



Hypertension Australia Annual Scientific Meeting Summary Report

***Adelaide Convention Centre, Adelaide
9 December – 12 December 2025***

ASCEPT **Hypertension Australia**

ASCEPT and Hypertension Australia Joint Scientific Meeting

9-12 December 2025
Adelaide Convention Centre
South Australia

#ASCEPT_HA2025
www.ascept-hypertensionau.com.au

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Annual Scientific Meeting Overview

In 2025, Hypertension Australia collaborated with the Australasian Society of Clinical and Experimental Pharmacologists and Toxicologists (ASCEPT) to host a Joint Scientific Meeting, a four-day gathering designed to showcase cutting-edge research and foster collaboration across hypertension, pharmacology, and toxicology. The meeting attracted a diverse mix of clinicians, researchers, and industry representatives, providing an engaging forum for scientific exchange, networking, and professional development, with a total of 407 attendees.,

The program featured a combination of international keynote addresses, concurrent specialised sessions, interactive workshops, and innovation showcases. Delegates were presented with the latest advances in hypertension management, experimental and clinical pharmacology, and toxicology, while the structure of the program encouraged cross-disciplinary discussion and the sharing of practical insights.

The Joint Scientific Meeting was delivered under the guidance of an expert Organising Committee and supported by Expert Events. Committee members included Dr Luke Grundy (Co-Chair), Dr Quynh Nhu Dinh (Co-Chair), Assoc Prof Hesh Al-Sallami, Dr Kacie Dickinson, Dr Natansh Deepak Modi, Assoc Prof Bridin Murnion, Prof Andrew Rowland, Prof Markus Schlaich, Prof James Sharman, Assoc Prof Nicola Smith, and Dr Vivian Tran, reflecting broad representation from leading Australian and international institutions.

For a detailed view of the full ASM program, including all speakers and presentations, [click here](#) to access the PDF.

Strong delegate participation and generous sponsor support enabled the meeting to deliver a budget surplus, which will be reinvested into initiatives that support emerging researchers and strengthen society activities, including student travel grants and award prizes.

A total of 223 abstracts were submitted, 63 (28.3%) of these were submitted under a Hypertension Australia theme. These submissions represent contributions from across Australia and internationally, demonstrating the depth and quality of research showcased at the meeting:

NSW	85
QLD	10
SA	20
TAS	4
VIC	79
WA	12
International	13



Hypertension Australia

Delegate feedback was overwhelmingly positive. ASCEPT email was the main source of information for 80-90% of attendees, with colleagues and prior attendance also influential. Logistics, including the website, app, and on-site support, were rated “very helpful” to “extremely helpful,” while keynote addresses, concurrent sessions, and workshops were mostly rated “very informative” to “extremely informative.” Networking and the meeting dinner were highly enjoyed.

Highlights included Prof Christophe Stove’s closing keynote, the symposium on healthcare for people with intellectual disability, interactive pre-conference workshops and student prize sessions. The venue was rated “excellent” to “very good,” and nearly all delegates indicated they would attend future meetings. Suggestions for improvement included additional topics (e.g., chronic pain, rare diseases, gene therapies), better session timing, clarifying poster formats, and adding a barista station.



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Invited Speakers

Our 2025 Hypertension Australia invited named lecturers delivered a series of impactful and engaging presentations, which were highly appreciated by this year's attendees. These distinguished speakers were selected based on recommendations from the Hypertension Australia membership.

We were privileged to welcome the following speakers:



RD Wright Lecture:
A/Prof Jens Titze, DukeNUS Medical School
Body fluids and blood pressure: lost in translation

A/Prof Jens Titze began working on salt and water homeostasis as a medical student in 1991. At that time, the prevailing belief was that body Na^+ content is constant, and that any increase would elevate blood pressure. While measuring Na^+ balance in humans preparing for long-term space missions, he discovered that Na^+ rhythmically disappeared and reappeared from a storage site that was invisible at the time. Using novel tools, he and colleagues demonstrated that both rodents and humans store large amounts of Na^+ under the skin and in skeletal muscle, and that this storage process is physiologically regulated.

