

ASM2019 report

Stephen Kidd

The local organising committee and the ASM Executive were very pleased to be able to hold the Australian Society for Microbiology (ASM) Annual: National Scientific Meeting and trade exhibition (ASM2019), in Adelaide and held at the Adelaide Convention Centre (ACC).

There was a diverse and stimulating scientific program with leading microbiologists from around Australia and the rest of the world presenting an exciting array of science, research and the advances in the field of microbiology. There was an overarching theme of Humanitarian Development and Solutions and a wonderful social program to encourage discussion and interaction.

We kicked-off the conference on Sunday with a public lecture by Wendy Jackson and Hilda Zoleveke from the Pacific Region Infectious Disease Association PRIDA – empower, grow, sustain). This was a great talk outlining the history and work of PRIDA and the important work they do in the neglected areas of infectious disease including bacteriology, sepsis, other life-threatening infections and then hospital infection prevention. The importance and impact of seemingly simple but vital work and education in these remote areas was obvious and enlightening. The work they are doing goes into many areas and remote sites across the Pacific Region including Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Timor Leste and the Marshall Islands. Professor Tilman Ruff gave an inspiring Rubbo Oration (on Tuesday). He has a broad portfolio of amazing professional and personal activities; and his work has had an enormous impact in humanitarian development. He is an infectious disease and public health physician and has major roles in international organisations functioning for immunisation, public health, nuclear disarmament and peace. He helped establish the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) and was its founding chair. ICAN was the recipient of the 2017 Nobel Prize for Peace.

Likewise, Dr Alan Landay, from Rush University Medical Center in Chicago (USA) talked about his research into HIV/AIDS and his part in the AIDS Clinical Trials Group and as an advisor to UN (United Nations) on AIDS and HIV and Aging. He presented research he has been at the forefront of in developing and providing an understanding of the role of immune activation in diseases related to aging in the HIV population. Intriguingly, there was some new research that was presented showing the links of the microbiota on HIV/AIDS disease progression. Indeed, there was a large number of

talks presented at ASM2019 that showed important data reflecting the developments in our understanding of the role of the microbiome and pathology, and indeed, the role of the microbiome and antimicrobial resistance and tolerance. Commonwealth Serum Laboratories (CSL) annually provide direct support for the Bazeley Oration at the ASM 2019: we were pleased to have the Bazeley Oration given by Professor Luigina Romani. She is internationally recognised in the area of antifungal immunity. She presented some wonderful results on anti-fungal therapies but further to this, the role of the bacterial microbiota in mucosal homeostasis and the function of metabolites in maintaining protection against pathogenic fungi. We were lucky to hear further on fungal infections (in plants) from Professor Sarah Gurr. Her interests in crop diseases, with particular emphasis on fungal infestations and in their global movement and control, highlighted the impact in modelling the rise and re-emergence of diseases in the global food supply.

Further to our understanding of infectious diseases, how they spread and how we treat these diseases, a global concern is the increasing number of infections that are resistant to antimicrobials and antibiotic resistance in particular. The Snowdon lecture was given by Dr Marnie L. Peterson (USA), an expert in antibiotic resistance, antimicrobial stewardship, experimental therapeutics, and microbial pathogenesis. Marnie provided a great platform for understanding the increase in antibiotic resistance, the global importance of monitoring the rise of resistance in infectious diseases and gave some case studies that showed the impact of research and development into new antimicrobial drugs.

Tuberculosis (TB) remains a major, global public health and infectious disease problem, particularly in developing countries, where in many parts it is endemic. Globally, almost 1 million people die from TB every year. Fittingly the conference was concluded by Professor Miguel Viveiros (from the Instituto de Higiene e Medicina Tropical da Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Portugal) with a wonderful talk on TB and antimicrobial resistance mechanisms.

Throughout the conference we had great environments to interact with each and with further science (in the poster sessions), and during the social events. We are proud to have hosted such a wonderful conference – the scientific program and the exciting social events. We especially thank all our sponsors of ASM 2019: they are providing essential and generous support.

Finally, the ongoing quality of ASM National Conferences is the end result of the effort of the ASM Executive (in particular, we acknowledge Dena Lyras, Cheryl Power and Kate Seib) as well as the Local Organising Committee members: Stephen Kidd (Chair), Chris Ossowicz (Deputy Chair), Peter Zilm (Scientific Program Chair), Paul Sideris, Stephanie Lamont-Fredrich (So-

cial), Laura Weyrich, Tania Veltman, Haig Henry, Gianni Scoleri, Alexandra Tikhomirova, Katarina Richter, Nicky Thomas, Darren Trott, Mohammed Alsharifi, Gupta Vadakattu and Tania Veltman. We would also like to thank ASN Events (especially Kara Taglieri, the ASM National Office Manager) for their work in organising this conference.

EduCon 2019: event report



Karena Waller

ASM Ed SIG Chair
Email: klwaller@unimelb.edu.au



This year's ASM EduCon was held 3–4 July in the University of South Australia's new Health Innovation Building in Adelaide. It was a fabulous meeting, attended by 33 registrants from Australia, and from international locations. Registrants enjoyed a diverse program of engaging oral and poster presentations focussing on microbiology and broader biomedical education, teaching and learning in the higher education landscape and professional development opportunities for teaching-focussed academic staff. Throughout the program, attendees enjoyed plentiful and tasty catering supplied by *Food Lore* (caterers based within the Health Innovation Building).

The meeting commenced with Associate Professor Prue Bramwell (RMIT University) delivering an engaging presentation titled *Group work – perspectives on the student experience and assessment*. Prue, recipient of the 2018 ASM David White Excellence in Teaching Award, presented her perspectives and findings on the complexities of group work and its assessment. Prue's presentation included examples of the successful use of Spark^{PLUS}, a licensed software for peer assessment and feedback on group work.

Mr Adam Montagu, from Adelaide Health Simulation (University of Adelaide), then delivered an engaging presentation titled *Simulation under the microscope*, which included a live demonstration of the capabilities of the simulation unit by Adam and his colleagues (including physicians, technicians and actors). Following this, we were then treated to a guided tour of, and further demonstrations in, the Health Simulation unit, which is responsible for teaching active, clinical practice skills to medical, nursing, physiotherapy and health science students.

Wednesday's activities were rounded out by the EduCon Conference Dinner, held at the Union Hotel, a local gastronomic pub within walking distance of the Health Innovation Building. Once there, we enjoyed a delicious three-course meal accompanied by regional wines within an opulent, yet relaxed setting. A wonderful evening of networking and great conversation was had by all!

Thursday's program kicked-off with Dr Helena Ward and Professor Ray Peterson (both from the University of Adelaide) delivering an accessible presentation on *Scholarship of Teaching and Learning: Why it matters and how you can engage in it*. Given the increasing importance of scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) activities to the careers of many University academic staff, this presentation was highly informative, relevant, practical and timely.

Dr Nicolene Lottering, currently of Swinburne University of Technology but formerly with the University of Adelaide, delivered an engaging presentation titled *Re-inventing learning for the digital generation: A students-as-partners approach to maximise student engagement*, which exemplified the use of social media in increasing student engagement in her Anatomy classes. Nicolene outlined useful ways for using Instagram to boost engagement (not only with her students, but also with us via a live demonstration), and highlighted the many positive outcomes this had on student engagement, performance and the subject's reviews.

Associate Professor Wilhelmina (Willa) Huston (University of Technology Sydney) then presented *Student-Professional-Academic*