Plant Molecular Biology

Thursday 3 September – Friday 4 September, 2026
Te Pae, Christchurch, New Zealand

Wednesday 2 September

Time	Details	Location
	QRW Plenary Lecture *sponsored by Decode Science*	
4.45pm	Audience take seats	
5.00pm-5.10pm	**Introduction**	Conway C2+C3 live feed to C4 and C5
5.00pm-6.00pm	**Plenary Lecture: Prof. Sir Graham Le Gros** Malaghan Institute of Medical Research *Harnessing the Power of the Immune System Using Basic Science and Cutting Edge Technologies*	Conway C2+C3 live feed to C4 and C5
6.00pm-8.00pm	**Evening Social Function & The Great QMB Trivia Night** *sponsored by Thermo Fisher Scientific*	Exhibition Area

Thursday 3 September

Time	Details	Location
8.15am	**Karine David, Robert Schaffer** Welcome to the Plant Molecular Biology satellite	Conway C4
	<u>Session 1 - Genomics</u> **Chaired by Elena Lopez-Girona (Bioeconomy Science Institute)**	
8.30 am-9.10 am	**Plenary Lecture: Hong Ma (PB1)** Pennsylvania State University (USA) *Comparative genomics of Angiosperm polyploid genomes, especially those in Poaceae, Rosaceae, and Cucurbitaceae, and impact on adaptive evolution*	Conway C4
9.10 am-9.25 am	**Annabel Whibley (PB2)** Bragato Wine Institute (NZ) *Improving elite germplasm: genomic routes to climate resilience in grapevine*	Conway C4
9.25 am-9.40am	**Ting-Hsuan Chen (PB3)** Bioeconomy Science Institute (NZ) *Characterising centromeres of aneuploid chromosomes*	Conway C4
9.40am-10.00am	**David Chagné (PB4)** Bioeconomy Science Institute (NZ) *Time travel using plant genomics*	Conway C4
10.00am-10.30am	**Morning Tea**	**Exhibition Area**
	<u>Session 2 New Breeding Technologies</u> **Chaired by Revel Drummond (Bioeconomy Science Institute)**	
10.30am-11.10am	**Plenary Lecture: Andrew Allan (PB5)** Bioeconomy Science Institute / University of Auckland (NZ) *New breeding technologies are essential for New Zealand's future agriculture*	Conway C4
11.10am-11.30pm	**Glenn Thorlby (PB6)**	Conway C4

	Bioeconomy Science Institute (NZ) *Advancing DNA-Free gene editing in conifers: progress and challenges for forest biotechnology*	
11.30am-11.50pm	**Richard Macknight (PB7)** Kiwifruit Breeding Centre (NZ) *Implementing New Technologies in a Commercial Kiwifruit Breeding Programme*	Conway C4
11.50am-12.10pm	**Dinum Herath (PB8)** Bioeconomy Science Institute (NZ) *Advancing plant regeneration through development regulators: From meristem reprogramming to somatic embryogenesis*	Conway C4
12.10pm-12.20pm	**Student talk: Suguru Sugiyama (PB9)** Lincoln University (NZ) *De novo shoot organogenesis of Sauvignon Blanc: plant growth regulators and genetic control*	Conway C4
12.30pm-1.30pm	**Lunch**	**Exhibition Area**
<u>Session 3 - Reproductive Development</u> Chaired by Soledad Perez-Santangelo (University of Auckland)		
1.30pm-2.10pm	**Plenary Lecture: George Coupland (PB10)** Max Planck Institute for Plant Breeding Research (Germany) *Functions of FT/florigen and interacting bZIP transcription factors in Arabidopsis meristem development during flowering*	Conway C4
2.10pm-2.30pm	**Lynette Brownfield (PB11)** University of Otago (NZ) *Following the clues: The identification the self-incompatibility mechanisms in ryegrass and clover*	Conway C4
2.30pm-2.50pm	**Hilary Ireland (PB12)** Bioeconomy Science Institute (NZ) *Floral morphology influences pollination outcomes in self-incompatible apple*	Conway C4
2.50pm-3.00pm	**Student talk: Daniya Shahid (PB13)** University of Canterbury (NZ) *MicroRNA profiling reveals key regulatory switches in* Pinus radiata *reproductive tissues*	Conway C4
3.00pm-3.30pm	**Afternoon Break**	**Exhibition Area**
<u>Session 4 - NZSPB Prize and Flash Talks</u> Chaired by Nick Albert (Bioeconomy Science Institute)		
3.30pm-4.30pm	**NZSPB Roger Slack Award: Joanna Putterill (PB14)** University of Auckland (NZ) *How does Medicago flower on time? Functional genetics to identify flowering regulators in the model legume* Medicago truncatula	Conway C4
4.30pm-5.00pm	**Flash poster talks**	Conway C4
5.00pm-7.00pm	**Poster Session & Social Mixer** *sponsored by Lab Supply*	Exhibition Area
7.30pm	**Dinner for NZSPB members**	Offsite

