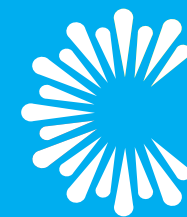


CASE STUDY



**VIRUSES of
MICROBES 2024**
Cairns AUSTRALIA
15-19 July 2024

CAIRNS: A GATEWAY TO SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERIES



CAIRNS
CONVENTION
CENTRE



EXPANDING OUR VIRAL FRONTIERS

The International Society for Viruses of Microorganisms (ISVM) advances the study and application of microorganism viruses, including archaeal viruses, bacteriophages, and viruses of microbial eukaryotes. The Viruses of Microbes Conference, initiated in Paris in 2010 and has been held biennially across Europe. In July 2024, it debuted in Cairns, Australia, attracting over 500 global participants to discuss microbial virus research advancements.

The primary objective of this Conference is to advance science and expand the scope of current research on microbial viruses with the aim of encouraging new research directions.

The theme for VoM 2024, “Expanding our viral frontiers,” aptly acknowledges the rapid growth within the field of virology. It also celebrates the Conference’s expansion beyond Europe, serving as a testament to both scientific progress and the resilience of the global scientific community.



“ This is an exciting time for Australian science as we emerge as leaders in the field

Jeremy J. Barr Associate Professor, Monash University

CASE STUDY

VoM 2024 CAIRNS: A GATEWAY TO SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERIES



1st

FIRST TIME OUT OF EUROPE



500

GLOBAL PARTICIPANTS



73%

FROM OVERSEAS



46

COUNTRIES



EXPANDING OUR VIRAL FRONTIERS

Jeremy J. Barr, Associate Professor from Monash University and Co-Chair of the meeting, highlighted that “Hosting this meeting in Australia, marking the first time it has been held outside of Europe, is a significant and impactful legacy. This is an exciting time for Australian science as we emerge as leaders in the field. This event will not only promote Australian and New Zealand researchers but also enhance our scientific contributions and attract more people to Australia in the long run.”

The Conference program was comprehensive, featuring 13 symposia that covered a wide array of topics. These ranged from phage therapy, evolution, and ecology to structural biology, bioinformatics, and the microbiome.

Barr continued “Our program had a diverse range of topics, covering many subfields to cater to the broad interests of our researchers. The delegates were excited about our scientific program, appreciating the quality and diversity of the talks. The program was impactful and well-received.”

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Jeremy J. Barr Associate Professor, Monash University

EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY

VoM 2024 placed a strong emphasis on inclusivity, with a speaker lineup that achieved a balanced representation. The organising committee worked diligently to ensure this equitable distribution, recognising the importance of diverse perspectives in advancing scientific knowledge.

The Conference also prioritised students and early-career researchers (ECRs), with dedicated symposium sessions for student-delivered oral talks (41%) providing crucial exposure for the next generation of phage researchers. ECR networking events and a pre-meeting workshop on effective science communication further enhanced the Conference's impact.

Barr had this to say about the role and impact of equity, diversity and inclusivity in speaker representation "This was front and center from the inception of our meeting. We made efforts to ensure gender and career representation across Australia and New Zealand. I'm proud of our early career researchers and the geographical diversity of our speakers - we've had speakers from Australia New Zealand, Southeast Asia, North America on top of our traditional European clientele. This was something we were really invested in."

He also reflected on his own experiences as an ECR: "I was fortunate to have many opportunities to present my work at Conferences, which made my career. Now, I want to give back and ensure that the younger people in our field have those same opportunities. The students and the ECRs put in so much effort and passion in their presentations, and in my opinion, they have been some of the best presentations at the Conference. I'm proud and happy that we've got all those people speaking."



