Travel report for IVIS Congress, Gold Coast, 16th-19th Aug 2016

I would like to start this report by thanking the IVIS VIC and EVIG organisers for the travel award to attend the IVIS conference in August. It was my absolute pleasure to attend this conference in the sunny Gold Coast with many like-minded students and scientists.

My PhD is investigating changes in innate immune function over the calving period in the New Zealand dairy cow. I have presented at dairy conferences during my PhD and I have never felt as welcomed and accepted at a conference as I did at the IVIS Congress. This conference provided a safe environment to freely discuss research in the field of veterinary immunology, which I thoroughly enjoyed. Often, as researchers in the field of veterinary immunology, we are a minority at other conferences and this was an environment where I felt my research truly ‘belonged’.

The travel award not only provided the financial support that allowed me to travel to the conference, but it put me into contact with other award winners from all over the world. These people are wonderful, bright researchers that became great friends and people I hope to see again someday. It was fantastic to be able to discuss the triumphs and tribulations within our field as I am normally quite isolated from such discussions where I conduct my research.

This report will not be complete without mentioning the fantastic array of immunological research that was presented at the conference. Every plenary session opened the day with interesting talks that piqued my interest in more fields of immunology and concurrent sessions were difficult to choose between. I never knew Tasmanian devil facial tumours could be so interesting; or that camelids have unique immunoglobulin molecules. The organisers did a great job at including talks that spanned many branches of veterinary immunology, which kept the conference stimulating from opening to closing. I thoroughly enjoyed the conference and am very grateful for the opportunity to attend.