

Editorial

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The Australasian Plant Pathology Society (APPS) recently held its 18th biennial conference at the new Darwin Convention Centre. This conference was unique in that it was the inaugural joint conference between the APPS and the Asian Associations for Plant Pathology. The four day conference in late April was attended by 395 scientists from 35 countries and was a resounding success. Darwin turned on some magnificent weather, and the setting on the Darwin waterfront, and organisation of the conference were superb. Congratulations to conference convenor Lucy Tran-Nguyen and her team for a very successful conference.

During the conference our thoughts were with our colleagues in Japan, who because of the tsunami were unable to attend the conference. We wish them a speedy return to normal and look forward to seeing them at future joint conferences.

This year the publication of Australasian Plant Pathology (APP), and web hosting of Australasian Plant Disease Notes (APDN) moves to Springer after ten years with CSIRO as publisher. The move was prompted by the need to increase the profile of the journals internationally. We thank CSIRO for the superb job they have done with publishing the journals, and we welcome Springer as our new publisher and look forward to working with them for a good many years.

In this issue of APP we present several of the keynote addresses to the conference. In his address to the conference, Prof Susanto Somowiyarjo President of the Asian Association of Plant Pathology outlined the plant disease problems faced by smallholder farmers in Asia. Asia's agriculture is dominated by smallholder farmers with self-subsistence production and limited resources. This poses special problems in the management of plant diseases. Plant pathology infrastructure and capacity building was also the focus of Les Baxter's (ACIAR) talk. He outlined the role that Australian R&D institutions have played in developing

plant pathology capacity in developing countries, and discussed the challenges and opportunities ahead.

Prof XuDong Zhou of the Chinese Academy of Forestry reviewed diseases of eucalypts and their management in China. Eucalypts are of increasing importance to feed the rapidly growing economy and diseases are a serious problem. Over the last five years extensive surveys of eucalypt diseases have been carried out resulting in the identification of new pathogens. Eucalypt diseases was also the focus of Angus Carnegie's (NSW) talk, specifically myrtle rust caused by *Puccinia psidii*. This disease endemic in S. America was found in Australia in 2010, and Angus's talk outlined the responses to this incursion. The theme of biosecurity was continued by Francisco Ochoa-Corona (Oklahoma State University) who discussed the overlapping of biosecurity, biosafety, bioterrorism, and microbial forensics.

The use of genome wide associations to investigate interactions between the fungal pathogen *Magnaporthe oryzae* and rice was reviewed by Prof R Terauchi (Kobe University). These studies have led to the identification of new *avr* genes in the fungus and R genes in the host. Fungal DNA polymorphisms are being used to identify the genomic regions under natural selection, a potentially useful tool to isolate the genes involved in plant-pathogen interactions.

References

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