

MedSci 2026 Programme at a glance

Monday 31 August 2026

2:30pm – 4:30pm	MedSci + AWCBR joint symposium The Heart-Brain Axis: From Autonomic Circuits to Clinical Care Room: Bealey B4 + B5. Chair: Assoc. Prof. Anna Mitchell
4:30pm – 5:00pm	Afternoon Break
5.00pm-7.00pm	MedSci Poster session <i>Sponsored by Abacus dx</i> Exhibition Area (set up from 4.45pm)

Tuesday 1 September 2026

8:30am-9.00am	Mihi Whakatau Conway C2 + C3	
9.00am-9.30am	Morning Tea: Exhibition Area	
9.30am-10.30am	MedSci Plenary Lecture Alessio Gizzi Università Campus Bio-Medico, Rome Conway C5 (with live feed to C4)	
10.30am-12.30pm	Session 1A - Conway C4 PSNZ – Prize Finalists PSNZ Bullivant Prize Finalists	Session 1B - Conway C5 Reproductive Endocrinology in Women and Men: Bridging Biology and Clinical Care
12.30pm - 1.30pm	Lunch: Exhibition Area PSNZ AGM - Conway C4	
1.30pm-3.00pm	Session 2A - Conway C4 PSNZ – Prize Finalists Hubbard Prize	Session 2B - Conway C5 NZSE – Prize Finalists MediRay Student oral
3.00pm-3.30pm	Coffee Break: Exhibition Area	
3.30pm-5.30pm	Session 3A - Conway C4 PSNZ – Prize Finalists - New and Emerging - Mini-orals (Infoblitz)	Session 3B - Conway C5 Biological Rhythms in Health and Disease
7.00pm-late	MedSci & QMB Conference Cocktail Function + Prize-giving <i>Sponsored by Thermo Fisher Scientific & Maurice Wilkins Centre</i> Te Puna o Waiwhetū - Christchurch Art Gallery	

Wednesday 2 September 2026			
9.00am-10.00am	MedSci Plenary Lecture Matthew Kemp National University of Singapore Conway C5 (with live feed to C4)		
10.00am-10.30am	Morning Tea: Exhibition Area		
10.30am-12.30pm	Symposium 4A - Conway C4 Food Meets Physiology: Energetics and Electromechanics of the Gut	10.30am-12.30pm	Session 4B - Conway C5 From Detection to Delivery: challenges in identifying and treating perinatal brain injury
12.30pm-1.30pm	Lunch: Exhibition Area MedSci AGM - Conway C4		
1.30pm-3.00pm	Symposium 5A - Conway C4 Free Communications	1.30pm-3.00pm	Symposium 5B - Conway C5 NZSE Awards & PhD orals • Emerging Researcher • Nancy Sirett
3.00pm - 3.30pm	Coffee Break: Exhibition Area		
3.30pm - 4.30pm	Session 6A - Conway C4 Free Communications		
5.00pm-6.00pm	QRW plenary Lecture Prof. Sir Graham Le Gros Malaghan Institute of Medical Research Conway Rooms		
6.00pm-8.00pm	Evening Social Function <i>Sponsored by Thermo Fisher Scientific</i> Exhibition Area		

Monday 31 August 2026

2:30pm – 4:30pm	MedSci + AWCBR joint symposium The Heart-Brain Axis: From Autonomic Circuits to Clinical Care Bealey B4 + B5 Chair Assoc. Prof. Anna Mitchell
2:30 – 2:40	Assoc. Prof. Anna Mitchell (UC) Chair's Welcome & Opening Overview: Framing the heart-brain axis
2:40 – 3:00	Prof. Johanna Montgomery (UoA) Cardiac Plasticity: Cellular remodeling within the intrinsic cardiac nervous system
3:00 – 3:20	Prof. Chris Reid (Florey Institute) Genetic Pathology: How genetic cardiac arrhythmia contributes to SUDEP risk
3:20 – 3:40	Prof. Catherine Morgan (UoA/Mātai) Neuroimaging: Advanced 4D Flow MRI techniques mapping brain hemodynamics
3:40 – 4:00	Dr. Fiona McBryde (UoA) Systemic Physiology: Cerebrovascular control and blood pressure variability
4:00 – 4:20	Prof. Laura Bennet (UoA) Translational/Clinical: Fetal heart rate variability changes to determine evolving brain injury after hypoxia-ischemia.
4:20 – 4:30	Panel Discussion
4:30pm – 5:00pm	Afternoon Break
5:00pm – 7:00pm	MedSci Poster session <i>Sponsored by Abacus dx</i> (Set-up from 4:45 pm) Exhibition Area

