ASM members making news

Prof Barry Marshall
2005 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine

We extend our congratulations to ASM member Prof Barry Marshall (right in picture) and colleague Dr Robin Warren (left in picture), who have been awarded the 2005 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine.

They overturned the dogma that stress caused peptic and duodenal ulcers to show that Helicobacter pylori was the cause. In affected individuals, treatment now involves eradication of the H. pylori with antibiotics. Treatment also reduces the risk of such ulcers leading to the development of stomach cancers.

H. pylori is a surprising new example of a microorganism causing a chronic inflammatory disease, and leads one to re-consider the possibilities of microbes being involved in other chronic inflammatory diseases like Crohn’s disease, ulcerative colitis, rheumatoid arthritis and atherosclerosis. Microbiology impacts many areas and the study of H. pylori demonstrates the fascinating interplay between a chronic infection, inflammation and cancer.

For further information go to: nobelprize.org/medicine/laureates/2005

Prof Ian Frazer
2006 Australian of the Year

Congratulations also to ASM member Prof Ian Frazer, Founder and Director of the University of Queensland’s Centre for Immunology and Cancer Research, on being recognised as 2006 Australian of the Year.

For 20 years he has been researching the link between papilloma viruses and cancer, seeking ways to treat these viruses in order to reduce the incidence of the disease. Ian has now developed vaccines to prevent and to treat cervical cancer which affects 500,000 women each year. A vaccine based on his research has shown in worldwide trials to prevent papilloma virus infection and reduce Pap smear abnormalities by 90%. It has the potential to virtually eradicate cervical cancer within a generation. Expected to be on the market within a year, this vaccine will revolutionise women’s health across the globe. Ian embodies Australian know-how, determination and innovation.

For further information go to: www.australianoftheyear.gov.au

Prof Frazer will present the closing plenary presentation on Infections & Cancer – Opportunities & Challenges at this year’s ASM 2006 Annual Scientific Meeting & Exhibition on the Gold Coast (2-6 July 2006).

Go to www.asm2006.org for further info.

Automated Media Pourer for Small Users

The new PetriSwiss Mini™ PS20 from BioTool is a uniquely affordable and compact automated Petridish filling system, ideal for the smaller laboratory.

Offering features such as dish feeding, single dosing, stacking and plate discharging, the PetriSwiss Mini™ delivers precise high-throughput automated operation to enhance the productivity of your laboratory. The system can load twenty 90mm dishes with agar and re-stack them back into the removable PetriRack™ stacker in only 2 minutes.

Equipped with intuitive software, the PetriSwiss Mini™ is easy to use and provides user-friendly operator prompting with graphic monitor and touch screen interface. This allows the user to set variables such as dosing volume, pouring speed, pause time and an anti-drip function.

Built to the highest Swiss quality standards and with self-monitoring of all device functions, the PetriSwiss Mini™ provides most of the features of larger systems without the price tag.

Australasian Medical & Scientific Ltd
PO Box 84
Artarmon NSW 1570
Trevor Warren
Tel: (02) 9436 0444
Fax: (02) 9436 0562
E-mail: info@amsl.com.au
Web: www.amsl.com.au
R&D: where a little buys a lot

This article was also published in the Australian Financial Review on Monday 27 March 2005.

Governments and companies invest in R&D today in order to secure their future. For companies, this is to ensure their commercial survival. For governments, there are more complex reasons. In part, it is to ensure their citizens enjoy improved standards of living. But also, R&D is a long-term investment in risk minimisation and capability building, as highlighted by Australia’s capacity to respond rapidly to the avian bird flu threat. The critical question for both companies and countries is ‘How much of our current resources do we wish to spend on ensuring our future?’

Companies often express this as a percentage of their net sales. DuPont, for example, in 2004, spent US$1333 million on R&D, 4.9% of its net sales. This is a widely used international comparison.

For comparisons between nations, the percentage of GDP invested in R&D is the most widely used measure. It is a useful indication of how much of our current wealth we are prepared to invest in the future. Australia is usually in the top 10 OECD countries when comparing government funded R&D as a percentage of GDP. Government investment dropped as low as 0.59% in 1989-90 and hit a high of 0.77% in 1995-96. In 2005-06 at 0.60%, we are getting close to our historic low. A difference of 0.17% of GDP doesn’t sound very much, but it is. Raising government expenditure to our historic high would mean an additional $1.53 billion!

As China and India power up their R&D institutions and international collaboration is becoming an increasingly crucial national capacity, Australia runs the risk of becoming a derivative economy if our science and innovation capability stagnates.

In contrast to government financed expenditure on R&D, business expenditure on R&D in Australia is in the lower half of OECD countries. Even at its current all time high of 0.89% of GDP, it remains well below the OECD average of 1.51%.

As has often been pointed out, this result is explained in part by the structure of the Australian economy with its high proportion of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), low advanced manufacturing sector and high proportion of service industries. However, a new report from the OECD – Going for Growth 2006 – shows business investment in R&D is in the bottom quartile of OECD countries, even when adjusted to take account of structure.

