

August 2019



## Physical Chemistry Division Newsletter

### From the Chair

Dear RACI Physical Chemistry Division Members,

Welcome to the first RACI Physical Chemistry Division newsletter. The Division Committee, which consists of myself, Laura McKemmish, David Wilson, Adam Trevitt and Scott Kable, wish to use Division newsletters to highlight Division activities and distribute useful information about past events and future events.

First, I would like to congratulate Duncan Wild and Allan McKinley for organising a very successful Division Meeting in February 2019 in Perth, on the campus of beautiful UWA. Division meetings are always important platforms for members to present their latest and greatest work. The Division committee recognise the importance of these meetings. We have offered travel grants to student members to promote the involvement of next-generation physical chemists. I look forward to the next meeting in Sydney in 2021.

Second, big congratulations to Amir Karton of UWA. Amir has been awarded the 2019 Physical Chemistry Division Lectureship. The lectureship enables Amir to travel to universities around the country to present his research and promote the Physical Chemistry Division. Please give Amir a warm welcome when he visits your university to give a seminar.

Third, *PCCP*. Have you ever wondered if the RACI owns a journal? It turns out the RACI does not own our national chemical journal. But it co-owns *PCCP* with 18 other chemistry or physical chemistry societies around the world. It has an impact factor of 3.6 and my experience of publishing in *PCCP* has been good; manuscripts are handled professionally. Thus far, I have been involved in an ownership board meeting (teleconference) and I have indicated my hope to see an Australian editor in the near future. Please let me know if you are interested in serving on the editorial board of *PCCP*. Lastly, a little known fact. For every paper published by an Australian author, the RACI receives \$250–\$300. You can publish your work in a world class journal and contribute to the RACI simultaneously.

Finally, I want to thank you for your continuing support to the Physical Chemistry Division. We have over 950 members and we are one of the most active Divisions in the RACI, with regular Division meetings and student meetings (the next one is likely to be in April 2020, more information to follow), Division lectureships and travel grants. I also want to thank the Division Committee for their hard work and I look forward to your continuing support.

Tak W. Kee  
RACI Physical Chemistry Division Chair  
August 2019

## Recent Events

### **RACI PhysChem division meeting 2019**

The RACI Physical Chemistry conference was held from February 11<sup>th</sup> to February 14<sup>th</sup> 2019 at the University Club of Western Australia, with 153 delegates attending. The conference program consisted of 82 talks, including six talks from invited speakers and twelve short presentations from PhD students, and 65 posters.

Huge thank you to all the conference organising team and student volunteers for a fantastic and engaging conference, particularly the two co-chairs Duncan Wild and Allan McKinley, both from the The University of Western Australia. Thank you also to the event sponsors, The University of Western Australia, Murdoch University, John Morris, Lastek and NewSpec.



## Future Events

### **RACI PhysChem student conference 2020**

We are currently making preparations for our next PhysChem student conference. To reduce conflicts with other conferences, we are aiming to host the conference next year in Adelaide around the April university holidays. Please contact Alex Stuart ([alexandra.stuart@student.adelaide.edu.au](mailto:alexandra.stuart@student.adelaide.edu.au)) for details.

### **RACI PhysChem division meeting 2021**

The next division meeting will commence on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> February with an evening mixer and conclude with a banquet on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> February. An associated one-day symposium will be held on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> February in honour of Professor Noel Hush. The meeting will be held in Sydney's cultured inner west with lectures at the University of Sydney. Facilities to support participants with small children will be provided. The conference will also include a mentoring and networking session for early-career researchers. Please contact Meredith Jordan ([meredith.jordan@usyd.edu.au](mailto:meredith.jordan@usyd.edu.au)) and Tim Schmidt ([timothy.schmidt@unsw.edu.au](mailto:timothy.schmidt@unsw.edu.au)) for details.

## RACI National Congress 2022

The next RACI National Congress will be held in Brisbane from 3-8<sup>th</sup> July 2022 at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre. Division members are encouraged to propose Physical Chemistry and/or interdivisional symposia by the closing date of 1st September 2019.

## Tribute

Recently, Australian physical and theoretical chemistry lost one of its greats. Professor Noel Hush, or Prof as he was affectionately known to many, passed away on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2019 at the age of 94. The grandfather of theoretical and computational chemistry, and many other related areas within Australian science, his influence will be felt for decades not only scientifically but perhaps more importantly in the culture he helped foster in Australian chemistry and through the actions of those he taught and mentored.



A touching memorial service was held for Professor Hush on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2019 at the University of Sydney, with speeches from RACI PhysChem Division Secretary Laura McKemmish and former Division Chair Jeffrey Reimers including a formal thank you from the Division to Noel for his scientific and cultural impact on our community.

Noel Hush was the foundation professor of the Department of Theoretical Chemistry at The University of Sydney. He was a main organizer of the Australian Summer School on Theoretical Chemistry, which ran from 1973 to 1984, influencing many people. These efforts paralleled those of the RACI's emerging Division of Physical Chemistry over the same period in developing a strong national presence for research and teaching in both experimental and theoretical fields. He was a strong advocate for funding of basic research, influencing the Australian Research Grants Committee (now ARC), and other bodies. Post retirement in 1989, he remained a strong supporter of RACI events, even into his '90's. From his 72-year research career, he is most known for his research in Electron Transfer, developing many of the basic equations now used widely throughout biological sciences and nanotechnology. This led to the development of the field of Molecular Electronics in Australia. His first paper in the field of Attosecond Spectroscopy was submitted on the day he passed away. A larger than life figure who influenced four generations of students, many of whom now have senior positions throughout Australia and the world, in Australia from Bob Gilbert to Laura McKemmish. His energy, enthusiasm, and drive for a simple, right, answer will be remembered, and missed.

## Future Newsletters

If you have additional material to be included in the next edition of this newsletter, please email [l.mckemmish@unsw.edu.au](mailto:l.mckemmish@unsw.edu.au).

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