Tuesday 1 September 2026

8:30am-9.00am	Mihi Whakatau Conway C2 + C3		
9.00am-9.30am	Morning Tea: Exhibition Area		
9:30am-10:30am	MedSci Plenary Lecture: Conway C5 (with live feed to C4) Alessio Gizzi Università Campus Bio-Medico, Rome Active Mechanics in Soft Tissues: From Heart to Stomach Chair: Leo Cheng		
10.30am-12.30pm	Session 1A: PSNZ Bullivant Prize Finalists Room: Conway C4 Chairs: JC Han and Victoria King	10.30am-12.30pm	Session 1B: Reproductive Endocrinology in Women and Men: Bridging Biology and Clinical Care Room: Conway C5 Chairs: Joe Yip + Bridget Barraclough
10.30-10.45am	Melanie Malcolm MS2: Understanding the role of GABAergic GIP receptor signalling in the reproductive axis in female and male mice	10.30-11.00am	Prof. Damasias Becu-Villalobos: MS10: Concerted prolactin actions on thermogenesis in the hypothalamus and brown adipose tissue
10.45-11.00am	Jekhan Saravanan MS3: Multifunctional conductive bilayer scaffold incorporated with miRNA-loaded lipid nanoparticles for regenerative cardiac tissue engineering		
11.00-11.15am	Georgia Aliprantis MS4: Development of sleep states in a model of late-onset fetal growth restriction	11.00-11.30am	Prof. Jane Girling: MS11: Are there things to consider at the intersection of endometriosis and polyendocrine ovarian syndrome?
11.15-11.30am	Sam Scott MS5: Inflammation and brain injury in late-onset fetal growth restriction		
11.30-11.45am	Caitlin McRae MS6: Silencing the androgen receptor in liver and fat in polyendocrine metabolic ovarian syndrome (PMOS)	11.30-12.00pm	Dr. Jenny Clarkson: MS12: Turning up the heat: examining the role of kisspeptin neurons in menopausal hot flushes

11.45am-12.00pm	Lily Burgin Penlington MS7: Investigating sex differences in the therapeutic efficacy of fructose metabolism inhibition in diabetic HFpEF		
12.00-12.15pm	Dr. Neelesh Gehlot MS8: The role of angiotensin type 1 receptors in modulating blood pressure and cardiac sympathetic nerve activity levels during hypertension	12.00-12.30pm	Dr Erik Wibowo: MS13: Latent symptom profiles among men with prostate cancer who received androgen deprivation therapy
12.15-12.30pm	Michael Beacom MS9: Dissecting the impact of severe hypoxic-ischemic injury on the peripheral chemoreflex during brief repeated umbilical cord occlusions in preterm fetal sheep		
12.30pm - 1.30pm	Lunch: Exhibition Area PSNZ AGM - Room: Conway C4: 12:50 pm NZSE AGM – Room: Conway C5: 12.50pm		
1.30pm-3.00pm	Session 2A: PSNZ – Hubbard Prize Room: Conway C4 Chairs: Pete Jones and Helen Waddell	1.30pm-3.00pm	Session 2B: NZSE MediRay Best Student Speaker Award Room: Conway C5 Chairs: Jenny Clarkson and Shahd Al-Isawi
1.30-2.00pm	Sophie Piesse MS14: Preeclamptic extracellular vesicles exacerbate maternal vascular dysfunction and hypertension long-term in SHRs	1.30-1.45pm	Vivienne Saunders MS17: Investigating the role of estradiol in perimenopausal mood disorders
		1.45-2.00pm	James Cox MS18: Stress controllability gates encoding of opposing valence states
2.00-2.30pm	Andy Stewart MS15: Investigating the mechanisms underlying the attenuation of fever during pregnancy	2.00-2.15pm	Anita Clark MS19: Investigating the role of prolactin receptor signalling in serotonergic neurons in respiratory and sleep adaptations to pregnancy
		2.15-2.30pm	Kleff Tan MS20: The sexual-dimorphic action of PTPN2 in diet-induced metabolic and reproductive dysfunction

