Bridging Bass Strait: report on Bi-State 2009 Hobart

The Bi-State meeting was initiated in 2007 by members of the Victorian and Tasmanian branches of ASM. Its main aim was to provide a local forum for microbiologists from the mainland and Tasmania to meet every second year and discuss their work. With support from ASM, r-biopharm Australia and Thermo Fisher, the meeting was held for the second time in Hobart on 20 and 21 November 2009 at the Royal Hobart Yacht Club.

Smaller meetings play an important role in bringing members together, often being attended by ASM members who do not attend the national meeting for a wide variety of reasons. The less formal program allows for more relaxed participation and conversations. The cost factor is reduced significantly as smaller venues can be used and the heavy financial burden of overseas speakers is removed, although many speakers did travel over the sea to both speak and attend this meeting. A final benefit of a small local meeting is the opportunity to recognise and hear about the depth of good microbiology that is being undertaken in Australia by Australian microbiologists.

Guy Abell (CSIRO Marine) gave the first keynote address on the microbial ecology of estuarine nitrogen cycling. He was followed by Gary Dykes (Monash University) who spoke on the attachment of food-borne pathogens to abiotic surfaces. Richard Bradbury (Royal Hobart hospital) next posed the question *When is a hookworm not a hookworm?* After a break for lunch and a chance to take in the fresh air on the balcony overlooking the water, Karen Laurie (WHO Flu Centre) spoke on the novel typeA (H1N1) influenza virus, Ellen Donnan (Dept Health VIC) talked about a multi-jurisdictional Hepatitis A outbreak investigation, a presentation that generated many questions, as did case studies of Listeria infections in the dairy industry provided by Ian McFarlane (Dairy Food Safety Victoria). To end the first day Enzo Palombo (Swinburne University) described his work on alternative antimicrobial therapies and Caroline Lavender (VIDRL) talked about multi-drug resistant TB in Victoria.

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In place of a formal conference dinner, Fred Peacock, a winemaker from Bream Creek Winery, a small, local, family-owned and -operated business, hosted a wine tasting. His excellent wines were matched with platters of Tasmanian cheeses and many people trundled off with a bottle or two to share over dinner or take home as consolation prizes.

Richard Morrison (DPI, Tasmania) opened the meeting on the second day with a report on vaccine development for salmonid aquaculture. Tom Ross (UTas) discussed the survival of *E. coli* on chilled carcasses and Jason McKenzie (La Trobe University) presented stunning images of virus replication in cells. After a BBQ lunch, Dr Alex Padiglione (Monash Medical Centre) talked about the microbiology laboratory’s experience of the Victorian bushfires and finally Greg Woods (UTas) gave the inside story on Devil facial tumour disease, a truly transmissible cancer.

In a survey conducted at the end of the meeting, attendees spoke very positively about the wide diversity of topics presented and made the comment that even if the topic being addressed wasn’t their usual focus, it was all good microbiology, accessible and engaging. All attendees found the meeting to be helpful, useful, stimulating and good monetary value. This was due in no small part to the skilful organisation of the program and the venue by Sue Cornish and Louise Roddam. To add to the overall pleasure of the occasion, the setting on the water’s edge was most attractive and the catering both tasty and generous. Morning tea was a little late on the second day because the scones hadn’t cooled sufficiently to eat, but the program was sufficiently flexible for this not to be a problem! The Hobart meeting in November clearly lived up to the expectations of those who attended. One of the best indications of its success was that all attendees indicated they would attend a future meeting. Launceston 2012 perhaps?
Student Awards

BD Student Awards

This award, sponsored by BD, provides the opportunity for one student member from each ASM State Branch to attend and give an oral presentation at the ASM Annual Scientific Meeting.

All postgraduate microbiology students who have submitted or are intending to submit an abstract for the ASM Annual Scientific Meeting are invited to apply – especially those in the final year of their degree program.

Eligibility requirements:

• Applicants must be a student member of the ASM (or if not currently a student member, applicants must be eligible for membership and must pay for such at the time of application of the Award).

• Applicants must not previously be a recipient of a BD ASM Student Award.

Application requirements:

Applicants must contact their ASM State Branch to ascertain submission requirements and the deadline date.

