**NZMSS First Overseas Conference Travel Fund Report**

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8th International Symposium on Aquatic Animal Health

September 2-6th, 2018 - Charlottetown, PEI, Canada

I would like to acknowledge the New Zealand Marine Sciences Society for funding my trip to the 8th International Symposium on Aquatic Animal Health (ISAAH) in Prince Edward Island (PEI), Canada. The ISAAH meets every four years and the symposium in 2018 was inspiring with 6 key note presentations, 94 posters and 350 oral presentations, categorized into 48 sessions, all centralized around the theme “***Integrating Biotechnology in the Advancement of Aquatic Animal Health***”.

At the symposium, I was so proud to present my work on “Rapid and specific PCR assay for diagnosis of Apicomplexan- “X” (APX) associated with the flat oysters (*Ostrea chilensis*) in New Zealand” to more than 400 aquatic health professionals from around the world. The questions and positive recommendations I received from other scientists have helped broaden my knowledge and added invaluable information to my PhD progress. Two micrographs of apicomplexan-X that I presented at [ISAAH 2018 Scientific Art Competition](https://isaah2018.com/2018/08/20/isaah-2018-scientific-art-competition/) also received a lot of interests and encouragements. Importantly, attendance at this conference also provided me the opportunity to make contact with other delegates and the chance to discuss with many excellent scientists about the research developments, trends, and the future of the aquatic animal health industry.

I particularly enjoyed the way that the symposium was organized with many social events in the evening such as Student & Early Professional Reception, PEI Cultural Event & BBQ, Discover Charlottetown Event. Through the evening tours, I have made more friends, known more about the history and culture of PEI, and so enjoyed the fresh local seafood and lively PEI entertainment. A biotech and aquaculture field trip day also deepened my knowledge about technologies that have been applied in aquaculture in PEI.

I sincerely thank the New Zealand Marine Sciences Society for being extremely supportive for PhD students. I am going to cherish the great experience of sharing, learning and connecting with other scientists at one of the biggest conference in the field of aquatic animal health for a lifetime.