



Paul Young
President of ASM

Welcome to this issue of *Microbiology Australia*, one that deals with the positive side of microbes and our interactions with them – from those that we utilise in biotechnology to those that have co-evolved with their hosts in a mutually beneficial way. Ipek Kurtböke and Ian Macreadie have brought together an exceptional group of contributors who have provided a broad and fascinating insight into these “good microbes”.

Before I go any further I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of all ASM members, to express heartfelt thanks to Prof. John Turnidge for his magnificent stewardship of the Society over the last two years. As most of you will be aware, John's tenure in the Presidency came at a time when the Society was sailing through some very troubled waters, both organisationally and financially. He and his team have successfully steered a course that has brought us through into much calmer waters. The sterling efforts of Johnson Mak, our outgoing VP Corporate Affairs during this time, also requires special mention. As does the excellent office administration work carried out by Janetta Stones from ICMS. Janetta was called in when the previous office imploded and did a remarkable job of picking up the pieces and helping us steady the ship. We now bid farewell to Janetta who is currently helping us transition the office to our new partners, ASN Events and will leave our service at the end of August. Janetta, we wish you all the very best for the future. Welcome to Maree Overall and Hamish Hill from ASN, who will be our new day-to-day operational officers. ASN will also look after our yearly conferences and their proven expertise as PCOs in this area will ensure the smooth running of our annual meetings into the future. Indeed, indications from the first few months of our dealings with ASN are that the Society can look forward to steady times ahead. This is allowing us to more effectively refocus on the business of the Society and we hope to be flagging a raft of new initiatives for discussion over the coming months. So watch

this space! In the interim, please keep revisiting the ASM website where you will note ongoing changes and upgrades designed to make the site more user-friendly and informative.

I am very pleased to announce that Ian, Jo and Hayley Macreadie have accepted our offer of a three-year extension to their contract editing *Microbiology Australia*. Ian has helped to guide the *MA* over the last few years through a number of transitions to the excellent online, themed journal format that you are currently reading. Nevertheless, there is always room for improvement and after much feedback and debate amongst members, we have decided that we will reintroduce a print version, in addition to an upgraded online version with increased functionality. The final details need to be ironed out, but expect this to roll out in early 2013.

With the ever-increasing developments in media communications, we have decided to introduce a new position on the Executive Committee, VP Communications, to help coordinate our activities in these areas. We will be making a call for nominations very soon, most likely through our eNews emails that you regularly receive, and will provide links to the relevant nomination forms at that time. We are looking for an enthusiastic member who would like to drive new initiatives into this space, so please consider this exciting new opportunity.

The recent ASM annual meeting in Brisbane was a great success with many of us receiving excellent feedback, particularly on the scientific program, both at the level of Plenary speakers and the Symposia presentations. Congratulations go to David McMillan as Chair of the LOC, Glenn Ulett as Scientific Chair, the Divisional Chairs and the entire LOC team for their efforts in bringing this successful meeting together. Many of the delegates to the meeting took the time to fill in a post-meeting survey and we will be providing a summary of the feedback in a forthcoming eNews. We will use this feedback to help in the organisation and conduct of future meetings as we strive to meet the expectations and wishes of our members. Organisation for the 2013 Adelaide meeting is in full swing and it is shaping up to be another excellent opportunity to come together as a Society and hear of exciting new developments in our field and to enjoy some social time together. A special emphasis in coming meetings will be on cross-disciplinary research and activities in order to provide additional perspective to the other, more specialist meetings that crowd our calendars. I look forward to seeing you all there!