Another year has passed, with 2014 proving to be very busy and successful. Some highlights include:-

- The official opening of the WMI building;
- Transfer of ownership to the university of the Westmead Fertility Centre;
- Full implementation of electronic marking of student OSCEs and long case exams;
- Conclusion of the first year of MD program;
- Exciting new plans unveiled for the redevelopment of Westmead Hospital; and
- Many well deserved awards, grants and scholarships, including Australia Day awards, Excellence in Health & Medical Research, NHMRC Excellence Awards, SMSF grants, Teacher of the Quarter and Year, MyWestmead awards and scholarships, Sir Zelman Cowen Universities Fund Prize, to name but a few, as well as many publications.

Congratulations again to all those who have been recognised for their efforts during 2014.

With the festive season approaching, we wish all our readers a Merry Christmas and a happy and successful 2015.

Don’t forget that the university will be closed for the Christmas break from Friday, 19 December 2014, and will re-open on Monday, 5 January 2015. We hope that all staff will have the opportunity for a well-deserved break to recharge their batteries in readiness for the challenges of 2015 ahead.

**Next Issue: March 2015**

Please contact Amanda Burke on +61 2 9845 7661 or Amanda.Burke@sydney.edu.au if you would like to include an article in the next edition.

**WEB LINKS……..**

- SMS Westmead Archived Newsletters
- SMS Westmead Web Site
- University Events Calendar
- Westmead Redevelopment
- Sydney University Alumni & Friends
The Class of 2014...

Following their Graduation on Friday, 5 December 2014, it is pleasing to see that at least twelve of Westmead’s Class of 2014 will be commencing their medical careers at Westmead in 2015.

We wish all our students every success as they continue their medical training at various hospitals.

End of Year School Luncheon.....

We were delighted to have the opportunity to catch up with many of you at our end of year thank you luncheon held on Thursday, 4 December 2014, and look forward to working with you again in 2015.

Teacher of the Year 2014...

We are pleased to announce that Dr Jimmy Chien from Respiratory has been awarded the 2014 Teacher of the Year, having received the highest number of student nominations this year.

Although there can only be one winner, we sincerely appreciate the support given to our students by all our valued teachers throughout the year.
Final Year Student Farewell Luncheon...

During the recent Westmead Association Final Year Luncheon, the following Westmead Association Excellent in Teaching Awards 2014, were announced:

- Medicine – Dr Vineet Nayyar;
- Surgery – Dr Mauro Vicaretti;
- Psychiatry – Dr Chris Ryan;
- Emergency Medicine – Dr Andrew Coggins;
- Registrar – Dr Anna Domazetovska;
- Perinatal & Womens’ Health – Natalie Weame;
- Community Health – Dr Chee Koh;
- Radiology – Dr Phil Vladica

The Westmead Association also provided student travel grants during 2014 to:

- Stefan Dimou – poster presentation at the International Neurotrauma Symposium conference in Budapest, Hungary; and
- Anubhav Saxena – oral presentation at the World Stroke Congress in Istanbul

The annual Sydney Medical School Westmead Awards were also announced at the Final Year Luncheon. Congratulations to the following students on their achievements:

The top ranked Westmead students from the recent barrier exams are:

- Year 3 – Nathan Wong & Nathan Harvey; and
- Year 4 – William Meere

Highest Achieving Students (discipline selection):

- Medicine – William Meere;
- Surgery – Andrew Tan;
- Critical Care/Surgery – Rebecca Sparks & Mathew Economides;
- Child & Adolescent Health – Lily Francis;
- Psychological Medicine – Howard Yu;
- Perinatal & Womens’ Health – Tessa Morgan; and
- Community Medicine – Omar Aziz

The recipient of the Clancey-Donald award for 2014 is Andrew Tan.

Welcome New Staff...

Welcome to Daniel Keelty, who recently joined us to work with the Finance team at the clinical school.
Publications...

