

QMB Meeting Programme

Tuesday 1 September – Wednesday 2 September, 2026
Te Pae, Christchurch, New Zealand

Tuesday 1 September

Time	Details	Location
8.30am-9.00am	Mihi Whakatau	Conway C2+C3
9.00am-9.30am	Morning Tea	Exhibition Area
Keynote Speaker Session		
Chaired by Andrew Munkacsi (Victoria University Of Wellington)		
9.30am-10.30am	Manolis Kellis (Q1) QMB Keynote Speaker via Zoom Massachusetts Institute of Technology <i>AI for genomic medicine and drug discovery</i>	Conway C2+C3
10.30am-10.40am	<i>10 mins comfort break</i>	
Session 1 Translational Genetics & Genomics		
Chaired by Heather Hendrickson (University of Canterbury)		
10.40am-10.50am	Hannah Lee-Harwood (Q2) Victoria University of Wellington <i>Functional metagenomic discovery: From antimicrobial resistance to industrial applications</i>	Conway C 2+C3
10.50am-11.00am	Hilary Sheppard (Q3) University of Auckland <i>Using advanced genome editing techniques to reprogramme T-cells for cancer immunotherapy</i>	
11.00am-11.10am	Alicia Didsbury (Q4) University of Auckland <i>Building a transitional pathway for cell therapy</i>	
11.10am-11.20am	Essie Van Zuylen (Q5) University of Canterbury <i>He taoka nō te whenua: Māori sovereignty and the native Psilocybe of Aotearoa</i>	
11.20am-11.30am	Phillip Wilcox (Q6) University of Otago <i>Implementing Māori data and algorithmic sovereignty in genomics: (some) pragmatic considerations</i>	
11.30am-11.40am	Hannah Darroch (Q7) University of Otago <i>An Aotearoa-relevant role for JAZF1 in the development of metabolic disease</i>	
11.40am-11.50am	Heather Hendrickson (Q8) University of Canterbury	

11.50am-12.00pm	<i>Location, location, location: A genomic squatter explains phage cocktail performance against American foulbrood</i> Louise Bicknell (Q9) University of Otago <i>Genetic answers for New Zealand through genomic sequencing</i>	
12.00pm-12.10pm	Candice Quin (Q10) Victoria University of Wellington <i>From dysbiosis to frailty: Gut microbiota shape inflammation and immune remodeling in aging</i>	
12.15pm-12.20pm	Sponsor presentation: Sabine Ferrettole Thermo Fisher Scientific <i>Enabling Multi-Omics Research: From Sample to Biological Insight</i>	Conway C2+C3
12.23pm-12.28pm	Sponsor presentation Jessie Chang Decode Science <i>The Age of Multi-Omics</i>	Conway C2+C3
12.30pm-1.30pm	Lunch	Exhibition Area
Session 2 AI-Driven Biology Chaired by Annabel Whibley (Bragato Research Institute)		
1.30pm-1.43pm	Annabel Whibley (Q11) Bragato Research Institute <i>From data to solutions: striving for precision and efficiency in viticulture and winemaking</i>	Conway C2+C3
1.43pm-1.56pm	Te Taka Keegan (Q12) University of Waikato <i>AI and Māori Data Sovereignty of te Reo Māori</i>	
1.56pm-2.09pm	Arthur Morley-Bunker (Q13) University of Otago <i>Improving gastrointestinal cancer outcomes with AI-enhanced digital pathology</i>	
2.09pm-2.22pm	Jack Flanagan (Q14) University of Auckland <i>Chemical space travel connects patients to early stage drug discovery science</i>	
2.22pm-2.35pm	Binh Nguyen (Q15) Victoria University of Wellington <i>Integrating Artificial Intelligence and molecular sciences for drug discovery</i>	
2.35pm-2.47pm	William Schierding (Q16) University of Auckland	

2.47pm-3.00pm	<i>Multi-omics for glaucoma: Integrating molecular, neuroimaging, and clinical data across a multimodal systems biology framework</i> Justin O’Sullivan (Q17) University of Auckland <i>From genome to therapy: AI-driven systems biology for precision medicine</i>	
3.00pm-3.30pm	Afternoon Break	Exhibition Area
3.30pm-5.30pm	Poster Session <i>sponsored by Mediray</i>	Exhibition Area
5.30pm-6.30pm	Annual General Meeting (AGM) of The Queenstown Molecular Biology Society <i>All are welcome to attend and contribute to planning of future meetings</i>	Conway C2+C3
7.00pm-late	QMB & MedSci Conference Cocktail Function Ticket only <i>sponsored by Thermo Fisher Scientific and Maurice Wilkins Centre</i>	Art Gallery

Wednesday 2 September		
Time	Details	Location
<u>Session 3 Chemical Biology & Biodiscovery</u> Chaired by Marina Fuhrer (University of Auckland)		
8.00am-8.15am	Alan Cameron (Q18) University of Auckland <i>Developing a cancer prodrug for activation by an oncolytic virus</i>	Conway C2+C3
8.15am-8.30am	Marina Fuhrer/Ruth Pay (Q19) University of Auckland/Victoria University of Wellington <i>Studies towards His-Tyr-Bridged cyclic lipopeptides: Aciculitins</i>	
8.30am-8.45am	Christelle Andre (Q20) New Zealand Institute for Bioeconomy Science <i>Unique bibenzyl cannabinoids in the New Zealand endemic liverwort Radula marginata: Biosynthetic insights and cultural perspectives</i>	
8.45am-9.00am	Meika Foster (Q21) Edible Research Limited, University of Auckland, AuOra Limited, Wakatū Incorporation <i>Beyond chemistry: Implementing an Indigenous-led value-creation and benefit-sharing system for biodiscovery research and innovation</i>	
9.00am-9.15am	Siouxie Wiles (Q22) University of Auckland	