The level of business investment on R&D is highly relevant when thinking about government funded R&D. That is because capturing the value of public sector research is greatly enhanced when there are companies that themselves have an R&D capability and an active programme of turning research into new products and processes.

The experience of many Australian researchers is it is easier to talk to multinational firms than many local firms because companies such as IBM, Dupont or Roche have considerable in-house scientific expertise and R&D is a ‘naturalised’ part of their corporate culture. Enhancing the link between private and public sector research is, therefore, a crucial area of public policy.

Over the years, successive Australian governments have developed a variety of innovative policies to support industry-research links, including Cooperative Research Centres and ARC linkage grants. Nevertheless, it is a widely held belief that commercialisation of research is a persistent defect in the Australian innovation system. However, in an increasingly knowledge-based economy, a key role of public sector research in industry innovation is transferring ideas, highly trained personnel – notably PhD graduates – and elements of systematically gained knowledge, not commercialisation of technologies.

The recognition that there are multiple pathways to adoption of research by industry is evident in the growing debate about the prospect of Australia introducing a ‘third stream’ or ‘knowledge transfer’ funding programme. The key premise of such a programme is the recognition that it is the quality and dynamism of the partnerships between universities, industry and other knowledge-users that will determine its success.

However, such partnerships need ongoing resourcing. Even a relatively modest investment of $100-200m per annum in a new knowledge transfer programme will provide opportunities for industry, and especially SMEs, to access university capabilities that will enhance their viability and productivity. Over the long-term, such a programme is likely to encourage a broader base of firms capable of collectively ramping up Australia’s quantum of business investment in R&D to internationally competitive levels.
Meetings
Contributions listing relevant meetings are welcome. Please send to: <editor@theasm.com.au>

2006
13 June 2006
University of Queensland, St Lucia
Food Microbiology Seminar Series – John Bates (QHSS)
A world class event, presented solely by authors of AIFST’s coveted Green Book. The authors will present Scientific Status Summaries of Foodborne Microorganisms of Public Health Significance (Green Book), adding emphasis via case studies from their own work. The fee structure incorporates discounts for ASM and AIFST members, as well as students and student members. The evening seminar series is targeted to microbiologists and technical staff from industry, government, academia and consulting laboratories, food manufacturing QA staff, university/TAFE students and potential or current NATA food microbiology signatories. Presented by ASM Food Microbiology SIG and AIFST.
E-mail: sofroni@eml.org.au
E-mail: aisf@aifst.asn.au

15-18 June
Lisbon, Portugal
12th International Congress on Infectious Diseases (ICID)
Tuberculosis and leprosy in early Egyptian cities, quorum sensing, and insuring a global influenza vaccine supply are a few of the fascinating yet disparate areas that make up the field of infectious diseases today. They also are a small sample of the diverse and thought-provoking presentations that will be part of the programme. This also includes from community-acquired MRSA to haemorrhagic fever outbreaks in low resource areas.
With internationally recognised speakers from every region of the world, the ICID provides a breadth of infectious diseases updates not found in any other congress. The 12th ICID will be an especially exciting occasion, as it marks the 20th anniversary of the ISID. Please visit the Congress website at http://www.isid.org/12th_ICID/ for the latest programme updates, to submit an abstract for the scientific programme, beginning 1 October 2005, and to register for the meeting.

24-28 June
Prague, Czech Republic
10th International Symposium on the Genetics of Industrial Microorganisms
Chair: Jaroslav Spizek
Website: www.gim2006.org

2-6 July
Gold Coast Convention & Exhibition Centre, Gold Coast, QLD
ASM 2006, Gold Coast
Annual Scientific Meeting & Exhibition for the Australian Society for Microbiology
Chair: Phil Giffard
Conference Manager: Janette Sofronidis
Australian Society for Microbiology
E-mail: janette@theasm.com.au

10-21 July 2006
University of Adelaide, SA
Virology MasterClass
Conference Secretariat: SAPMEA
E-mail: virology2006@sapmea.asn.au
Tel: (08) 8274 6060
Web: www.sapmea.asn.au/virology2006

8 August 2006
University of Queensland, St Lucia
Food Microbiology Seminar Series – Kari Gobius (FSA)
For details see announcement at 13 June

20-25 Aug 2006
Cairns Convention Centre, QLD
8th International Mycological Conference
There will be a clinical mycology workshop as well as clinical mycology talks in addition to other aspects of mycology.
Web: https://www.sapmea.asn.au/imc8
Chair: Wieland Myer
Vice-Chair: Ceri Pearce

27 August – 1 September
Cairns Convention Centre
Cairns, Queensland
13th International Meeting on Hepatitis C Virus and Related Viruses
Convenors: Eric Gowans, Michael Beard & Geoff McCaughan
Contact: Secretariat, Nola Miles-Clark
PO Box 2101
West Ashgrove, QLD 4060
E-mail: hepatitis2006@bigpond.com