2.30-3.00pm	Samuel James MS16: Investigating the role of cardiac glycopathy in diabetic heart disease and SGLT inhibitor treatment	2.30pm-2.45pm	Sydney Wood MS21: Sex-specific role of galanin-like peptide (GALP) in the timing of puberty onset
		2.45-3.00pm	Hual Juan Lau MS22: Distinct natriuretic peptide pathway profiles in Pacific Peoples with heart failure
3.00pm-3.30pm	Coffee Break: Exhibition Area		
3.30pm-5.30pm	Session 3A: PSNZ – Prize Finalists • New and Emerging • Mini-Orals (Infoblitz) Room: Conway C4 Chairs: Kim Mellor and Michelle Munro	3.30pm-5.30pm	Session 3B: Biological Rhythms in health and disease Room: Conway C5 Chairs: Caitlin MacRae and Micheal Perkinson
3.30-4.00pm	Dr. Simerdeep Dhillon MS23: Preterm brain injury: biomarkers and neuroprotective treatments	3.30-4.00pm	Prof. Chris Hall: MS33: Cell-intrinsic circadian timers boost daytime antibacterial immunity
4.00-4.30pm	Dr. Toan Pham MS24: Mitochondria-derived peptide MOTS-c restores mitochondrial respiration in type 2 diabetic heart	4.00-4.30pm	A/Prof. Svetlana Postnova: M34: Beyond Time Zones: Factors Shaping Jetlag Recovery in the Field
4.30-4.35pm	Ellie Morrison MS25: The Role of early postnatal androgen exposure in the neuroendocrine programming of PMOS	4.30-5.00pm	Dr. Raewyn Poulsen: M35: Causes and consequences of peripheral clock disruption: lessons from arthropathy
4.35-4.40pm	Teo De Rezende McGuinness MS26: Exploring melt ElectroWriting as a platform for controlled therapeutic delivery		
4.40-4.45pm	Caleb Calhoun MS27: Quantifying allelic effects in vivo of non-coding variants associated with gout in Māori and Pacific peoples		
4.45-4.50pm	Emily Morice MS28: From GWAS to mechanism: Developing a BLaER1-based framework for functional investigation of gout risk loci		

4.50-4.55pm	Georgia Walsh MS29: Biological sex and the relationship between myocardial structure, calcium handling and cardiac function		
4.55-5.00pm	Amaan Abdul-Aziz MS30: Effects of acute vape aerosol exposure on epithelial sodium channel activity in a human airway cell model		
5.00-5.05pm	Andrew Rajendran MS31: Validation of electrogastrographic (EGG) recordings against simultaneous serosal recordings	5.00-5.30pm	A/Prof. Karl Iremonger: M36: Brain rhythms controlling stress
5.05-5.10pm	Zisen Zhou MS32: Production of viable cardiac muscle strips from frozen tissue for mechanical experimentation		
7.00pm-late	MedSci & QMB Conference Cocktail Function + Prize-giving <i>Sponsored by Thermo Fisher Scientific & Maurice Wilkins Centre</i> Te Puna o Waiwhetū - Christchurch Art Gallery 312 Montreal Street <i>Ticket only</i>		

