

ANBUG Annual General Meeting on 11th November 2020

Meeting held: by Zoom teleconference as part of the virtual AANSS 2020 meeting

Committee Members Present: Tracy Rushmer (TR, President), Yun Liu (YL, Vice President), Andrew Clulow (AJC, Secretary), Ian Gentle (IRG, Immediate Past President), David Cortie (DC, website/comms), Katy Wood (KW, Immediate Past Secretary), Anna Paradowska (AP, Treasurer) & Ben Mallett (BM, Ordinary Member, NZ).



Other Attendees Present: Jamie Schulz (ANSTO), ANBUG membership at the virtual AANSS 2020 meeting

Agenda

1. *Update from the ACNS – Jamie Schulz (15:00-15:20)*
2. *ANBUG President's report – Tracy Rushmer (3:20-3:35)*
3. *Treasurer's Report – Anna Paradowska (15:35-15:45)*
4. *Membership Town Hall (15:45-16:00)*

Meeting Opened: 15:00

Items Discussed

1. Update from the ACNS

Jamie Schulz (ANSTO) provided an update on the operations at the ACNS. Jamie congratulated the award winners, welcomed the new members of the ANBUG committee and thanked outgoing members of the ANBUG exec committee.

OPAL & ACNS overview – 312 days of neutron beam to users in 2019, OPAL is a reliable neutron source for Australian science. There are roughly 225 days dedicated to user service in a year (COVID-19 notwithstanding), there are up to 4300 registered users over ~500 individual user visits a year at OPAL. New instruments in 2020 – Spatz has completed hot commissioning and is now under user operation, all 15 instruments are currently in operation. There have been challenges with Taipan and Sika this year and these instruments have been repaired. An upgrade to Koala to its next iteration “Koala 2.0” is in progress.

COVID-19 & recent news – ANSTO has operated under alternate working arrangements since 23rd March 2020, all instruments closed down. Onsite attendance recommenced on 25th May and user program restarted on 23rd June under “ANSTO orange working conditions”. Regular meetings of the ANSTO executive team have been held during that time to manage dynamic access arrangements. On 9th November ANSTO has commenced the return of all staff to site under COVID-safe campus arrangements in line with state and federal recommendations. Initially when staff returned to site maintenance and upgrades were prioritised to maximise days of beamtime available towards the back end of 2020, samples were run by mail-in mode where feasible. Proposals that could not be run were not rescheduled in 2021 to minimise the backlog and were encouraged to either resubmit in the 2021-1 round or be transferred with existing reviews. Throughout the COVID-19 period, 41 proposals have been withdrawn, 39 discretionary proposals were approved (~30 for ECRs/students) and 151 user proposals run since the return to service in June. Users encouraged to try to take advantage of mail-in proposals where feasible. Guidelines on mail-in proposals for Quokka and Echidna can be found on the appropriate instrument websites (Quokka = <https://www.ansto.gov.au/research/user-office/instruments/neutron-scattering->

instruments/quokka/services, Echidna = <https://www.ansto.gov.au/our-facilities/australian-centre-for-neutron-scattering/neutron-scattering-instruments/echidna-1>).

The joint ACNS/AS annual powder diffraction workshop was run in an online format in early October and was well attended. There is a desire to get this workshop back on site with hands on data collection and analysis.

The federal government Research Infrastructure Investment Plan (RIIP) has provided some funding towards ACNS as part of its first response to funding applications in 2018. \$6.7M has been allocated for asset management to replace critical instrument systems and upgrade aging infrastructure, along with providing two replacement X-ray instruments (to replace the current Bruker SAXS and X-ray reflectometer) and some sample environment equipment. The primary shutter replacement (thermal guides) has been delayed to June 2021, necessitating a shutdown of the instruments in the neutron guide hall from 24th April-14th July 2021. OPAL in a fortunate position with regards to people on site during COVID, we have had greater access for beamline team and users than many overseas facilities.

Access to ACNS – Three modes of access: 80% for merit proposals; ~10% user pays (commercial, rapid access) model; and ~10% discretionary beamtime. Demand for beamtime is ~50% Australian users, ~25% partner nations (of which Japan is no longer one but Germany has come onboard following the closure of HZB) and the remainder other countries. There is healthy demand across the instruments, all instruments oversubscribed pretty well oversubscribed.

An anonymised review trial has been proposed by Prof. Lisa Harvey-Smith (Australian Government Women in STEM Ambassador) to determine whether there is unconscious bias in proposal reviews for beamtime and if present, remove it. This is based on studies in the US that have shown that there is bias against women in STEM in scientific proposal review systems. This will be introduced for the proposal round in 2022-1 due to modifications to the portal and PAC structure required to allow full anonymisation of the proposals.

In 2024 the cold neutron source will be replaced and improved. In 2021 the TG123 shutter will be replaced and the TG2 guide installed. There are multiple opportunities for new thermal instruments on the new thermal guides including potentially a thermal ToF spectrometer, a thermal TAS and a ToF materials diffractometer. There is space for a cold diffractometer on CG2B before the Spatz reflectometer. Whilst it has been discussed for a while, discussions regarding a second guide hall at OPAL are reigniting. There is debate about whether this facility should be for all cold neutrons or a mixed spectrum facility. The next round of community engagement will be launched in February 2021 to assist in the development of the science case (which will require industrial alignment). Calculations for the 2nd cold source are underway. ANBUG members can send any ideas in the interim (before February 2021) to Richard Mole (ANSTO) but there will be formal engagement with the community commencing from February 2021.