This new way of thinking about the body fluids quickly delivered new research avenues in immunology (immunological host defence and auto-immunity), endocrinology (insulin resistance, diabetes mellitus, and metabolic muscle function), and cardiovascular disease (hypertension research, heart failure). Today, our clinical research revolves around the fact that Na^+ storage is secondary to intracellular K^+ depletion, and that increasing K^+ intake effectively reverses this process; with beneficial effects on blood pressure. In the basic research arena, we dream of solving a general methodological-physiological root problem in the field: our inability to visualize and quantify Na^+ and K^+ distribution disorders inside diseased cells at the μm scale in intact, hydrated organs.



Austin Doyle Lecturer:
**Prof Seth Masters, Centre for Innate Immunity and Infectious Disease,
Hudson Institute of Medical Research**
Functional testing in autoinflammatory diseases

Prof Seth Masters is Centre Head of the Centre for Innate Immunity and Infectious Disease at the Hudson Institute of Medical Research (Australia). He has uncovered the genetic basis for several autoinflammatory diseases and continues to manage the associated Australian Registry, AADRY. Mechanistically this work has defined the innate immune pathways driving inflammation as a result of aberrant proteasome function, retrograde transport and mitochondrial homeostasis. This has led to improved understanding of innate immune pathways in complex disorders such as inflammatory bowel disease and motor neuron disease. Prof Masters is a Scientific Advisor for NRG Therapeutics (UK) and Odyssey Therapeutics (USA) and was appointed as a Fellow of the Viertel Foundation, HHMI-Wellcome Trust and the NHMRC.



Colin I Johnston Lecturer:
Prof Francine Marques, Monash University
Rewriting blood pressure control through the gut microbiome: A translational odyssey

Professor Francine Marques is a National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Emerging Leader, Viertel Charitable Foundation, and National Heart Foundation Fellow. She completed a PhD in genomics at the University of Sydney in 2012, followed by postdoctoral training supported with NHMRC and Heart Foundation fellowships.

Since 2018, Prof Marques has led the Hypertension Research Laboratory at Monash University, currently based at the Victorian Heart Institute, where she serves as Deputy Director (Discovery). Her team aims to build exceptional scientists that help improve cardiovascular health, using translational approaches to lower blood pressure via the gut microbiome. Her research program has attracted over \$12 million in competitive funding and resulted in over 140 peer-reviewed papers and 34 awards, including the 2019 American Heart Association Hypertension Council Goldblatt Award, the 2020 High Blood Pressure Research Council of Australia and 2021 International Society of Hypertension Mid-Career Awards, the 2021 Australian Academy of Science Gottschalk Medal, and the 2024 Australian Society of Medical Research Peter Doherty Leading Light Award.

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Keynote Speakers

Our 2025 Hypertension Australia keynote speakers were invited to present as recipients of prestigious awards from the previous year. The Paul Korner Lectureship was delivered by the 2024 Paul Korner Medallist and the BIHS Lectureship was presented by the Early Career Researcher Oral Prize winner from the BIHS Annual Scientific Meeting.

We extend our gratitude to all the keynote speakers for their insightful and informative presentations.



**British and Irish Hypertension Society (BIHS) Lecturer
Dr Jamie Kitt, Oxford & Thames Valley**

Hypertensive pregnancy: a truly multi-organ disorder...can the postpartum period offers a window to modulate lifetime risks of end organ damage?

Dr Jamie Kitt is a dual accredited Cardiology & General Internal Medicine (GIM) Consultant trained in Oxford & Thames Valley, United Kingdom. He has sub-specialty training in Echo, Cardiac magnetic resonance (CMR), Cardiac CT, and Hypertension, the latter of which complements his research expertise within hypertensive pregnancy. He now works as an imaging cardiologist in London for the NHS and continues his post-doctoral research in Oxford in Hypertensive Pregnancy.