Congratulations to Phil Le Page, Ruelan Furtado, Sam Law, Andrew Tan (Class of 2014), Marcus Hayward, Hans van der Wall and Gregory Falk upon the acceptance of their article ID #5625 “Durability of giant hiatus hernia repair - 455 patients over 20 years” for publication in The Annals of The Royal College of Surgeons of England.

Appointments & Promotions...

Congratulations also to the following colleagues on their recent appointments:-

- Professor Jenny Gunton;
- Conjoint Professor David Lewis;
- Conjoint Associate Professor Golo Ahlenstiel;
- Conjoint Associate Professor Gopala Rangan;
- Honorary Professor Richard Kefferd
- Clinical Senior Lecturer Matthew Doane;
- Clinical Senior Lecturer Vu Kwan;
- Clinical Senior Lecturer Jimmy Pouliopoulos;
- Clinical Senior Lecturer Sylvia Lim-Tio;
- Clinical Lecturer Nimeshan Geevasinga;
- Clinical Lecturer Rajeef Chalasani;
- Clinical Lecturer George McIvor;
- Clinical Lecturer Urvasi Doolabh;
- Clinical Associate Lecturer Dinusha Chandratilleke;
- Clinical Associate Lecturer Richard Blennerhassett;
- Clinical Associate Lecturer Joanna Connolly;
- Clinical Associate Lecturer Briony Hazelton;
- Clinical Associate Lecturer Jennifer Li;
- Clinical Associate Lecturer Vikas Gupta;
- Adjunct Lecturer Simon Pollett;
- Senior Research Fellow Min Hu;
- Senior Research Fellow Min Kim;
- Senior Research Fellow Mayuresh Korgaonkar;
- Senior Research Fellow Monica Miranda Saksena;
- Research Fellow Emily Fuller;
- Research Fellow Ya Wang;
- Research Fellow Jason Amatoury;
- Research Fellow David Liuwantara;
- Honorary Principal Research Fellow Associate Professor Helen Rizos;
- Honorary Associate Dr Flavia Senetiner;
- Level A Mr Baburam Bastakoti;
- Level A Ms Mehrulnisa Alam

Westmead Student Surgical Association......

Surgical Olympics and a Year in Review...

Teams arrived in fervent spirit on Friday, 24 October, ready to compete in the 2014 Surgical Olympics. The contest became very heated, especially with the guest appearance of a fourth year team comprising WSSA legacy, Stefan Dimou and Andrew Tan, and their recruit Mathew Economides.
Olympians were challenged with surgical tasks to be performed to the utmost precision whilst having to maintain sterility and answering curly anatomical questions for bonus points.

Congratulations to the winning team: Melia Condon, Sarah Minto, Niri Pandit, Sara Shahrestani and their captain, Pree Pampapathi.

It has been, yet again, another busy year for WSSA hosting basic suturing, advanced suturing and knot tying workshops, and Capstone Surgical Seminars on pituitary adenoma and fractured neck of femur. We hope you have enjoyed them and learnt some new skills along the way.

I would like to personally wish our outgoing chair, Stefan Dimou, Advisory Committee member, Andrew Tan, and Fourth Year Representative, Cyrus Mehta, the best of luck in their surgical endeavours. Stefan and Cyrus will be familiar faces on the Westmead wards and Andrew departs us for RPA.

Finally, thank you to our mentors Professor Pleass, Associate Professor Vincent Lam, Dr Mauro Vicaretti and Professor Danny Cass, and the Westmead Clinical School for their continued support throughout the year.

Have a Happy Christmas and an Exciting New Year!

Harry Constantin
Westmead Student Surgical Association
Stage 3 Representative

Postgraduate Student Unit...

PG Research Seminars
Congratulations to our October PG Research Seminar winner Cecelia Li (Centre for Infectious Diseases) and a special mention of our lucky door prize winners, Kaitlin Tagg) & Alex Agyekum (CIDM).

The PG Research Seminar final was held on Thursday 27 November 2014, with 9 of the 10 winners from 2014, vying for the ‘Jerry Koutts Young Investigator Award’, on the day that would have been Prof Koutts’ 70th birthday.

