

## **Ian Allison's response to the award of the SCAR Medal for International Scientific Coordination 2012**

I am both honoured and humbled to receive the SCAR Medal for Science Coordination. The key function of SCAR has always been initiation, promotion and co-ordination of scientific research in Antarctica, so it is indeed an honour to be recognized for a small contribution to this work. But coordination can only be successful with the enthusiastic contribution from many collaborators and I humbly accept the award on behalf of the thousands of scientists and support staff who have made SCAR programs successful.

Polar scientists led the way in internationally-coordinated, large-scale geophysical measurement programs with the First International Polar Year in 1882-83. They have continued to work together ever since. SCAR grew out of international collaboration during the IGY and has actively maintained that tradition for more than 50 years since it was formed. The challenges of vast geographic regions, a harsh environment and isolation make this necessary. But today's big science problems that have societal impact, such as climate change and environmental degradation, are so large that they cannot be addressed by a single nation, let alone one scientist or research group alone. International collaboration and coordination is vital in almost all areas of science.

I have been privileged to have enjoyed many years in Antarctic science, to have travelled south many and varied times, and to have indulged in research programs that have covered a fairly broad spectrum of physical science. I have never lost my awe for the power and beauty of the Antarctic and Southern Ocean and one of my most vivid memories, during a storm in the Mertz Glacier Polynya in early August, is of watching breaking waves form on an ocean totally covered in pancake ice. I hope that my experiences have not yet finished, because it has always been an enjoyable and educational journey and there is a quiet satisfaction in being able to feel that the work you do is important and necessary. On a more personal level, one of my greatest pleasures from involvement in international collaboration has been making countless friends in all parts of the world. I thank you all for sharing your ideas, and for your hospitality. Involvement in the International Polar Year 2007-2008 was in many ways a culmination of my organizational career; at times a little hectic, but always fun and, while it is for history to finally judge, outstandingly successful in the science achieved and in building long-lasting and ongoing collaborations. The latter include strengthened bi-polar cooperation between SCAR and IASC.

Many people have helped and mentored me in my career, but here I would especially like to acknowledge those who urged me to take a role in international science activities, and gave me the opportunities to do so. First and foremost is Uwe Radok, but Morton Rubin, Kuo Kusunoki, Bill Budd, Charlie Bentley and Norbert Untersteiner were all early mentors, and there have been many more since. I urge all of us with established careers to provide the opportunities for today's early career scientists to become involved with SCAR programs in significant roles. As we have seen with APECS, their enthusiasm, scientific skill and organizational ability is boundless.

I sincerely thank the SCAR community for this recognition. I wish you continuing success in making the whole greater than the sum of the parts; and in communicating the importance of our science to the wider community.