Friday 4 September		
Time	**Details**	**Location**
8.15am	**Karine David, Robert Schaffer -** Welcome to day 2	Conway C4
<u>Session 5 – Biotechnology for Crops</u> Chaired by Chris Carrie (University of Auckland)		
8.20am-9.00am	**Plenary Lecture: Kim Johnson (PB15)** La Trobe University (Australia) *Identifying regulators of stem traits for horticulture and forestry*	Conway C4
9.00am-9.20am	**Jia-Long Yao (PB16)** Bioeconomy Science Institute (NZ) *Unveiling the multifaceted control of apple fruit development by the microRNA172-APETALA2 regulatory module*	Conway C4
9.20am-9.40am	**Claudia Meisrimler (PB17)** University of Canterbury (NZ) *Distinct NADPH- and NADH-dependent Fe(III)-chelate reductase activities contribute to iron acquisition in* Pisum sativum	Conway C4
9.40am-9.50am	**Student talk: Krystal Chand (PB18)** The University of Auckland (NZ) *Dissecting nitrogen signalling in plants: A cross species analysis and receptor engineering*	Conway C4
9.50am-10.00am	**Student talk: Rosie Morris (PB19)** University of Otago (NZ) *Unlocking the potential of microbial bioactive compounds and omics technologies to promote* Pinus radiata *health*	Conway C4
10.00am-10.30am	**Morning Tea**	**Exhibition Area**
<u>Session 6 - Plant Stress Responses</u> Chaired by Karine David (University of Auckland)		
10.30am-11.10am	**Plenary Lecture: Jim Whelan (PB20)** Zhejiang University (China) *The role of mitochondria in development and stress responses in plants*	Conway C4
11.10am-11.30am	**Chris Carrie (PB21)** University of Auckland (NZ) *Coordinated physiological, transcriptomic and regulatory reprogramming underlies tissue-specific desiccation tolerance in the resurrection grass* Sporobolus stapfianus	Conway C4
11.30am-11.50am	**Jesus Francisco Echaide Aquino (PB22)** Lincoln University (NZ) *Plant Priming Induced by 6-pentyl-α-pyrone in* Phaseolus vulgaris *Under Drought Stress*	Conway C4
11.50am-12.10pm	**Chanusha Weralupitiya (PB23)** University of Canterbury (NZ) *Decoding crinklers: structural and functional insights into the crinkler effector arsenal of* Phytophthora cinnamomic	Conway C4

12.10pm-12.20pm	**Student talk: Darshika Wickramasinghe (PB24)** University of Canterbury (NZ) *Wounding, drought, and H_2O_2 trigger translocation of a novel nuclear envelope-associated NAC transcription factor from* Zea mays	Conway C4
12.30pm-1.30pm	**Lunch**	**Exhibition Area**
Session 7 Carbohydrates and other Metabolites **Chaired by Ross Atkinson (Bioeconomy Science Institute)**		
1.30pm-2.10pm	**Plenary Lecture: Yunliu Zeng (PB25)** Huazhong Agricultural University (China) *'Ready-to-eat' kiwifruit: A cool temperature–induced ubiquitination controlled transcription factor promotes starch degradation and ripening*	Conway C4
2.10pm-2.30pm	**Don Hunter (PB26)** Bioeconomy Science Institute (NZ) *The role of POLYGALACTURONASE and PECTATE LYSASE in fruit softening and texture in tomato.*	Conway C4
2.30pm-2.50pm	**Christelle Andre (PB27)** Bioeconomy Science Institute (NZ) *Unique bibenzyl cannabinoids in the New Zealand endemic liverwort* Radula marginata*: biosynthetic insights and cultural perspectives*	Conway C4
2.50pm-3.00pm	**Student talk: Ingrid Lindeman (PB28)** University of Otago (NZ) *Diurnal environmental cues adjust carbohydrate partitioning and circadian clock gene expression in controlled environment grown table grape*	
3.00pm-3.30pm	**Afternoon Break**	**Exhibition Area**
Session 8 - Plant Microbe Interactions **Chaired by Jay Jayaraman (Bioeconomy Science Institute)**		
3.30pm-4.10pm	**Plenary Lecture: Sera Choi (PB29)** The University of Sydney (Australia) *An integrated view of plant immunity activation*	Conway C4
4.10pm-4.30pm	**Carl Mesarich (PB30)** Massey University (NZ) *Dissecting recognition of the* Venturia inaequalis *effector* AvrRvi4 *by the apple immune receptor* Rvi4	Conway C4
4.30pm-4.50pm	**Maxim Prokchorchik (PB31)** The University of Sydney (Australia) *Leveraging genomics to understand the diversity of Australian Clubroot isolates and their effector functions*	Conway C4
4.50pm-5.00pm	**Student talk: Chiara Mercer (PB32)** University Of Canterbury (NZ) *Mechanistic insights: NAC transcription factor suppression by tail-anchored RxLR effectors*	Conway C4
5.00pm-5.05pm	**Karine David, Robert Schaffer -** Wrap up	Conway C4