The winners were selected by a panel of judges comprising A/Prof Steve Vucic (Postgraduate Coordinator), Dr Cameron Webb (Deputy PGC), A/Prof Wayne Hawthorne (CTRR) and A/Prof David Booth (Immunology)…..and the winners were:

- 1st Prize – Jerry Koutts Young Investigator Award + $1000: Kaitlin Tagg (CIDM)
Congratulations to all our winners and students who supported the seminars throughout the year. We look forward to doing it all again next year!!

**PG Presentations - International & Local**

**Ulzi Gujav** (Centre for Infectious Diseases and Microbiology) has had her abstract titled "Mycobacterium tuberculosis reactivation in New South Wales, Australia" has been accepted for oral presentation at the 12th International Conference on Molecular Epidemiology and Evolutionary Genetics of Infectious Diseases, which will be hosted by Elsevier between 11-13 December in Bangkok, Thailand.

**Nimeshan Geevasinga** of Neurology has two oral/platform presentations coming up at the ALS Symposium in Brussels, December 2014: Diagnostic Utility Of Threshold Tracking Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation In Als - STARD Study; and Cortical Excitability In Familial C9orf72 ALS Patients

**Dave Lilly** - Medical Entomology (ICPMR) presented recently at conferences in Europe, the US, and Australia.

In late July, Dave visited the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine with Kai Dang and Medical Entomology Department Head, Stephen Doggett, to jointly present some findings of their research on bed bugs. Dave then travelled to Zurich for the 8th International Conference on Urban Pests (ICUP) and presented two talks on his PhD research.

Upon his return to Australia, Dave was a keynote speaker at the annual Australian Environmental Pest Managers Association Nation Conference in August, before presenting an update on the relative risks of bed bugs to doctors and nurses working overseas as part of aid organisations at the Travel Doctor Annual Conference in Sydney - a talk that proved to be the most popular of the event!

Finally, in November, Dave travelled to the US for a week-long visit to Ecolab Pest Elimination in Minneapolis / St Paul (in blistering -12°C weather) and then the 62nd Annual Meeting of the Entomological Society of America in Portland, Oregon. Whilst he didn't win the best student presentation prize, many celebratory donuts were nonetheless eaten.

**PG Grants**

**Florence Chang** of Neurology received a $29,000 research gift from the Brain Foundation to fund the functional MRI section of her PhD project on the pathophysiology of dystonia.
Publications from Florence’s work so far include a review paper on the "clinical significance of pharmacogenomic studies in tardive dyskinesia associated with psychiatric disorders” in Pharmagenomics & Personalised Medicine October 2014.

**PG Publications**

**Nimeshan Geevasinga – Neurology**

Axonal Ion Channel Dysfunction in C9orf72 Familial Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis.


**Matloob Khushi – Cancer Research**


**Other News**

We would like to announce the new Westmead hub student research society: StResS.

WRS and KRISS have now joined forces to bring all PG students bigger and better events, with the aim of promoting cross-institutional networking but, more importantly, provide a social forum for students.

Please pass this information on to all PG students within the hub as we not solely a lab-based society. We would like all PG students from all departments, disciplines and universities to be a part of this society.

If you have any questions, comments or ideas please feel free to contact us at stress.westmead@gmail.com

A three week international adventure in parasites and vectors

**Andrea Lee**

It isn’t always the case that PhD students get to travel to exotic and exciting places for the betterment of their PhD, particularly in their first year. My ‘luck’ came largely in the form of funding received from Australian Society for Parasitology (JD Smyth Postgraduate Student Travel Award), The University of Sydney Grants-in-Aid (constituted by the G.H.S and I.R. Lightoller Scholarship and the Bailieu Research Scholarship) and the Australian Biological Resources Study (National Taxonomy Research Grant Program – Student Travel Grant).

My work is centred on fleas, in particular the common cat flea (Ctenocephalides felis), which is the most common ectoparasite found on cats and dogs globally. The ubiquitous nature of these fleas in family households represents a significant disease risk from zoonotic flea-borne pathogens.