9.15am-9.30am	<i>Searching Aotearoa New Zealand's fungi for novel antimicrobial compounds</i> James Strong (Q23) New Zealand Institute for Bioeconomy Science <i>From Bench to Bioreactor to Beyond: Collaborative Scale-Up Solutions</i>	
9.30am-9.45am	Alistair Brown (Q24) Victoria University of Wellington <i>Indigoidine synthetases: Driving the synthesis of novel C-nucleosides and bioactive pigments</i>	
9.45am-9.52am	Sarah Douglas (Q25) Ferrier Research Institute <i>Investigating novel enzymes in indole diterpene biosynthesis</i>	
9.52am-10.00am	Sereyboth Soth (Q26) Lincoln University <i>Metatranscriptomic insights into microbial functional responses to fungal volatile organic compound seed treatment in perennial ryegrass under drought stress</i>	
10.00am-10.30am	Morning Tea	Exhibition Area
Session 4 Spatial & Systems Biology Chaired by Sarah Szelecki (Victoria University of Wellington)		
10.30am-10.43am	Austen Ganley (Q27) University of Auckland <i>Levels of background transcription and splicing in the human genome</i>	Conway C2+C3
10.43am-10.56am	Anh Thu Tran Tran Nguyen (Q28) University of Otago <i>Sensing RNA-protein interactions with ONT nanopore sequencing</i>	
10.56am-11.09am	Arielle Sulit (Q29) University of Otago <i>SEQing space in response prediction to chemoradiotherapy in rectal cancers</i>	
11.09am-11.22am	Saem Park (Q30) University of Auckland <i>Mapping the spatial architecture and cellular neighbourhoods of the tumour microenvironment</i>	
11.22am-11.35am	Zaramasina Clark (Q31) Victoria University of Wellington <i>Title TBC</i>	

11.35am-11.48am	Rachael Zemek (Q32) University of Auckland <i>Cancer surgery, mapped over time: turning the wound-healing response into therapy</i>	
11.48am-12.01am	Ava Handley (Q33) Malaghan Institute of Medical Research <i>Spatially resolving tissue immunity during infection</i>	
12.01am-12.14pm	Zachariah McLean (Q34) Massachusetts General Hospital, Harvard Medical School, The Broad Institute of M.I.T. and Harvard <i>Splice-regulatory variation at MSH3 modifies Huntington's Disease onset</i>	
12.14pm-12.27pm	Sarah Appleby (Q35) University of Otago <i>Altered circulating bacterial DNA profiles following myocardial infarction</i>	
12.30pm-1.30pm	Lunch	Exhibition Area
<u>Session 5 Protein Biology & Structure</u> Chaired by Jodie Johnston (University of Canterbury)		
1.30pm-1.43pm	Wanting Jiao (Q36) Ferrier Research Institute <i>Exploring enzyme function using computational tools – insights into the catalytic mechanism of anthranilate phosphoribosyltransferase</i>	Conway C2+C3
1.43pm-1.56pm	Kurt Krause (Q37) University of Otago <i>Using a team approach to develop broad spectrum antivirals – establishing a pipeline that will help New Zealand prepare for the next pandemic</i>	
1.56pm-2.09pm	Abigail Schwartfeger (Q38) University of Canterbury <i>Smuggling death across membranes; an endolysin against Gram-negative bacteria</i>	
2.09pm-2.22pm	Christoph Göbl (Q39) University of Otago <i>The tumour suppressor protein p16 undergoes reversible and fully redox- controlled amyloid formation</i>	
2.22pm-2.35pm	Timothy Allison (Q40) University of Canterbury <i>The confusing structural forms of small proteins in type VII secretion systems</i>	
2.35pm-2.48pm	Shaun Lott (Q41)	

2.48pm-3.00pm	University of Auckland <i>The structure of a bacterial teneurin homologue gives clues to the origin of intercellular interactions in the evolution of complex eukaryotes</i> Jack Forsman (Q42) Umeå University, Uppsala University <i>The effect of high light on the structure of Photosystem II from Arabidopsis thaliana</i>	
3.00pm-3.30pm	Afternoon Break	Exhibition Area
Session 6 QMB Award Lectures Chaired by Alan Cameron (University of Auckland)		
3.30pm-3.45pm	Award Lecture for the Biomolecular Interaction Centre Māori Early Career Researcher Award: Victoria Sugrue (Q43) University of Otago <i>The molecular journal: DNA methylation as a record of aging, health, and life history</i>	
3.45pm-4.00pm	Award Lecture for the Thermo Fisher Scientific Award for Excellence in Molecular Biology: Kristi Biswas (Q44) University of Auckland <i>From biofilms to microbiomes: Understanding microbes in upper airway disease</i>	
QRW Plenary Lecture <i>sponsored by Decode Science</i>		
5.00pm-6.00pm	Plenary Lecture: Graham Le Gros (Q45) Malaghan Institute of Medical Research <i>Harnessing the Power of the Immune System Using Basic Science and Cutting Edge Technologies</i>	Conway rooms
6.00pm-8.00pm	Evening Social Function: The 2nd Annual Great QMB Trivia Night <i>sponsored by Thermo Fisher Scientific</i>	Exhibition Area