10-15 September
Cairns Convention Centre, QLD
IPNC 2006 – 15th International Pathogenic Neisseria Conference ‘06
Co-convenors: John Davies & Michael Jennings
Conference Manager: Janette Sofronidis
Australian Society for Microbiology
E-mail: janette@theasm.com.au
Website: www.ipnc2006.org

20-22 September 2006
Hilton Hotel, Sydney, NSW
Australian Infection Control Conference
Website: www.aica.org.au

10 October 2006
University of Queensland, St. Lucia
Food Microbiology Seminar Series – P Desmarchelier (FSA)
For details see announcement at 13 June

15-18 October
Amsterdam, Netherlands
6th International Conference of the Hospital Infection Society
Contact: Congress Secretariat
HIS 2006, Concorde Services Ltd
4B/50 Spiers Wharf, Glasgow G4 9TB
Tel: (+44) 141 531 0123
Fax: (+44) 141 531 0234
E-mail: info@his2006.com
Website: www.his2006.com

16 – 19 October
Hilton on the Park, Melbourne
23rd NRL Workshop on Serology
E-mail: rosanna@nrl.gov.au
Web: www.nrl.gov.au

29 October – 1 November
Crown Promenade Hotel, Melbourne
VTEC 2006: The 6th International Symposium on Shiga Toxin (Vero cytotoxin) producing Escherichia coli infections
Chair: Elizabeth Hartland
Conference Manager: Janette Sofronidis
Australian Society for Microbiology
E-mail: janette@theasm.com.au
Website: www.vtec2006.org

12 December 2006
University of Queensland, St. Lucia
Food Microbiology Seminar Series – Narelle Fegan (FSA)
For details see announcement at 13 June

2007
2-6 July
Melbourne Exhibition & Convention Centre
23rd International Conference on Yeast Genetics and Molecular Biology
Chair: Ian Macreadie
Conference Manager: The Meeting Planners
E-mail: yeast2007@meetingplanners.com.au
Tel: (03) 9417 8888
Website: www.yeast2007.org

9-13 July
Adelaide
9 th International Exhibition & Convention Centre
ASM 2007, Adelaide
Chair: Andrew Lawrence
Conference Manager: Janette Sofronidis
Australian Society for Microbiology
E-mail: janette@theasm.com.au
Tel: (03) 9867 9699
ASM joins APACE

The Australian Professional Acknowledgement of Continuing Education (APACE) is a voluntary continuing education programme for medical scientists designed and administered by the Australian Institute of Medical Scientists (AIMS).

Recently the Australasian Association of Clinical Biochemists (AACB) and the Australian Society for Microbiology (ASM) signed a memorandum of understanding with AIMS to allow AACB and ASM members to also participate in the APACE programme.

AIMS will continue to administer the APACE programme. ASM members will be able to enrol in the programme for an annual fee of $25.00 (non-member rate $184.80). Applications from ASM members wishing to enrol in APACE will be processed initially by the ASM National Office. Application forms will be available shortly on the ASM website and joining APACE will be an option for members when paying their annual membership subscription.

Why join APACE

The healthcare industry is undergoing rapid changes and there is now a requirement for medical scientists, especially those in supervisory positions, to continually develop their knowledge and skills in relation to their professional practice through participation in a continuing education programme. By joining APACE, all medical scientists will have access to the same continuing education programme. To gain APACE accreditation, participants will be required to accumulate a minimum of 100 CEU credits within a maximum submission period of 2 years (3 years for rural members).

For more information about APACE and CEU credits go to http://www.aims.org.au/apace/apace.htm

New Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>International</th>
<th>VIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geoffrey Day, New Zealand</td>
<td>Joanne Allen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitty Crosson, New Zealand</td>
<td>Linda Bawden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ronald Garcia, Philippines</td>
<td>Anna Maria Costa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allison Jones, Sweden</td>
<td>Leanne Daniel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chih-Yu Chen, Taiwan</td>
<td>Matthew Greacen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ying-Chien Chung, Taiwan</td>
<td>Thomas Hiscox</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephanie Brandt, United States</td>
<td>Nicole Joos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Angela Mantegazza</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACT</th>
<th>WA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vanessa Lamb</td>
<td>Russell Chapman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farzana Thanweer</td>
<td>Sim Yee Lean</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NSW</th>
<th>VIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roberto Anitori</td>
<td>Joanne Allen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natalie Bell</td>
<td>Linda Bawden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justin Ellem</td>
<td>Anna Maria Costa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa Gonzalez</td>
<td>Leanne Daniel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glenn Hawkins</td>
<td>Matthew Greacen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lien Hoang</td>
<td>Thomas Hiscox</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elecia Johnston</td>
<td>Angela Mantegazza</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NT</th>
<th>WA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ignatius Wong</td>
<td>Russell Chapman</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QLD</th>
<th>Sim Yee Lean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christopher Barker</td>
<td>Joanne Montgomery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Batzloff</td>
<td>Bimba Samarasinghe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QLD</th>
<th>VIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bronwen James</td>
<td>Joanne Allen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Megan Miller</td>
<td>Linda Bawden</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information about APACE and CEU credits go to http://www.aims.org.au/apace/apace.htm