CHOOSING CAIRNS: THE IDEAL SPOT FOR INTERNATIONAL SCIENTISTS



**VIRUSES OF MICROBES 2024
CONFERENCE INTERVIEW:**
Jeremy J. Barr, Associate Professor,
Monash University and
Kate Smith, Managing Director,
WALDRONSMITH Management

Cairns, with its stunning location on the Great Barrier Reef, was the ideal location for the Viruses of Microbes 2024 Conference. Barr emphasised “The decision to host the meeting in Cairns was a simple one. Cairns offers a unique experience with its diverse and unique wildlife, scenery, and setting. It’s not often that one has a Conference on a tropical coral reef with a rainforest just above”

“Cairns’ laid-back atmosphere, friendly people, and Australian culture add to the charm, making it a memorable experience for international delegates. The facilities at the Cairns Convention Centre are world-class, some of the best in the country, and Cairns’ regional character has kept a local, connected feel for the meeting.”

An impressive 73% of delegates have come from overseas, representing a total of 46 different countries, including South Korea, USA, UK, and more. This global participation emphasises the universal relevance of the topics discussed at the Viruses of Microbes 2024 Conference and highlights Cairns’ capacity to host such a significant international event. Cairns’ unique blend of natural beauty, world-class facilities, and a thriving health sector makes it an attractive destination for delegates from around the world.

“ Cairns offers a unique experience with its diverse and unique wildlife, scenery, and setting.”



Jeremy J. Barr Associate Professor, Monash University



CHOOSING CAIRNS: THE IDEAL SPOT FOR INTERNATIONAL SCIENTISTS

Additionally, Cairns is a significant player in the health sector, particularly in tropical health. Institutions like the Australian Institute of Tropical Health and Medicine (AITHM) at James Cook University are leading advancements in disease research, further emphasising the region's significance in the health sector.

Kate Smith, Managing Director of WALDRONSMITH Management who provided PCO services for the Conference, expressed delight in bringing VoM 2024 to Cairns "Cairns was certainly a standout, its beautiful appeal, especially in July, and its world-famous Great Barrier Reef were key factors in attracting international attendees to the Conference. The combination of these aspects gave the committee the confidence to choose Cairns."

Smith continued to say that "The Cairns Convention Centre's meticulous planning and attention to detail provided a seamless experience. Hosting young scientists from over 40 countries has been extraordinary. WALDRONSMITH Management was privileged to be part of this remarkable event."

Barr added "Cairns Convention Centre have been incredible throughout this whole process. They've been extremely professional and responsive. It's been an optimal location for a Conference, we couldn't have asked for anything better"

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Kate Smith, Managing Director, WALDRONSMITH Management

Minister for Tourism and Member for Cairns, Michael Healy MP said that Queensland is the perfect backdrop for hosting memorable business events.

“Queensland is fast gaining a reputation around the globe for being a world-class events destination and the fact that Cairns was chosen to hold the Viruses of Microbes Conference for the first time outside of Europe is testament to that”.

“We recognise the value of hosting business travellers and events, which is precisely why the recent upgrades were made to our Cairns Convention Centre.”



Executive General Manager, Commercial & Business Events

Australia, Robin Mack said supporting Cairns Convention Centre’s successful bid to host the International Society for Viruses of Microorganisms presented a significant tourism opportunity for the Tropical North Queensland region.

“Given the importance of business events to Australia’s economy, we are so pleased to have supported this event win for Cairns through our Business Events Australia Bid Fund Program, which also spotlighted Cairns as a global hub of specialist knowledge in tropical health and medicine,” said Mack.

“Since its inception our Bid Fund program has been helping to support a thriving visitor economy by building a strong pipeline of future international business events across Australia.”

Tourism Tropical North Queensland, Chief Executive Officer,

Mark Olsen said hosting the prestigious Conference had been an invaluable opportunity to demonstrate the capabilities and attraction of Cairns as a host destination.

“Tourism Tropical North Queensland, Tourism and Events Queensland and Business Events Australia were delighted to support The Viruses of Microbes Conference which brought more than 500 global delegates to the only place with two World Heritage areas side by side,” he said.

“The delegates were wowed by offsite events such as the gala dinner at Rainforestation where they dined in the rainforest, experienced Indigenous culture and interacted with local wildlife.”

For more information, contact our Business Development Team:

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