Wednesday 2 September 2026

9.00am-10.00am	MedSci Plenary Lecture Conway C5 (with live feed to C4) Matthew Kemp National University of Singapore Evidence-based Optimisation of Antenatal Glucocorticoid Therapy Chair: Greg Anderson		
10.00am-10.30am	Morning Tea: Exhibition Area		
10.30am-12.30pm	Symposium 4A: Food Meets Physiology: Energetics and Electromechanics of the Gut Room: Conway C4 Chairs: Leo Cheng + Nipuni Nagahawatte	10.30am-12.30pm	Symposium 4B: From Detection to Delivery: challenges in identifying and treating perinatal brain injury Room: Conway C5 Chairs: Victoria King + Simerdeep Dhillon
10.30-10.54am	Prof. Alessio Gizzi: MS38: A computational paradigm for intestinal peristalsis and wrinkling	10.30-11:00am	Dr. Victoria King: MS43: Late-onset fetal growth restriction: lessons from a new preclicinal model
10.54-11.18am	Prof. Gail Bornhorst: MS39: Using our knowledge of gastric physiology to develop in vitro models: Applications to food and pharmaceuticals	11:00-11.30am	Dr. Julie Wixey: MS44: Determining key mechanisms of brain injury for treatment options in fetal growth restriction
11.18-11.42am	Dr. Juliana Leite: MS40: From <i>in vivo</i> to <i>in vitro</i>: Evaluating dynamic gastric models using carbohydrate-rich foods	11.30-12.00am	A/Prof. Joanne Davidson: MS45: Perinatal hypoxic-ischemic brain injury – Should we treat infants with mild hypoxic-ischemic encephalopathy?
11.42-12.06am	Dr. Nipuni Nagahawatte: MS41: Measuring and modulating gut electro-mechanical function		
12.06-12.30am	Dr. Toan Pham: MS42: Energy metabolic function in the small intestine	12.00am-12.30pm	A/Prof. Gergely Toldi: MS46: Tackling inflammation in prematurity: novel approaches for treatment and prevention
12.30pm-1.30pm	Lunch: Exhibition Area MedSci AGM - Room: Conway C4: 12:50 pm		

1.30pm-3.00pm	Symposium 5A: Free communication Room: Conway C4 Chairs: Calvin Young + Simerdeep Dhillon	1.30pm-3.00pm	Symposium 5B: NZSE – Awards • Emerging Researcher • Nancy Sirett • PhD Student Oral Room: Conway C5 Chairs: Joe Yip and Caroline Decourt
1.30-1.50pm	Dr. Bridget Barraclough MS47: Competing internal demands override the CRH induced avoidance response to flexibly adapt approach-avoidance behaviours	1.30-2.00pm	NZSE Emerging Researcher Award Dr Aline Boer MS51: GIP: the forgotten incretin that has finally entered the spotlight
1.50-2.10pm	Dr. Yuanyuan He MS48: Differential regulation of TRPV4 function by microtubule and actin cytoskeleton remodelling	2.00-2.30pm	NZSE Nancy Sirett Award: Prof. Greg Anderson MS52: A neuronal circuit for stress-induced infertility
2.10-2.30pm	Dr Ryan Sixtus MS49: Exercise causes exaggerated blood pressure rises in patients with aortic dissection	2.30-2.45pm	Nikkita Murray MS53: Impact of obesity on reward signalling in female mice
2.30-2.50pm	Dr. Michael Perkinson MS50: A hormone-sensitive neural circuit drives maternal-pup interactions via the dopamine reward system	2.45-3.00pm	Zsaleya Sword-Tua MS54: Investigating AgRP neuron activation as a modulator of HPG axis dysfunction in polyendocrine metabolic ovarian syndrome
3.00pm - 3.30pm	Coffee Break: Exhibition Area		
3.30pm - 4.30pm	Session 6A: Free communication Room: Conway C4 Chairs: Ryan Sixtus + Cayden Buitendach		
3.30-3.45pm	Areeb Iqbal MS55: Patient-specific iPSC-derived cardiac organoids for heart failure modelling and drug testing		
3.45-4.00pm	Elijah Atta Manu		

	MS56: The Epithelial Sodium Channel suppresses breast cancer progression through alterations in the transcriptome, calcium signalling and cell cycle regulation		
4.00-4.15pm	Daniel Lyth MS57: Hyperuricaemia and pancreatic β -cell mass in Zebrafish and MIN6 cell models		
5.00pm-6.00pm	QRW Plenary Lecture Prof. Sir Graham Le Gros Malaghan Institute of Medical Research <i>Harnessing the Power of the Immune System Using Basic Science and Cutting Edge Technologies</i> Conway Rooms (Guests are invited to take seats from 4:45 pm)		
6.00pm-8.00pm	Evening Social Function <i>Sponsored by Thermo Fisher Scientific</i> Exhibition Area		