ANZSRS Fellowship and Society Research Medal

Associate Professor David Parsons
BSc, PhD, FANZSRS

Nominated by:
Dr Jeff J. Pretto
July 2011

Summary of Major Scientific Contributions (at the time of nomination)

At the time of nomination, Associate Professor David Parsons was Chief Medical Scientist in the Department of Respiratory and Sleep Medicine at the Women's and Children's Hospital, Adelaide. He had been an active member of the ANZSRS for 18 years and during this time had developed a national and international reputation for his original research in the specialised area of gene therapy in cystic fibrosis.

David had been recognised internationally for his cutting-edge research contributions in the highly specialised area of animal model gene transfer which primarily aims to provide faster and more accurate diagnosis and monitoring of cystic fibrosis airway health. He was considered a world leader in lentiviral gene therapy, including development of the first host-modification techniques for airway gene transfer, and the clever application of innovative high resolution synchrotron x-ray imaging techniques to directly visualise airway-surface motion during respiration in live animals.

At the time of nomination David had published 57 peer-reviewed scientific papers mainly in high ranking scientific journals and as a senior author.

David obtained his PhD in marine neurosciences in 1981 (Zoology, Melbourne University) after obtaining a BSc in computer science and first-class BSc Honours in Zoology. In addition he undertook 18 months of research training at the CF Centre at the University of North Carolina, USA. Up to 2011 David had successfully supervised four Honours students and three PhD students and was currently supervising one PhD student.

David had won 17 research grants from 1997 totalling over $3M. He had received continuous NHMRC project funding since 2004, totalling over $1.6M. Furthermore, since 2003 he played a central role in supporting local CF parents and friends and subsequently established a charitable body (Cure4CF Foundation, Ltd). Through this initiative over $900,000 had been raised toward CF gene therapy research, supporting pilot studies, staff professional development and conference attendances, and the purchase of equipment.