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David Ellis

President ASM

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It is a great honour for me to become President of ASM and I look forward to the challenges that the next 2 years will provide.

I must take this opportunity to pay a special tribute to Lyn Gilbert for the outstanding job she has done as President.

Lyn provided quality leadership to the society during a difficult time which saw the restructure of the executive, the formation of NSAC and the reorganisation of the society into four major scientific divisions. Lyn has earned the respect of all for the gracious way she has gone about this and she has set a wonderful example for me to follow.

The Melbourne conference was just sensational. Jan Tennent and the local organising committee need to be thoroughly congratulated for hosting a truly memorable meeting. The quality of the science and the calibre of the speakers was awe inspiring.

There were many highlights but two special moments for me were the presentation of an honorary FASM to Frank Fenner at the opening ceremony and Adrian Lee's presentation of the Rubbo Oration. A special commemorative

medallion was also presented to many of our previous Rubbo orators which was a very touching moment.

The trade exhibition and social events were also exceptionally well organised and a lot of fun. A special thanks also to the National Office, especially Janette Sofronidis our conference organiser, and to all our sponsors, speakers and participants for just making the week so enjoyable.

Council has agreed to establish a new membership category to be called 'Senior Associate Member' to include those members with technical qualifications and many years' experience who are not eligible for MASM. Senior Associate Members would be given full member rights. The qualifications committee under Ruth Foxwell's guidance is working out the exact criteria.

The Society's finances are currently also under review; unfortunately this will mean some cost cutting measures and a slight rise in membership fees. I will report more on this when this review has been completed.

We are also working on improving the Society's website with the aim of providing members with more information. I am also conscious of the need to establish good communication links with members and it goes without saying that I would welcome any suggestions, especially on how we can improve our member services.

The next annual scientific meeting will be a joint meeting with our colleagues from New Zealand to be held in Auckland from 28 September to 2 October 2003. The worth of our joint meetings have been proven many times before and I look forward to an exciting time at *Microbiology – Art in Science*. Auckland and New Zealand is a great place to visit and we should see some great sailing in the America's Cup – go the Kiwis.