The opportunity to expand this interest came about in around March in the form of my stumbling across an advertisement on the ASP website for IIIParSCo: the third instalment of a summer parasitology course on vectors and their transmitted pathogens in southern Italy. The course was run by Prof. Domenico Otranto (University of Bari, Italy) and Dr Filipe Dantas-Torres (Aggeu Magalhães Research Institute, Recife-Brazil). The main aim of the course was to give us updated information and practical skills on vectors and vector-borne disease in the Mediterranean region. There were 13 attendees representing 9 different nationalities including myself as the only Australian, the only non-veterinarian and the youngest by at least 3 years.

Around the time I applied for IIIParSCo I was also struggling to ‘learn bioinformatics’. I was just brushing the surface of how to use and understand the command processor Bash when one of my supervisors A/Prof Jan Šapeta forwarded me an email for a 1 day bioinformatics workshop in Seoul, Korea. The
workshop focused on a software package called QIIME, used to organise and analyse microbiome data by the people behind the human microbiome project. The workshop was too brief to be able to work with my own data, however it was an enlightening day for consolidating my existing bioinformatics knowledge and expanding to new concepts and features of QIIME.

Between my short stay in Seoul and the workshop in Italy was a space of approximately a week. An association with the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, via my supervisor Dr Cameron Webb in the Medical Entomology Department at Westmead Hospital, landed me an invitation to visit the lab of James Logan, head of the Department for Disease Control at the school. I visited for one day and gave a seminar on my flea work.

Having a keen interest in flea taxonomy and having always wanted to visit the British Museum of Natural History, I emailed the curator of the entomological collections to see whether I might be able to view the famous Rothschild Collection of Fleas, containing the type specimens used to describe several species. She agreed wholeheartedly and was excited at the prospect of having a ‘flea person’ come to visit as apparently they don’t get many. I took with me four specimens representing two native flea species both collected from echidnas in NSW to donate to the museum.

During my two day visit to the museum, I created an image reference library of the type specimens that I can now refer to when identifying fleas and that will be invaluable to me for the entirety of my PhD and beyond. The IIIParSCo course was based heavily on practical activities with Domenico, Filipe and a number of affiliated veterinarians, parasitologists and molecular biologists imparting their skills in the field. These skills included collecting, identifying, dissecting and preserving endemic vectors such as sandflies, ticks, Phortica variegata – a fruitfly that transmits eyeworm – from both the environment and from their respective hosts. The collection of Phortica variegata included using students as human ‘bait’ for the attraction of the zoophilic flies. We also learnt techniques for isolating and identifying the pathogens these vectors transmit such as Leishmania spp., various tick-borne pathogens, Thelazia callipaeda (eyeworm), and metastrongyloides (lungworms).

Luckily during the course, there was also some time dedicated to sight-seeing around the area, including a guided tour of the beautiful UNESCO World Heritage Site Matera and the picturesque Castelmezzano where we – at least the brave among us – went zip-lining or Volo dell’Angelo (literal translation: ‘flight of the Angel’) over the valley from Castelmezzano to Pietrapertosa, another picturesque town cut into the adjacent peak.

Being able to have these experiences so early in my research career was extremely gratifying. The skills and knowledge I gained from the courses and my time in the museum allowed me to understand fleas and other vectors on an international scale. However, the most significant aspect I have taken away is the professional collaborations and long-lasting personal friendships I now have with the talented group of parasitologists who I met and worked with in my time overseas. I wholeheartedly recommend this course to any young parasitologist who is lucky enough to come across the opportunity to attend.

Me with the Rothschild Collection of Fleas in the British Museum of Natural History. The fleas are stored in the original mahogany, bone and brass cases designed by Charles Rothschild himself.
Teaching Opportunities...

As you may know, we are continually seeking tutors for all stages of the course.

If you are interested in teaching, please contact Dr Amanda Harrison on 9845 6403 or email amanda.harrison@sydney.edu.au at the clinical school to discuss possibilities further.

We are happy to provide letters recognising your teaching contribution which can be included with your CV.