Award conditions:

Within 5 days of receiving the award from their ASM State Branch, the recipient must email their presentation abstract to the ASM Conference Manager for publication in the program and abstracts book.

The recipient of the award will be required to present their paper at the BD Student Award Session at the ASM Annual Scientific Meeting.

Assessment:

Finalists for the award will be selected on the basis of their abstract and a presentation summary submitted for consideration to their ASM State Branch.

The recipient of the award will be selected on the basis of an oral presentation – 12 minutes plus 3 minutes question time, to be given at the BD Student Award Evening of each ASM State Branch.

Closing date for application:

Contact your local ASM State Branch for details.

BIOMÉRIEUX ASM Identifying Resistance Award

This award, sponsored by bioMerieux, is given to an individual on the basis of career achievements in the field of the identification of bacterial resistance to antimicrobials in the clinical setting.

Eligibility requirements:

Applicants must be a member of the ASM of 12 months’ standing at the time of application.

Application requirements:

• A current curriculum vitae (including a list of publications).

• The names and contact details (including email addresses) of two referees.

• A brief summary of the applicant’s contribution to the study of bacterial resistance to antimicrobials in a clinical setting.

The award consists of:

• $1,000 cash prize.

• Plaque.

• Provision for flights and accommodation for the recipient to attend the Award Presentation Ceremony at the ASM Annual Scientific Meeting.

Assessment:

The award committee will take into account the quality and originality of the published research and service to Australian microbiology in general. The award is based on the applicant’s entire career rather than a single achievement.

Closing date for application:

Please send applications to Michelle Jackson michelle@theasm.com.au by 31 March 2010.
OXOID ASM Culture Media Award

This award, sponsored by Oxoid, assists an individual to attend and make a presentation on the use of culture media at the ASM Annual Scientific Meeting.

Eligibility requirements:
Applicants must be a member of the ASM of 12 months’ standing at the time of application.

Application requirements:
- A current curriculum vitae (including a list of publications).
- A current position description.
- The names and contact details (including email addresses) of two referees.
- A brief synopsis of the presentation to be made.
- A copy of the abstract to be submitted for presentation.

Award conditions:
The winner must present a paper or poster relevant to the use of culture media in microbiology at the ASM Annual Scientific Meeting. This may be based on original research, a method evaluation or validation or a review of a culture-based diagnostic method. For example, this may include improved isolation methods, rapid or presumptive identification or novel ways of using culture media.

The award consists of:
- $1,000 cash prize.
- Certificate of award.
- Up to $1,000 travel expenses for the recipient to attend the award presentation ceremony at the ASM Annual Scientific Meeting.

Assessment:
The award committee will take into account the eligibility of the applicant for an encouragement award, together with the quality and originality of the planned presentation and its relevance to the use of culture media in microbiology.

Closing date for application:
Please send applications to Michelle Jackson michelle@theasm.com.au by 31 March 2010.

PFIZER ASM Mycology Award

This award, sponsored by Pfizer, assists a laboratory scientist or technician to attend and make a presentation in the field of medical mycology at the ASM Annual Scientific Meeting.

Eligibility requirements:
Applicants must be a member of the ASM of 12 months’ standing at the time of application.

Application requirements:
- A current curriculum vitae (including a list of publications).
- A current position description.
- The names and contact details (including email addresses) of two referees.
- A brief synopsis of the presentation to be made.
- A copy of the abstract to be submitted for presentation.

Award conditions:
The award recipient must present a paper or poster in the field of medical mycology at the ASM Annual Scientific Meeting. This may be based on original research, case reports, a new or updated methodology or a review article.

The award consists of:
- $500 cash prize.
- Certificate of award.
- Return economy class airfare.
- Full conference registration.
- Allowance of $120 per day for 5 nights towards hotel accommodation.

Assessment:
The award committee will take into account the eligibility of the applicant for an encouragement award, together with the quality and originality of the planned presentation and its relevance to medical mycology.

Closing date for application:
Please send applications to Michelle Jackson michelle@theasm.com.au by 31 March 2010.
**ROCHE ASM Molecular Diagnostic Award**

This award, sponsored by Roche, assists an individual to attend and make a presentation of the use of PCR in the field of diagnostic infectious diseases at the ASM Annual Scientific Meeting.