He completed a PhD studying the cardiac complications of hypertensive pregnancy between 2018-2022. Under the supervision of Prof Paul Leeson, he was awarded a British Heart Foundation fellowship during which they performed a randomized trial on post-partum self-management of hypertensive pregnancy (POP-HT). This resulted in several high-impact publications in the field of hypertensive pregnancy, with the key POP-HT trial papers published in JAMA, Hypertension and Circulation to coincide with the trial's presentation at American Heart Association's late breaking Science in November 2023. He was awarded the early career research award of the British and Irish Hypertension Society in Autumn 2024 and the University of Oxford Graduate Prize Award in March 2025 for this body of work. The vascular paper is pending publication in Hypertension and the brain and renal outcomes from are under peer review. Prof Leeson and Dr Kitt are now collaborating in a multi-center PCORI funded trial of postpartum BP self-management in the USA, the multi-center validation of POP-HT in the UK (SNAP2), and help run dedicated postpartum hypertension clinics in Oxford and London. Dr Kitt looks forward to sharing this body of work at the Australian Hypertension society in late 2025 and working with Prof Larry Chamley to adapt the principles developed in POP-HT to the New Zealand model of postpartum care during a visiting lectureship in December 2025



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Paul Korner Awardee Lecturer
Prof Michael Stowasser, Frazer Institute, The University of Queensland,
Princess Alexandra Hospital
Hormones and Hypertension; Medicine and Music

Michael is currently Director of the Hypertension Units and of the Endocrine Hypertension Research Centre within the University of Queensland Frazer Institute at Greenslopes and Princess Alexandra Hospitals in Brisbane. He has over 30 years clinical research experience in pathogenesis and management of hypertension and especially of endocrine varieties including primary aldosteronism, renovascular hypertension, pheochromocytoma and familial hyperkalemic hypertension.

Working with mentor Richard Gordon, he helped to demonstrate that primary aldosteronism is at least 10 times more common than previously thought and is the commonest specifically treatable and potentially curable form of hypertension. Subsequent studies have involved determining genetic bases for primary aldosteronism, examining non-blood pressure dependent effects of aldosterone excess, improving methods of detection, diagnostic workup and management of primary aldosteronism, exploring the pathogenesis and genetics of other salt sensitive forms of hypertension (including familial hyperkalemic hypertension) and investigating how dietary potassium lowers blood pressure.



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Meeting Highlights

ECR Symposium

The 2025 ECR Symposium was a joint career development workshop co-hosted by the Hypertension Australia ECR Committee and the ASCEPT Student Committee. We welcomed over 50 attendees for an interactive session all about exploring diverse career pathways. Our panel included 6 early-mid career researchers, including Dr Wubshet Tesfaye, Dr Rikeish Muralitharan, Dr Aili Langford, Dr Quynh Dinh, Dr George Tan, and Dr Audrey Adji, who shared their career journeys and gave honest, practical advice on navigating opportunities in research. We also had a rotating discussion format, so everyone had the chance to connect with every panellist and ask questions. The conversations were full of great insights. A huge thank you to Alemayehu Jufar and Hericka Bruna Figueiredo Galvão from the Hypertension Australia ECR Committee, and Ash McEvoy and Mariah Stavrou from the ASCEPT Student Committee, for working together to make this event possible. It was a fantastic opportunity to learn, network, and think big about the next steps in our careers.

Women in Hypertension Session

Due to this year's scientific meeting being held as a joint event between Hypertension Australia and the Australian Society of Clinical and Experimental Pharmacology and Toxicology (ASCEPT), the session was delivered as an EDI workshop in collaboration with the ASCEPT EDI Committee. As Chair of the HA Women in Hypertension Committee, together with Dr Brendan Wilkins, Chair of the ASCEPT EDI Committee, we co-chaired and moderated Workshop 9: "Visibility in STEM and Medical Practice/Research/Higher Education: Empowering Diverse Voices" on Tuesday, 9 December 2025.

