

April 2021



Physical Chemistry Division Newsletter

From the Chair

Dear RACI Physical Chemistry Division Members,

Welcome to the first 2021 RACI Physical Chemistry Division newsletter. I hope this newsletter finds all of you well. I would like to start by thanking all of you for your continuing support for the Physical Chemistry Division. The Division Committee has been running webinars for the past months. They have been a great success. We really appreciate your support in participating in the webinars and giving presentations. With the high level of engagement, we aim to continue the webinar series for the foreseeable future. Having said that, there are signs that we may be able to return to in-person events in the future. The RACI leadership is very supportive of that.

There is a plan to run a Physical Chemistry Division event this December. More information on this is found in the Future Events section below. I encourage all of us to support this event and participate in any way possible. Thanks to Chris Hansen and Alex Stuart for their efforts in organising this event.

We had our AGM in early November last year. As a Division, we agreed to expand the Division Committee to include a student representative. We welcome Alex Stuart to the Committee and look forward to working with her. I also had the pleasure of informing all of you that Evan Bieske would be on the advisory board of PCCP. Our Division has been working behind the scenes for years to have representation on the editorial board of PCCP. Thanks to the efforts of the past Division Chairs and a trans-Tasman cooperation on the Ownership Board, we were able to achieve this positive outcome.

In closing, the Division Committee thanks you for your continuing support. Please do not hesitate to contact us if there is anything the Division Committee can do. In the meantime, stay safe and continue to make progress in Physical Chemistry research. We look forward to hearing about it.

Tak W. Kee
RACI Physical Chemistry Division Chair
April 2021

From the Treasurer

Budget preparation is underway for the 21-22 financial year. The pandemic has necessarily impacted Division activities, which has hampered our ability to raise funds. However, we remain committed to supporting the annual Division Lectureship, and are supporting plans to run a Division event in December this year.

David Wilson
RACI Physical Chemistry Division Treasurer

April 2021

Webinars

Thank you so much for the enthusiastic support of the webinar series so far; it has been fantastic to see so many familiar and new faces in the participant list and the breakout rooms!

With this success, the Physical Chemistry Division is running two webinar series for the first half of 2021, both on alternative Tuesdays at 1 pm Sydney time:

1) Research webinars (27th April, 10th May, 24th May, 7th June, 21st June, 5th July):

Two talks (total 1 hr) on cutting-edge research spanning the diverse research interests of the Division, followed by informal breakout sessions. Sign up [here](#). *Upcoming talks from Michelle Coote, David Wilson, Alexandra Stuart, Adam Trevitt and more.*

2) Training webinars (20th April, 3rd May, 17th May, 31st May, 14th June, 28th June, 12th July): 3 hr presentation & workshop session focused on providing training in computational and related chemistry techniques from experienced Australian practitioners. Sign up [here](#). *Upcoming training sessions covering QM/MM, DFT, quantum computing and solid state modelling.*

We have limited slots to fill in both webinar series; if you are interested or want to recommend a speaker, please let me know (l.mckemmish@unsw.edu.au).

Laura McKemmish
RACI Physical Chemistry Division Secretary
April 2021

From the Student Representative

In the next year we hope to provide several opportunities for student involvement in the Physical Chemistry Division (which will hopefully keep the RACI student membership worthwhile!)

With the Physical Chemistry Webinars continuing into the foreseeable future, we would love to include some longer (approx. 15 min) talks by HDR students. If you are interested in giving a talk as part of the fortnightly research webinar series, or if you would like to suggest a student speaker, please get in touch (alexandra.stuart@adelaide.edu.au).

Additionally, we hope to run a Physical Chemistry workshop in late November/ early December this year. A proportion of this will be dedicated to a student conference, to make up for the postponed student conference of 2020. With luck this will be a great opportunity for a number of student talks, feedback, and for students to finally meet others in the community in person!

If you have any questions or suggestions regarding student involvement in the Division feel free to contact me.

Alex Stuart
RACI Physical Chemistry Division Student Representative
April 2021

Division News

Awards

Congratulations to Ivan Kassal of the University of Sydney, School of Chemistry for being awarded the 2020 Le Févre Medal. Ivan's contributions have included explaining quantum effects in light harvesting (and how to engineer them to improve performance), discovering

significant quantum effects in photosynthesis, and clarifying fundamental mechanisms of how organic solar cells operate. You can read about his award here - [Kassal Award](#), which includes a short video.

Congratulations to Lars Goerigk of the University of Melbourne, School of Chemistry, who is a recipient of the RACI Rennie Memorial Medal. This RACI award recognises research excellence in Chemical Science. Lars' research interests comprise both the development of new quantum-chemical methods, as well as applications to Organic-, Inorganic-, Physico- or Biochemical problems. You can read about his award here - [Goerigk Award](#).

Congratulations to Oliver Jones of the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, School of Biosciences and Food Technology, who was recently awarded the Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry, Asia-Pacific Australasia Mid-Career Medal. This award recognises his pioneering use of metabolomics in environmental science. Oliver is currently investigating photochemical degradation of wastewater contaminants.

Please let us know if you, a colleague or student in the PhysChem Division receives an award and we would be delighted to highlight in our next newsletter.

2021 Division Lectureship

The Division of Physical Chemistry now invites nominations for the 2021 RACI Physical Chemistry Division Lectureship. We are seeking applications from early to mid-career researchers (up to 11 years post-PhD taking into account career interruptions) who display research excellence, independence, creativity, impact and vision in the areas of physical and theoretical/computational chemistry. Nominations should be submitted to the Division Secretary, Dr Laura McKemmish, at l.mckemmish@unsw.edu.au by Friday 30th April 2021. [See here for more details.](#)

Future Events

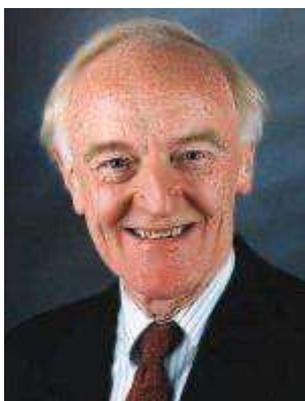
RACI PhysChem Summer Festival December 2021 (details upcoming)

Chris Hansen (UNSW) and Alex Stuart (Adelaide) will be chairing a combined, sequential division meeting & student workshop in the Blue Mountains in (likely) the 2nd week of December 2021. Save the date, more details to follow.

RACI National Congress 2022

The next RACI National Congress will be held in Brisbane from 3-8th July 2022 at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre.

Tribute



From Brian Orr: I have some sad news for many Division members, who knew Professor David Buckingham and appreciated his brilliant contributions to chemical physics. He died in Cambridge, UK on 4 February - just after his 91st birthday and following a prolonged decline in his health. David was my inspiring PhD supervisor in Bristol (1965-68) and he had close associations with many other Australian physical and theoretical chemists. He

visited his native Australia frequently and added his distinctive brand of personal and scientific sparkle to various local lectures and meetings over the years. I shall not say much more for the time being, other than to point to a brief obituary from the Department of Chemistry at Cambridge; it is online at <https://www.ch.cam.ac.uk/person/adb1000>. There is also an excellent autobiographical article in Annual Reviews of Physical Chemistry (1998. 49:xiii–xxxv), published a year after David's nominal "retirement" which was celebrated by a lively conference at Pembroke College in Cambridge and a 1997 Elsevier Festschrift book co-edited by David Clary and myself (ref. 135 in the above-mentioned 1998 article).

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