

The AONSA Prize 2015

The Selection Committee (SC) for the AONSA Prize 2015 received multiple nominees by the nomination deadline (June 30, 2014) and intensively reviewed them for a few months. All of the nominees made significant contributions to the field of neutron scattering in the Asia-Oceania region and are highly qualified, reflecting the quality of neutron science in the Asia-Oceania Region. Finally the SC nominated Professor John W. White as a recipient to the 13th AONSA Executive Committee Meeting held in Serpong, Indonesia on October 16, 2014 and the SC's nomination was officially approved. The recipient will be awarded a certificate, a medal and monetary prize (US\$5,000) at the Prize Ceremony to be held during the 2nd AOCNS (July 19-23, 2015) in Manly/Sydney, Australia.



John William White

Research School of Chemistry, The Australian National University

Citation: "For his seminal contributions to the use of neutrons in understanding molecules at interfaces, molecular crystals and self-assembly, for his visionary leadership in establishing the Asia-Oceania neutron scattering community and state-of-art neutron facilities including OPAL, and for his devoted mentoring of young scientists."

John W. White received his BSc from the University of Sydney in 1957, his MSc from Oxford University in 1959 and his PhD from the same institution in 1962. He was a University Lecturer and Fellow of St John's College from 1963-1985, during which time he began his leadership role in the neutron scattering community as Neutron Beam Coordinator at Harwell (1973-1974) Adjoint Director (1974-1977) and then Director (1981-1982) of the ILL. He returned to Australia in 1985 as Professor of Physical and Theoretical Chemistry at the Australian National University in 1985.

Over the course of 50 years in neutron scattering, through a combination of advances in experimentation and choice of paradigm examples, John's work has shown how the rich information

in the neutron scattering law can be analysed to provide precise details of molecular structure and dynamics on the picosecond time scale, for a wide variety of chemical systems.

John became closely engaged with the Australian neutron scattering community immediately upon his return in 1985. He was largely responsible for introducing SANS and neutron reflectometry as experimental techniques to the Australian chemistry, biology and physics communities. John led the charge to build the AUSANS instrument at the HIFAR reactor source, and pushed strongly for the development of a reflectometer there. When the idea of a replacement for HIFAR - the present OPAL research reactor - was first raised, John emerged as its most politically influential and effective advocate. He represented the case to the Australian Government on behalf of the Australian Academy of Science and the National Commission on Crystallography at a series of enquiries through the 1990's (ASTEC Review, McKinnon Enquiry, Senate and the Senate Select Committee). The case for OPAL in its final form, as developed by ANSTO, was appraised by an Australian Academy of Science committee that he led, which formulated advice to the government on policy, siting, environmental impact and user access.

More recently, John has been a major driver in building an Asia-Oceania neutron scattering community to the mutual benefit of all its member countries. His direct involvement began on the Asian Crystallography Association Council in the early 1990's, shortly after its founding, and the International Advisory Panels for KEK and JAERI, which led to his appointment as Chair of the International Advisory Committee for the J-PARC Project in Tokai, Japan. John was the President of AONSA from 2010–2012.

Perhaps most importantly, through a combination of his exemplary science and his promotion of neutron techniques, John has been responsible for launching the careers of a large part of the current generation of Australian neutron scatterers. University departments, ANSTO and other neutron laboratories throughout the world are populated with his former students, postdocs and others whom he informally mentored over the last 30 years. The legacy of his leadership will be felt in Australia and throughout the Asia-Oceania region for many years to come.