The workshop was well attended and generated lively discussion. The invited speakers were A/Prof Courtney Ryder from Flinders University and A/Prof Darren Roberts from the Sydney Children's Hospital Network.

A/Prof Ryder presented "Researching: Since Time Immemorial", sharing how she draws on her First Nations background to build a "knowledge interface" in her research on trauma and injury. She highlighted the distinctions between First Nations knowledge systems and Western knowledge



systems, and how both can be integrated to co-design trauma and injury management—particularly for First Nations communities.



A/Prof Roberts delivered “Supporting the Journey”, reflecting on his personal and professional journey from Sri Lanka to his research on self-poisoning, and how these experiences inform his current role in Australia as he works to create environments where every individual feels seen, valued, and safe.

An open discussion followed the presentations, featuring panellists Dr Norma Bulamu and Dr Maria Alejandra Pinero de Plaza (Flinders University), Mr Alex Burke (University of Sydney), Dr Rikeish Muralitharan (Monash University), and Dr Danial Saifuddin (University of Queensland). Each panellist shared their lived experiences and how their culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds have shaped their research careers. The audience contributed thoughtful comments, enriching the conversation.

By the end of the session, there was a shared recognition that this workshop represents an important first step in acknowledging diverse backgrounds and, collectively, fostering a more positive and inclusive research environment. As Chair of the Women in Hypertension Committee, I have led the transition to a newly named Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee to better align with the committee’s future direction and expanded scope.

Pulse of Asia 2024 – a joint symposium with Hypertension Australia Annual Scientific Meeting

The symposium was held as a hybrid, joint symposium with Hypertension Australia Annual Scientific Meeting on 26 November 2024. It was attended by 37 participants, both in person and virtual, from 6 countries including Australia, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Japan and USA. The two morning sessions were invited speakers, which cover the topic of “Clinical perspectives of artificial intelligence in cardiovascular haemodynamics applications”, and “Current challenges of emerging technologies and wearables in cardiovascular haemodynamics research”. The afternoon sessions were dedicated to 11 oral and 7 poster presentations, in which 3 were selected by two independent judges to be the best oral presentations. As attendees, we learnt about the applicability of artificial intelligence in clinical settings from different countries, and the successful outcomes and challenges faced by clinicians and researchers in applying artificial intelligence. We heard outcomes from recent clinical studies from early and mid-career researchers. The highlight of the symposium was the Michael O’Rourke lecture, entitled “Bridging Old and New for Pulse Research”, presented by Professor Junichiro Hashimoto from Japan. Prof Hashimoto presented his experience working with the late Prof O’Rourke, and how this learning has shaped how

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hemodynamic research is performed at present. The late Professor Michael O'Rourke was a leader in cardiovascular hemodynamic research and highly regarded by many of his collaborators, young and old worldwide. Prof O'Rourke was also an active member of Hypertension Australia (previously High Blood Pressure Research Council of Australia). The symposium was kindly sponsored by CardieX and Uscom.



The symposium was followed by a joint session of Pulse of Asia and Hypertension Australia on 27th November, entitled "Arteries and blood pressure: the role of large arteries and microvasculature in hypertension". Speakers for the session included Profs Alberto Avolio and Junichiro Hashimoto from Pulse of Asia, and Drs Jonathan Mynard and Audrey Adji from Hypertension Australia, presenting the applicability of hemodynamic research in the macro- and microvascular crosstalk.

