



Vertical transmission



Mark Schembri
President of ASM

As the year draws to a close it's a good opportunity to highlight some of The ASM events that occurred this year. Our national meeting in Brisbane exceeded all expectations, with excellent attendance and a fantastic mix of invited talks, symposium sessions, award lectures, student and early career researcher (ECR) award talks, an industry panel session, networking sessions and interactive poster sessions. We continue to promote microbiology at all levels with our awards, and it was enormously satisfying to give out 30 awards spread across our student, ECR and Senior ASM membership cohort. Our CliniCon and EduCon meetings were also successful, with the CliniCon meeting again running in parallel with the national conference and providing interaction opportunities for our members and Trade exhibitors. We additionally supported our MicroSeq and BiState meetings, as well as several international conferences. On this note, I would like to highlight that there are many upcoming ASM-supported meetings on our calendar, including AusME, BacPath, the Asian Pacific Congress of Protistology, the 3rd International *Mycobacterium ulcerans* conference, the Mobile Genetic Elements meeting, and our 2025 national conference in Adelaide. For a full list of ASM-supported Conferences and events coming up over the next 12 months please check out our webpage (<https://www.theasm.org.au/conferences-and-events>). Finally, ASM Hour continues to thrive as an online forum for national invited talks for our members, and our State Branches and Special Interest Groups ran many engaging programs. I look forward to seeing all of this continue and progress in the new year.

At Executive level, our leadership team have done an outstanding job. Their commitment to The ASM is

significant and includes tasks involving the planning of our conferences and events, governance and policy oversight, financial management, advocacy, and strategic planning. It is opportune to highlight the team including Hayley Newton (VP Scientific Affairs), Martina Sanderson-Smith (VP Corporate Affairs), Sam Manna (VP Communications) and Dena Lyras (immediate past President), as well as our invited members, Roy Robins-Browne, Priscilla Johanesen and Yogitha Srikhanta, who gave valuable advice for our decision-making processes. I would also like to thank our Standing Committee Chairs and Members, who often go unnoticed for their critical role in supporting our Society. Our Standing Committees include the National Scientific Advisory Committee (Chair, Hayley Newton), the Publications Standing Committee (Chair, İpek Kurtböke; Editor, Ian Macreadie), the National Examinations & Qualifications Board (Chair, Julian Rood; Registrar, Sally Partridge; Assistant Registrars, Louise Hafner Bishop, Ian Kay), the Standing Committee on Professional Development (Chair, Priscilla Johanesen), the Workforce Standing Committee (Chair, Tony Jennings) and the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (Chair, Yogitha Srikhanta). A special thank you to İpek Kurtböke for her distinguished service to The ASM and *Microbiology Australia*. İpek is retiring from her role as Chair of the Publications Standing Committee after serving for 20 years, a commitment that led to her acting as a guest editor on 15 issues of *Microbiology Australia*. We are currently seeking nominations for the now open position as Chair of the Publications Standing Committee, commencing in January 2025. An email outlining details of the role was sent to all members, but feel free to contact me if you have further questions. Finally, thanks to our State Branch Chairs, SIG Convenors and your committee members – you are the engine room of The ASM!

As this is my last VT for 2024, I wish you all a safe and happy holiday period and a fantastic New Year. There is still plenty to do in the next few weeks, but once we do wind down, I hope you get the opportunity to spend some quality time with your family and friends, and use the holiday break to relax and refresh. See you in 2025!