

## Vertical Transmission



Mark Schembri  
President of ASM

Greetings everyone in my first Vertical Transmission for the new year. I can't believe we are already in March! ASM Hour has kicked off and I hope you joined the first two sessions, which featured talks on Public Health Microbiology Challenges in the Australia-Pacific region (hosted by Lea-Ann Kirkham and Robyn Marsh) and from our new [Gut Microbes Special Interest Group](#) (hosted by Christine Ong and Sarah Revitt-Mills). Hayley Newton (VP Scientific Affairs) and our theme leaders have assembled a great list of topics and there are fantastic talks lined up. We will continue to use the same link for all ASM Hour sessions (see [here](#)), which should make these national invited talks accessible to all of our membership.

We recently celebrated International Women's Day, and I would like to acknowledge the valuable and significant contribution that women make in the Australian Society for Microbiology (ASM). Our Executive is committed to providing equal opportunities for women in the ASM, guided by our new Equity, Diversity and Inclusion committee. The EDI committee, chaired by Dr Yogitha Srikhanta, is already actively contributing to ASM decision processes.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you about our Communication Ambassador Program. Our ambassadors contribute to ASM's communication channels by sharing content on ASM events, showcasing their work, and serving as public advocates for microbiology. We provide all ambassadors with professional communication training from Science Technology Australia covering social media strategies, fostering a personal brand online, and becoming an online influencer in science and beyond. If you are an early-career researcher and interested in joining this program, applications for this year are open until 31 March and a link to the application form is available [here](#).

This year is jam-packed with great ASM conferences, so please check out our general, specialised and co-supported meetings on our website. This includes our co-supported [Parasitology MasterClass 2024](#) (April), [Viruses of Microbes 2024](#) (July) and [Biomolecular Horizons 2024](#) (September) meetings, and our specialised [EduCon 2024](#) and [CliniCon 2024](#) (both in July), [AusME 2024](#) (October) and [BacPath 2024](#) (November) meetings. Keep an eye out for discounted registration costs for ASM members to attend these meetings. Our highlight [Annual Scientific Meeting](#) in Brisbane is also approaching fast (1–4 July). Registrations and abstract submissions are open. I encourage everyone planning to attend the conference to book your travel early, as the cost of flights may rise quickly. We have a fantastic list of International Plenary speakers, as well as feature presentations from Prof. Matthias Boll (Germany; Rubbo Orator), Prof. Jessica Blair (UK; Snowden Orator) and our own Prof. Mark Walker (ASM Distinguished Orator Award winner). I hope to see you there!

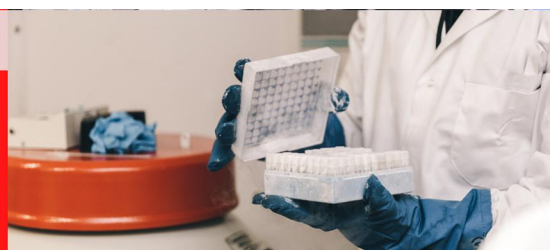
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