficient funding schemes for the maintenance of secondary school laboratories and equipment.

When the time did come to meet with parliamentarians a range of issues ranging from climate change to public/private R&D collaboration were discussed. Generally, the Senators and MP's that participate are highly interested in science education. They were pleased to hear about the success of the Australian National Chemistry Quiz in providing an extension activity for more than 100,000 students in 14 countries throughout the Asia-Pacific region. The role of professional societies such as the RACI was also discussed, our partnerships with schools being vital considering the need for contemporary careers advice was encouraged.

The SmP event is not a lobbying exercise nor can one quantify its effectiveness. SmP represents a unique opportunity for a broad professional demographic to educate parliamentarians on how scientific research can assist in solving everyday problems encountered by their constituents.



RACI Industrial Chemistry Division

R.K. Murphy Medal



This is the most prestigious award made by the Industrial Chemistry Division and will be presented at the Chemeca 2008 conference in Newcastle. The award is usually presented annually but the Division Executive may decide that if there is no suitable, high profile candidate then the award may be withheld for any particular year. The named "R.K. Murphy Medal", takes the form of a medal and not cash. The award is based on an assessment of the Institute member's achievement in process chemistry, chemical engineering or related areas within the chemical industry (including commercial or marketing functions) during the preceding five years. The award is made preferably to an individual or to a small project team, but not a company. There is no age limit on the candidate(s) and, although the award is intended for the recognition of significant recent contribution, an award may also mark personal achievement over a longer period. If the nomination is based on a specific contribution, the work of the nominee(s) shall be of published or publishable material, the work shall be unique, novel and innovative in character and the technology involved shall be predominantly of Australian origin. The terms of reference for the "R.K. Murphy Medal" are intentionally wide to embrace, for example, Institute members actively involved over lengthy periods in advisory capacities to Government. Such functions could include the setting of standard practice codes for materials handling, waste disposal, environmental protection, etc. Candidates may apply personally or be nominated by other members of the Institute. Candidates must be members of good standing in the Institute and no person would normally be eligible to receive the award on more than one occasion. The selection of the award is made by a panel, chosen by the Standing Committee of the Industrial Chemistry Division, which will consider the applications and make recommendations on the award. The Division reserves the right to make no award if no suitable nominations are received.

Nominations must be received by **30th June 2008**.

Recent winners of the RK Murphy Medal

- 2007 Prof. Milton T. W. Hearn
- 2006 Mr. Robert Ryan
- 2005 Prof. B. Dlugogorski and Dr. E. Kennedy (Joint Award)
- 2004 Dr. C. Drummond
- 2003 Prof. M. Lu
- 2002 Prof. David Solomon
- 2001 Mr. N. Whiffen
- 2000 Prof. M. Skillas-Kazacos
- 1999 Prof. D. Wood
- 1998 Dr. K. King



Student Chemeca Travel Bursaries

The Division offers annually four awards to student members of the RACI in order to support their attendance at that year's Chemeca Conference. The conditions of the awards require that each recipient must have a paper accepted for presentation at Chemeca and that each applicant is a current bona fide student and will be presenting the paper. A copy of the paper should be submitted with the application, along with an estimate of the financial requirements. The grants are awarded strictly on merit by a selection panel which is appointed by the Standing Committee of the Industrial Chemistry Division who will consider the applications and make recommendations on the awards. The Standing Committee reserves the right to make no award if no suitable applications are received.

Chemeca 2008 will be held at the Newcastle City Hall, Newcastle, NSW, 28th September to 1st October 2008. Further information can be found at: <http://www.chemeca2008.com>

Applications, including a statement by the Head of Department confirming the bona fides of the student, must be received by **1st September 2008**.

Please forward nominations for the R.K. Murphy Medal and applications for the Student Chemeca Travel Bursaries to:

Dr. Gary Bowman
Senior Research Scientist
R&D Innovation Group
Reckitt Benckiser
PO Box 138, West Ryde, NSW 1685.

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Chemeca 2008

28 September – 1 October 2008
Newcastle City Hall, Newcastle, Australia

“Towards a Sustainable Australasia”



UNSW Chemistry Prize Giving

On Wednesday 12th March Clarrie Ng, Attila Tottszer, and Edwina Hine represented the RACI NSW at the UNSW School of Chemistry's Prize Giving evening. It was a very enjoyable event, and it was so encouraging to meet the new crop of young potential chemists.

Barbara Messerle (UNSW Chemistry Head of School, and RACI member) presented a very interesting introductory talk, which outlined the UNSW School of Chemistry's history. From its beginnings at the Sydney Technical College, its relocation to the Dalton Building during the 50's, through to the refurbished school it inhabits today. It was amazing to hear about many of our RACI heroes (eg Ollé, Nyholm, Smith etc) who came from the UNSW ranks.

The RACI NSW Analytical Chemistry Group sponsors an analytical chemistry prize to the student who performs best in their third year in the subject. This year, Clarrie Ng (Chair of the Analytical group) presented the prize to Christopher Mellor. Christopher is a talented student who collected two other medals on the evening.

E/Prof Stephen Angyal (a RACI member for 62 years) attended the evening, and presented the Honours Prize (named in his honour) to two students – Daniel Chan and Katherine Sage. In addition to the Angyal Prize, two new PhD scholarships were announced. These have been named after two very active UNSW Chemistry School employees (who are also long serving RACI members). Prof. David Black (Black Scholarship: for the highest ranking commencing international PhD student), and E/Prof Michael Paddon-Row (Paddon-Row Scholarship: for the highest ranking commencing local PhD student). It was great to see NSW RACI members have their service honoured in such a manner, and that it assists the chemists of the future by providing scholarships as they undertake graduate research.



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