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Vertical Transmission



Hatch Stokes

President ASM

In recent years there has been a growing concern about the increasing shortfall in a trained workforce in pathology and related fields. This culminated last October with the release of the, so called, Legg report, entitled *The Australian Pathology Workforce Crisis* commissioned by the Department of Health and Aging. In the lead up to this report, and following its release, the Pathology Associations Committee (PAC), of which ASM is a member, has been working to revise and update the competency based standards for medical scientists. Longer serving members of the ASM may recall that a set of standards were first developed in 1993 and it is these standards that are currently being revisited in the light of government driven initiatives that may see the development of formal accreditation requirements for medical scientists. These potential changes of course will be highly relevant to many ASM members, particularly those who work in public and private pathology and diagnostic laboratories. As in the past, where relevant, we will be seeking input from all members so as to broadly represent the interests of the Society. Information on this issue can be found on the ASM website where the documents I referred to above can also be found. This information will be updated as it becomes available. I am particularly grateful to John Merlino, Silvano Palladino, Stephen Graves and Carol Ginns who have been working very hard to represent member's interests on this topic. As everyone is aware, we are entering the jubilee year of ASM so it is an exciting one that I am especially looking forward to. We have a number of special events planned and the National meeting will be bigger than ever. In late breaking news I can tell you that we will have a second Nobel Laureate at Perth. Harald zur Hausen from the German Cancer Research Centre will give the Bazeley Oration. This is in addition to the many other outstanding scientists attending, including Bonnie Bassler, Rita Colwell and of course our own Barry Marshall. As well a number of former Presidents from the early years of the Society have also agreed to attend. In addition to providing an opportunity to catch up with long standing colleagues, former Presidents will be actively participating in the meeting. Apart from the celebrations, 2009 will also see a number of service improvements to members. We have recently invested additional funds in the National Office that will improve the ASM web site. Also, you can look forward to improved communication generally via a major database upgrade that will provide for better on line member services including membership renewal. Look out for these changes as the year progresses.

The winners of each of our two new postgraduate travel awards have been determined. The inaugural Burnet/Hayes Travel award winner is Richard Harvey from the University of Adelaide. Richard will be presenting at the SGM meeting in May and will be spending time at a collaborator's lab in the UK. The second Millis/Colwell Travel Award has been won by Stephanie Bell from the University of Western Australia. Stephanie will be engaging in similar activities in the USA. These awards will be offered annually so I would encourage student members to look out for the call for applications in the next round later in the year. Each of these awards is worth up to \$6,500 provided by your ASM plus free SGM or USA ASM meeting registration. We will shortly know who the USA and UK winners will be who will be coming to Perth.

Keryn Christiansen will finish her term as Past-President in July. As there was only one nomination for President-Elect there was no need for an election for this position. Therefore, on the recommendation of Council, I am pleased to advise that the incoming President-Elect is Professor John Turnidge from South Australia. Like Keryn, John has a long history of service to the ASM and has previously served on Council. Finally, Ailsa Hocking has announced that she will be stepping down as Chair of the *Microbiology Australia* Editorial Board. Ailsa has been in this position for many years and has been on the Board for even longer. Her efforts in helping the journal grow are greatly appreciated and on behalf of all ASM members I wish her well for the future.