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Vertical Transmission



Hatch Stokes

President ASM

Planning for the national meeting in Perth is now very much in full swing. As mentioned previously, we hope to make this meeting extra special as the Society will be turning 50 in 2009. We will have the usual impressive array of international speakers that will include Bonnie Bassler as the Rubbo Orator. In addition, the American Society for Microbiology has very generously agreed to sponsor an additional speaker to this meeting to help us celebrate our 50th anniversary. Following an approach from the Perth LOC, I am pleased to be able to announce that Rita Colwell has accepted an invitation to attend the conference and speak. As many of you know, Rita has a number of links to Australia and has attended past meetings.

Another important positive outcome for us in 2009 is that Australia Post has agreed to produce a commemorative edition pre-paid envelope, the release of which we hope to time with the National conference. These envelopes prove very popular and ours will be available through post offices nationwide. The Editorial Board of Microbiology Australia will be working with Australia Post on a suitable distinctive design so this is definitely something to look out for. The ASM has also commissioned a history consulting company to write a short history of the Society to be completed by the Perth meeting. This will be a 'living history', drawing on information from prominent members who helped shape the earlier years of the Society. The interviews of these people have now been completed and we will have the final draft document in a couple of months. At that time we will decide in what form this history will be made available to members and the general public.

Now is a good time to remind everyone that planning is also underway for the National meeting to be held in Sydney in 2010. If you have suggestions for the scientific programme, either for international speakers or symposium themes, I would encourage you to contact the relevant members of the National Scientific Advisory Committee. These are Andy Holmes (the Scientific LOC Chair for Sydney) or Jon Iredell, Peter White, Linda Blackall and Ruiting Lan (the Division 1, 2, 3 and 4 Chairs respectively for Sydney). On a related theme, we are also keen to get suggestions from members for the Visiting Speakers' Program. Suggestions can be forthcoming at any time so, for example, if you have an international visitor to your lab, let Carol Ginns at the National Office know and we may be able to support them visiting other parts of the country to speak.

I was recently in Istanbul representing the Society at the International Union of Microbiological Societies (IUMS) Congress. This congress is held every 3 years and, as well as myself, TuckWeng Kok and David Ellis also attended on your behalf. Our attendance is supported to a large extent by the Australian Academy of Science to whom we are grateful. This is a useful exercise as it is an opportunity to network and discuss matters important to us all. The feedback from our British and American colleagues in regards the new postgraduate travel awards established between us and their respective societies was overwhelmingly positive. I am therefore optimistic that these will become long-term initiatives. One other positive outcome of the Congress for us was that TuckWeng was elected to the Scientific Advisory Board of the International Congress of Virology for a 3 year term; congratulations TuckWeng.

Finally, I draw your attention to the fact that we have recently revamped the rules for the awarding of Distinguished Service Awards. The details can be found on the ASM website. The closing date for nominations is 30 November. Please consider nominating someone you would consider appropriate for one of these important awards.