2. ANBUG President's report

ANBUG membership has grown to 330 in the build-up to the meeting. TR thanked AANSS 2020 co-chairs Leonie van't Hag and Livia Salvati Manni along with other organising committee members that worked on putting the AANSS meeting online for the first time. TR thanked the 2019-2020 ANBUG executive committee [Yun Liu (VP), Andrew Clulow (secretary), Anna Paradowska (treasurer) David Cortie (Website/Comms), Tilo Sohnel (NZ member), Ian Gentle (Past President) and Katy Wood (Past secretary)] for all their work over this unusual year, including communicating with ANSTO Executive about access and impact to users during COVID pandemic.

The new 2020-2021 ANBUG executive committee was announced: In 2021, our current Vice-President Yun Liu will become ANBUG President and TR will stay on the ANBUG executive as Past President. We held nominations for new members as there some positions becoming vacant and received one nomination for each available position. In 2021-2022 the ANBUG committee members will be: Prof.

Yun Liu (ANU, President), Assoc. Prof. Chris Wensrich (Uni of Newcastle, Vice-President), Prof. Tracy Rushmer (Macquarie Uni, Past-President), Dr Leonie van't Hag (Monash Uni, Secretary), Dr David Cortie (Uni of Wollongong, Treasurer), Dr Karyn Jarvis (Swinburne Uni Tech, Website/Comms), Dr Teng Lu (ANU, ECR member), Dr Ben Mallett (Uni Auckland, NZ member).

TR congratulated all of the ANBUG Award winners and looking forward to a great meeting. We will be presenting awards for outstanding student presentations at the end of the meeting.

The following overview was given of ANBUG activities but the numbers given are a touch out of date given that the membership had grown to ~300 members from ~100 in the last couple of years we potentially now cover ~60% of the 500 users coming to use OPAL each year.

The poster features the ANBUG logo (a stylized 'B' with a neutron path) and the text 'Australian Neutron Beam Users Group'. A prominent blue circle on the right says 'FREE to join!'. The poster is divided into a 3x3 grid of text boxes:

- Top Left:** Student prizes and travel bursaries are available for all members
- Top Middle:** ANBUG is represented on the PAC & ACNS Advisory committees to ensure that members interests come first
- Top Right:** ANBUG is a not-for-profit organisation with all proceeds from conferences given back to members via bursaries etc
- Middle Left:** Job applications and post-doc positions are regularly sent to the ANBUG mailing list
- Middle Middle:** In the 1990's ANBUG played a key role in lobbying politicians to upgrade the OPAL reactor
- Middle Right:** To be a successful lobby group we need as many members as possible, particularly in the next five years
- Bottom Left:** Our membership is open to everyone, including international users who conduct experiments at ANSTO
- Bottom Middle:** Even theorists who model neutron data should join ANBUG to ensure a healthy supply of data!
- Bottom Right:** Currently of the ~1000 users who conduct neutrons experiments each year, only ~10% are ANBUG members

At the bottom left, a white arrow points right with the word 'JOIN' inside. To the right of the arrow is the website address 'www.anbug.net'.

3. ANBUG Treasurer's Report

The operational account has \$14.6k in it and the long-term deposit has \$65.0k in it. Most of the ongoing costs go on management of the website. The long-term deposit brings regular income but we are considering relocating these funds as it is not making significant amounts of interest in the present environment. ANSTO pays for ANBUG's membership for AONSA and have sponsored the meeting costs including the Zoom fees. AINSE have provided prize sponsorship.

4. Membership Town Hall

AJC – Is there hard guidance for mail-in samples during COVID? Echidna and Quokka have direct guidance on their services pages (listed above) and for other instruments discussions will need to be had with the beamline scientists. For new proposals entering the mail-in regime due to COVID regime, the main challenges have been in regular sample change over.

Andrew Nelson (ANSTO) – from the reflectometry side only very simple experiments are possible as they are quite demanding, particularly ones with regular sample change over.

Stewart Campbell (UNSW Canberra) – believes that ANSTO, ACNS and ANBUG have been promoting women in science quite well but that we should be going through the process of anonymised review. Cathy Foley has now become the chief scientist, there is scope for ANSTO/ANBUG to make an approach on this front. Congratulated the retiring committee members on their work over the past few years.

DC – proposed that funds from current conference go towards supporting travel for students/ECRs to attend the joint ANSTO User Meeting next year. This was seconded by TR. An online vote was taken using the show of thumbs up feature of Zoom and this was passed unanimously.

Chris Wensrich (Uni. Newcastle) – queried the timeframe for introducing the anonymised proposal system. Jamie confirmed that there would be a substantial shift in proposal submission format to fully anonymise proposals. For this reason, the rollout of the new proposal system will be in the 2022-1 round.

YL – Asked how will the track record be anonymised in the new proposal system. Jamie replied that the track record is not considered by the PAC and this will be considered after the PAC stage. This would require a second round of review either by internal people or by PAC to take track record into account.

AP – we need to be pushing ANBUG membership and advocacy through more channels including putting it in the proposal portal. Trevor Finlayson (U. Melbourne) suggested changing the proposal portal so that you can't put a proposal in unless you're an ANBUG member perhaps? This was left as a matter for future discussion and development between ANBUG and ANSTO.

Meeting Closed: 16:00