

Vertical Transmission



Mark Schembri
President of ASM

There have been some exciting events occurring in our Society over the last few months – ASM Hour continues to promote new research by our members, SIG and State Branch meetings are running, and we have just had our Annual Scientific Meeting in Perth. One new initiative to inform you about is our effort to engage with politicians through a newly established Parliamentary Friends of Microbiology group. Myself, Dena Lyras, Peter Traynor and Julian Cox were in Canberra in June to kick off this event. This is a project driven largely by Peter Traynor, together with co-Chairs Steve Georganas (Member for Adelaide) and The Hon. Warren Entsch MP (Member for Leichardt). Our ASM team met with a number of Federal Parliamentary Members and Senators (and their staff and advisors), with a goal to increase the visibility of microbiology in Australia and present the ASM as an unbiased expert group able to give advice on all things microbiology. We are now in the process of following up on the connections we made during this event, and I hope we can build these networks to create new opportunities for all of our members.

Our recent Annual Scientific Meeting in Perth was a great success, with 439 in-person attendees, 28 virtual registrations, 9 trade booths, 258 submitted abstracts, >150 talks

and 106 poster presentations. We had an outstanding mix of international and national invited speakers, as well as fantastic talks from our early career researcher and student community. The meeting kicked off with an inspiring talk from our own Nobel Laureate Prof. Barry Marshall, which was then followed by a talk by Dr Andrea McWhorter from the University of Adelaide, winner of our inaugural ASM Industry Engagement award. For the first time, we also gave out an Early Career Microbiology Educator Award, which was won by Dr Charmaine Lloyd from Swinburne University. It is exciting that we are now able to acknowledge outstanding achievements by our members in these important areas of microbiology. Our student and early career day was a highlight and showcased our Nancy Millis Student Award speakers. We also had fantastic and interactive poster sessions that inspired great discussion and networking. For the first time, we ran our CliniCon meeting in parallel with the national conference, and this provided new interaction opportunities for our members as well as our trade exhibitors. The Local Organising and Scientific Program Committees, respectively chaired by Charlene Kahler and Josh Ramsay, did a fantastic job and deserve our thanks and congratulations for running a stimulating and engaging conference that displayed some of the best cutting-edge research being performed in Australian microbiology. Thanks also to our Communication Ambassadors who did a great job at promoting the meeting through our social media forums. Our next Annual Scientific Meeting will be in Brisbane next year over 1–4 July 2024. An exciting program is already taking shape.

Finally, I draw your attention to our upcoming Annual General Meeting. This will be held on Zoom on Thursday 14 September from 13:00 hours AEST. A calendar invitation and link to the meeting can be downloaded from our webpage. I hope to see you all online!

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for Microbiology

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