

Institute of Technology (1974); University of Queensland, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (1976); Swinburne College of Technology, Victorian College of Pharmacy (1977); University of Newcastle, South Australian Institute of Technology and Bendigo College of Advanced Education (1978). During this period, the number of representatives from industry and the CSIRO grew alongside the student population. Recent conferences have consistently attracted delegate numbers in excess of 120.

On Friday 8 June 2007, the RACI Division of Colloid and Interface Science hosted a 40th Anniversary Symposium at the Melbourne Museum to celebrate the longevity and success of this student conference, and to honour the two eminent scientists who initiated the conference series. The 40th anniversary of any happy event is usually a cause for celebration, and this is particularly true when one considers that this milestone is being celebrated for a conference. Since its commencement, the ACS SSC has been an event at which over 1100 different postgraduate students have had the opportunity to present their work to an audience of fellow students, academics or industry representatives. Students were able to present their latest results in a supportive environment, and obtain constructive feedback and suggestions regarding possible research direction. For many, the ACS SSC is the equivalent of receiving a scientific 'vitamin shot', with students returning to their universities with a renewed enthusiasm for their research, with new ideas and re-focused on their PhD studies and scientific careers.

Colloid and surface science communities across the world have attempted to organise a similar conference series in the hope of emulating the success enjoyed by the ACS SSC, yet very few have been able to even approach this success. What has made the ACS SSC unique? In many instances, scientists will continue to attend a conference series if it contains a delicate and unique mix of scientific content, venue, social activity and camaraderie. Clearly, the ACS SSC has achieved this consistently over the years, because there has never been a problem attracting good numbers of people. More importantly, there has never been difficulty passing the baton to the next group of enthusiastic conference organisers, usually from different states of Australia, to ensure the ACS SSC remains a truly national conference.

For a conference series to last 40 years (and show no sign of waning), another special ingredient must be present. Tom

Healy and Bob Hunter (who have attended every conference over the 40 years) have injected so much more than their immense knowledge of colloid and surface science into the gatherings; they have enthusiastically adopted the role of mentors for generations of students and staff and thus enjoy the respect and adoration of the Australian colloid and surface science community.

The 40th Anniversary Symposium provided an opportunity for several generations of scientists (all of whom are graduates of the ACS SSC) to reunite to hear presentations that were a mixture of cutting edge colloid and surface science together with fond memories from the past four decades. Franz Grieser, Bruce Firth and David Yates recounted the early years of the conference (1968-77). Dave Dunstan, Peter Scales, Roger Horn and Bruce Johnson (1978-87), Lee White, Robert Lamb and Stephen Hyde (1988-97) highlighted the significant advances in quality and volume of colloid and surface science research in Australia during these periods. In addition, Calum Drummond, Paul Mulvaney, William Ducker and Frank Caruso (1998-2007) gave their view regarding the legacy that the conference has given, and continues to give, to science in Australia and overseas. It is noteworthy that five of the speakers are current ARC Federation Fellows, perhaps a testament to the support and mentorship afforded to graduates of the ACS SSC.

Tom Healy and Bob Hunter have both had their contributions to science and the Australian community recognised in the form of Queens Birthday honours, amongst other awards. Both spoke of their memories of the ACS SSC, and the role the conference has played in mentoring generations of colloid and surface scientists in Australia, many of whom have taken on significant leadership roles both here and overseas.

On the occasion of the 40th anniversary ACS SSC (4-8 February, Warrnambool), it is appropriate to offer hearty congratulations to Tom and Bob on this occasion. Tom and Bob are genuine National Treasures, and, after 40 years, have matured like fine wines: rich and bold with a strong flavour and full of character!

Professor Russell Crawford FRACI CChem is Chair, Colloid and Surface Science Division and Dean, Faculty of Life and Social Sciences, Swinburne University of Technology. Associate Professor Erica Wanless MRACI CChem is Secretary, Colloid and Surface Science Division, School of Environmental and Life Sciences, University of Newcastle.