**Eligibility requirements:**
Applicants must be a member of the ASM of 12 months' standing at the time of application.

**Application requirements:**
- A current curriculum vitae (including a list of publications).
- A current position description.
- The Names and contact details (including email addresses) of two referees.
- A brief synopsis of the presentation to be made.
- A copy of the abstract to be submitted for presentation.

**Award conditions:**
The winner must present a paper or poster on the use of PCR in the field of diagnostic infectious diseases at the ASM Annual Scientific Meeting. This may be based on original research, case presentations or a review of a PCR method used to diagnose an infectious disease.

**The award consists of:**
- $1,000 cash prize.
- Certificate of award.
- Up to $1,000 travel expenses for the recipient to attend the award presentation ceremony at the ASM Annual Scientific Meeting.

**Assessment:**
The award committee will take into account the eligibility of the applicant for an encouragement award, together with the quality and originality of the planned presentation and its relevance to molecular diagnostic microbiology.

**Closing date for application:**
Please send applications to Michelle Jackson michelle@theasm.com.au by 31 March 2010.

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**ASM Frank Fenner Award**

The purpose of this award is to recognise distinguished contributions in any area of Australian research in microbiology by scientists in a formative stage of their career, rather than to reward senior scientists for a lifetime of achievement.

**Eligibility requirements:**
- Applicants must be a member of the ASM of at least 2 years' standing at the time of application.
- Applicants must have been engaged in research at postdoctoral level or equivalent for less than or equal to 15 years of full-time research since acquiring their postdoctoral degree in cases of significant career interruption.

**Application requirements:**
- Current curriculum vitae (including a list of publications).
- One page summary of contributions to research in microbiology.
- The names and contact details (including email addresses) of two referees.

**Award conditions:**
Applicants need to show that their area of research excellence was work done substantially in Australia or, for those applicants recently returned from overseas, is ongoing work in Australia that will encourage the nation’s international reputation in microbiology.

The recipient is required to present the Fenner Lecture at the ASM Annual Scientific Meeting.

**The award consists of:**
- Bronze plaque given at the ASM Awards Ceremony at the Annual Scientific Meeting.
- $1,000 cash prize.
- Full ASM Annual Scientific Meeting registration.
- Return economy flights.
- Up to 5 nights’ accommodation.

**Closing date for application:**
Please send applications to Michelle Jackson michelle@theasm.com.au by 31 March 2010.
**ASM Teachers’ Travel Award**

The aim of this award is to encourage ASM members involved in teaching microbiology at the tertiary level to attend the Annual Scientific Meeting of the Australian Society for Microbiology.

**Eligibility requirements:**

- Applicants must be a member of the ASM of 12 months’ standing at the time of application.
- Be employed full-time, part-time or sessionally.

**Application requirements:**

- Current curriculum vitae.
- A letter of recommendation from the applicant’s head of department confirming involvement in and commitment to a teaching program.
- The names and contact details (including email addresses) of two referees.
- A brief synopsis of the applicant’s area of interest in education.

**Award conditions:**

The synopsis would provide the basis for a poster presentation or participation in a session organised by the Education Special Interest Group at the ASM Annual Scientific Meeting.

**The award consists of:**

- Certificate to be given at the ASM Awards Ceremony at the Annual Scientific Meeting
- Up to $1,000 in travel expenses for the recipient to attend the ASM Annual Scientific Meeting.

**Closing date for application:**

Please send applications to Michelle Jackson michelle@theasm.com.au by 31 March 2010.

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**ASM Vic Skerman Student Prize**

This ASM-sponsored prize is awarded annually to a student member of the Society who has contributed, while enrolled as a student member of the ASM, the best review article to the Society’s journal for the period 1 July to 30 June in any year.

**The award consists of:**

- Certificate to be given at the ASM Awards Ceremony at the Annual Scientific Meeting
- $500.00 cash prize.

**Award conditions:**

The applicant must submit a 50-word summary of their CV with their application.

**Closing date for application:**

Please send applications to Michelle Jackson michelle@theasm.com.au by 31 March 2010.