BPOzKids: Blood Pressure in Australian Children

The primary focus of BPOzKids in 2025 was completing the first Australian guideline for paediatric hypertension and conducting the consultation process. The draft is now complete, and we received lots of constructive feedback from a broad range of stakeholders and peak bodies. A revised draft has been prepared based on the comments received. The final step before publication is seeking endorsement from key peak medical bodies, commencing early 2026. At the ASM in December, we had our first mini-symposium on paediatric hypertension as part of the main meeting program, with positive feedback from many. We heard from Prof Markus Schlaich on new therapies for hypertension; Dr Nick Larkins with an update on the guideline initiative and why paediatric hypertension is so important to address; Dr Danielle Longmore on emerging treatments for obesity and evidence of their BP effect; and Ms Arielle Hyland on the DASH diet for children and the resource being prepared to accompany the upcoming guideline.



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Hypertension Australia Awards 2025

A host of talent within Hypertension Australia membership was again recognised and rewarded in 2025 including the presentation of a range of oral and poster awards. A hearty congratulations goes out to all the worthy recipients below.

The Robert Vandongen Travel Award:

The Robert Vandongen award is presented for the highest scoring abstract submitted by a member from Western Australia.

The 2025 Robert Vandongen Travel Award went to **Dr Louise Woodhams**.

The Judith Whitworth Award:



Prof Judith Whitworth was the first woman to be elected as the President of the HBPRCA (1999-2001). Throughout her career, Prof Whitworth not only contributed to a major way to high blood pressure research herself, and to the mechanisms involved in steroid-related hypertension, but broke numerous barriers and paved a path for women in research, clinical practice and policy making.

The Judith Whitworth award goes to the highest ranked HBPRCA member abstract for which the first author is a woman.

The 2025 Judith Whitworth Award winner was **Heshmiha Christy**.

The Jaye Chin-Dusting Award:



Prof Jaye Chin-Dusting was the second woman to be elected as the President of the HBPRCA (2011-2016). As a founder of the Australian Cardiovascular Alliance, Prof Chin-Dusting was deeply concerned with the funding available for cardiovascular disease, which affects particularly those in the early and mid-stages of their career. During her presidency of the HBPRCA, she also established the young investigator subcommittee of the HBPRCA, to improve training, networking, and opportunities for early and mid-career high blood pressure researchers.

A mid-career scientist (between 5-20 years post PhD) who is an active researcher will receive the Jaye Chin-Dusting Award.

The 2025 Jaye Chin-Dusting Award winner was **Dr Katrina Mirabito Colafella**.

The Paul Korner Medal:

Prof Paul Korner was one of the founders and a former President of the HBPRCA (1987-1989). He devoted a large part of his career to researching the causes of essential hypertension, with a special focus on underlying neural and cardiovascular mechanisms. A senior scientist (>20 years post-PhD) who is an active researcher and has made a significant contribution to high blood pressure and Hypertension Australia receives the Paul Korner Senior Medal.

The 2025 Paul Korner Medal went to **Professor Garry Jennings**.



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Oral and Poster Researcher Awards:

In 2025, we received an outstanding selection of high-quality Student and Early Career Research oral and poster submissions. The dedication and effort reflected in their work were greatly appreciated by all.

We extend our congratulations to the following award winners:

Student Awards

The 2025 Student Poster Award went to: **Genevieve Shek**

The 2025 Student Oral Award went to: **Charlotte Barker**

Early Career Researcher (ECR) Awards

The 2025 Early Career Researcher Poster Award went to: **Dr Katrina Mirabito Colafella**

The 2025 Early Career Researcher Oral Award and British and Irish Hypertension Society (BIHS) Award went to: **Dr Rikeish R Muralitharan**



From left to right: Genevieve Shek, Charlotte Barker, Katrina Mirabito Colafella and Rikeish R Muralitharan with Quynh Dinh and Hypertension Australia President Markus Schlaich.



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Sponsors

Hypertension Australia would like to extend a huge thank you to our sponsors who have continued supporting us through this year and without whom none of this would be possible. Sponsors for the 2025 ASCEPT and Hypertension Australia Joint Scientific Meeting are as follows:

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when clarity
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We thank you all for attending and participating in our 2025 ASCEPT and Hypertension Australia Joint Scientific Meeting.

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