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Vertical Transmission



Keryn Christiansen

President ASM

The start of the new year brings with it the promise of new challenges, new experiences and new friendships. This is true not only for our members personally but also for the Australian Society for Microbiology (ASM). Our challenge is to attract new members, to reach those with an interest in microbiology both academic and diagnostic, to meet the increasing needs of our existing members, to foster new relationships with other societies both national and international, to work with the Federation of Australian Scientific and Technological Societies (FASTS) to promote microbiology at the highest level and to provide our membership with an exciting and relevant annual scientific meeting.

There are many national issues that require consideration and recommendations from the society. Issues such as funding for research, review of higher education support, the Australian Research Council Federation Fellowship scheme, and the Council of Australian Governments review of hazardous materials, need active input from members of the Society either at the executive level or through the National Scientific Advisory Council. These reviews demand a major commitment of time by all involved and this effort is frequently provided by a willing few. In addition, it is necessary for the Society to initiate its own crusades. There are issues that need our advocacy, for example antibiotic resistance management, pandemic influenza planning, and bio-preparedness. How best to achieve these aims and the associated workload within the society framework and resources are under consideration by the ASM Executive Committee. Involvement in university affairs is being facilitated by the nomination of representatives to participate in a workshop on the Research Quality Framework project, involvement in regulatory affairs by nominations to external committees and promotion of microbiological issues to politicians by representation at Science Meets Parliament organised by FASTS.

The year 2009 will be the 50th anniversary of the formation of the ASM and this golden jubilee provides a unique opportunity to celebrate our history. Through a professional group, the Society's council and executive are exploring the best way to showcase our identity and achievements. The jubilee will be initiated at the ASM Annual Scientific Meeting in Perth, but planning will ensure that all members have an opportunity to join the celebration.

On an international note, I am delighted to inform our members that negotiations by Julian Rood have come to fruition. The American Society for Microbiology has agreed to a collaborative Annual Postgraduate Student Travel Award for attendance at the respective annual scientific meetings of the American and Australian societies. Further details will be available on the ASM website in the near future. I am very grateful to Julian for making these awards possible, thereby enhancing opportunities for our members for significant scientific exchange.

I would also like to thank Ian and Jo Macreadie, the editors of *Microbiology Australia*, for consistently providing our membership with a high quality publication. I am sure our members will look forward to and greatly enjoy another year of interesting and informative reading.

My very best wishes to all members for an enjoyable, challenging and productive 2007.