From early 2015, we particularly require tutors for:-

- Communication skills and history taking (Med 1 & 2) for the Foundation, Immunology/Infection, Neurosciences/Vision/Behaviour blocks;
- Clinical Reasoning Sessions (CRS) for Stage 3;
- procedural skills.

Sydney Festival 2015....

Sydney University will again partner with the NSW Government in this uniquely Sydney annual event. See the Sydney Festival website for further information and event details, including local events scheduled for Parramatta.

International Medical Student Elective Reports...

Dennis Ellenbroek - The Netherlands - ED

For my final elective and last months of med school, I chose to go to Westmead Emergency. All personnel were really kind and helpful.

In comparison to our EDs, the role of emergency physicians is massive in Australia. ED is quite a new specialty in our country, and most things in ED are handled by the registrars of the different specialties. Other differences are that patients go to the ward when ready, most patients are referred to the emergency by a GP or ambulance and we don't see psychiatric patients in ED unless there are intoxications or self-harm. These differences made this elective very diverse and interesting.

The exposure to critically sick patients was a lot more than I was used to encounter in our EDs. This was a good experience to get used to the feeling and stress at these moments. In the future, this will help me to approach critical patients and stay calm.

In all the teaching sessions I also learned a lot; Medical and surgical grand rounds, JMO teaching and registrar training.

In summary, I had a perfect and educative experience in ED. When I go back to the Netherlands, I will graduate and start advanced training in internal medicine with the plan to become an intensivist.

During my time in Sydney, I had the opportunity to see all the tourist attractions. The atmosphere is perfect and I loved spending my time off with many nice people from different nationalities.

After the elective, I will go backpacking for 3 months, so hopefully I will see a lot more of this beautiful country and nice people. Thanks for this great Experience!! I'll use the phrase "No worries" for a long time when I get back.
Cathy Ding, Central South University, China
Medical Oncology & Radiology

Australia is the most beautiful country I have ever seen. The sky is so blue and no clouds in the sky. On 8 September, I started my 8-week elective program. The first placement was with Medical Oncology, during which I attended ward rounds every morning and saw clinics with doctors. Thanks to a nice team, I learned a lot about chemotherapy and radiotherapy for different cancers.

The next placement was with Radiology department. It was interesting to see the advanced equipment they were using and I learned a lot from this elective program.

I met many friends from different countries. We got along well and often had meals together and saw the beautiful scenery such as the Opera House, the Blue Mountain and so on. I also went for several weekend trips to Melbourne and the Gold Coast.

I had a wonderful time in Australia and I’m sure I will be back! Thanks to everybody who made this experience a great one.

Smile Sun, Central South University, China

ENT & ED

Although I arrived here on a rainy day in September, the friendly and warm welcome from the students in the accommodation made me happy and comfortable on the first day in Australia.

After a couple of days, I began my first placement with the ENT team. As ENT is my major in China, I was keen to learn and practise skills here.

Fortunately every weekend has very nice weather, so it’s time to explore the city and travel around. We are so excited to see the Sydney Opera House shining under the sun and blue sky and, of course, seeing Bondi Beach and enjoying the sunshine.

My second placement was with ED. I’ll never forget this experience and I enjoyed the different environment and medical student teaching, which was helpful in increasing my learning in this area.

Thanks to every one here who made this experience an exciting one!

Fiona Auld - University of Edinburgh

Rheumatology Placement

Having waited so long to come and do my elective in Australia, I was so excited to arrive in Sydney to glorious sunshine and leave the rainclouds in Scotland behind!

Staying within Westmead Hospital accommodation was so handy, especially for the early ward round starts! It was a privilege to work with the Rheumatology team for my four week attachment. Everyone was so friendly, welcoming and keen to teach.

All the students were lovely too and so helpful in showing us around. I learned so much in such a short space of time and saw many interesting cases which will help in my future career.

As well as the medicine, we were sure to make the most of the beautiful beaches here and see all the sights! I also managed to get a wee trip to Palm Beach and see the Home & Away set which was so surreal and an absolute highlight of the trip!

I’d like to thank everyone here at Westmead for being so kind and welcoming during my time here and I hope very much to return to Australia again sometime in the future. 😊