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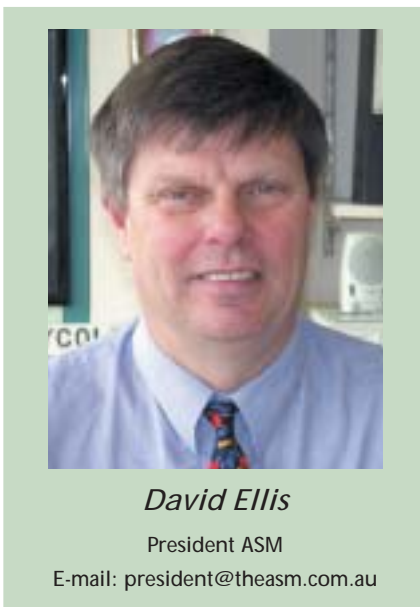
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## Vertical Transmission



*David Ellis*

President ASM

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I am pleased to report that the Extraordinary General Meeting held in Adelaide on Tuesday 13 May 2003 voted unanimously to approve the establishment of a Senior Associate membership category. The postal vote results were 368 votes in favour versus 51 votes against. The National Qualifications Committee will now assess applications for Senior Associate membership. Associate members shall be eligible to apply for Senior Associate Membership if they have (a) completed the requirements of an academic qualification in microbiology at diploma level or alternative qualifications acceptable to National Council; and (b) satisfactorily completed at least five years' appropriate full-time employment, or its equivalent, after completion of their academic qualification, as a practising microbiologist. A Senior Associate Member will be eligible to have voting rights.

The Joint ASM/NZMS conference, which will be held at the Aotea Centre in Auckland from 28 September – 2 October 2003, is now taking shaping so check out the website [[www.micronz2003.org](http://www.micronz2003.org)] or contact the National Office for more details. This is a great opportunity to visit New Zealand and I would encourage members to attend. The Rubbo Oration will be given by David D Ho, who has been actively engaged in AIDS research for 20 years. He is perhaps most recognised for the elucidation of the dynamic nature of HIV replication in infected persons. This basic understanding led Dr. Ho and his co-workers to champion

combination antiretroviral therapy, including the use of protease inhibitors, that has resulted in dramatic reductions in AIDS-associated mortality in developed countries since 1996. Dr. Ho was named *Time Magazine's* Man of the Year in 1996 and was the recipient of a Presidential Medal in 2001. For details of other invited speakers go to the website.

Congratulations to Elizabeth Hartland and Roy Robins-Browne on successfully bidding to host the 6th VTEC conference in Melbourne in June 2006. VTEC stands for Verocytotoxigenic *Escherichia coli* but the entire name of the conference will be the *6th International Symposium on Shiga Toxin (Verocytotoxin) - Producing Escherichia coli Infections*. Janette Sofronidis, our professional conference organiser, also deserves a special mention for preparing the bid documents. Janette and the team at the National Office will PCO this meeting.

I have had recent discussions with Neil Kent (AACB) and John Lown (AIMS) regarding the introduction of competency standards for medical scientists. A joint AACB/AIMS/ASM standard was issued in 1993 but no action has been taken to date. Basically this would require a registration process for all practising medical scientists and the establishment of an appropriate continuing education programme. I will prepare a more detailed article for publication in MA later this year in order to invite input from ASM members. A good article on the professional status of medical science in Australia has been written by Louise McGregor and H Moriarty, in the *Australian Journal of Medical Science* 2003, 24:63-78.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank David Nichols who is stepping down from the editorial board of MA. David has been and active member of the editorial board and has made a significant contribution to the Society over a number of years. Helen Smith from the Queensland Health Scientific Services will replace David. Helen has a strong background in public health and epidemiology and I would also like to welcome her to editorial board.