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Published five times a year by:

Cambridge Publishing –
a division of Cambridge Media
17 Northwood Street
West Leederville WA 6007
Web: www.cambridgemedias.com.au

Copy Editor: *Ceridwen Morris*

Graphic Designer: *Gordon McDade*

Advertising Sales Manager: *Gary Davidson*

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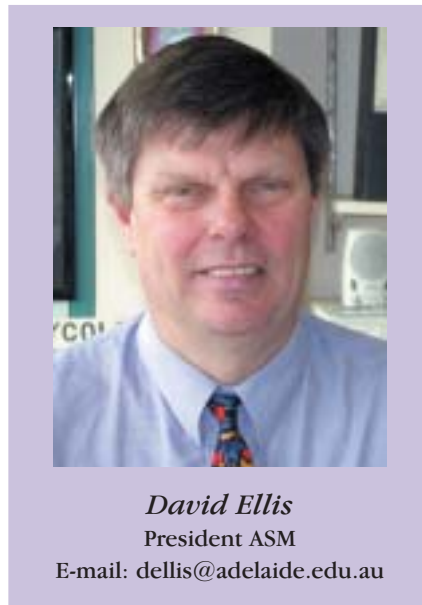
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ISSN 1324-4272

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Vertical Transmission



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President ASM

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Recently I have attended two ASM branch functions; one a student happy hour in South Australia designed to introduce students to ASM, the other was a visit to Perth where I gave a presentation to the WA branch. Both were enjoyable evenings but the take home message for me was that all state branches have progressive and innovative committees. This is without doubt one of the real strengths of ASM. If any member has an idea for the advancement of microbiology or for what ASM can do for its members, then please contact your branch, I can guarantee you will get a positive response.

Organisation of the Joint ASM/NZMS conference, which will be held at the Aotea Centre in Auckland from 28 September – 2 October 2003, is progressing. The scientific programme is now almost finalised and it promises to be another excellent conference. For more information look at the website [www.micronz2003.org] or contact the National Office.

This year the conference programme and abstracts will be published separately from *Microbiology Australia* and will only be available in hard copy to those attending the Conference. However, all programme details and abstracts will be published on the ASM website. This will allow the abstracts to be printed closer to the conference and also allow the Society to make a considerable saving. For those members not attending the conference who would like a hard copy of the

abstracts, these will be available for purchase on a cost recovery basis after the conference. *Microbiology Australia* will continue to be published quarterly in a slightly modified format due to a reduced use of colour; however, we are looking at increasing the page numbers.

Following the restructure of the ASM Executive with the introduction of the Vice President positions for Corporate Affairs and Scientific Affairs, the Executive has now reviewed the role and function of the National Office. As a result, the position of Executive Director will be replaced with that of an Office Manager and an Administrative Assistant will replace the position of Accounts Officer. Our current Executive Director, Caroline Parsons, will be leaving in early May after 6 years with the ASM and I would like to take this opportunity to thank Caroline for her service to the Society and to wish her well for the future.

The National Office will now consist of two parts; conference organisation with Janette Sofronidis in charge supported by Meg Lukies half-time and ASM membership services with Chris Daly as acting office manager, also supported by Meg Lukies and a yet to be filled administrative assistant position. We plan to complete this restructure by the end of the year to achieve a more cost effective structure. Overall the National Office is a valuable asset to the Society and is staffed by committed individuals.

E-mail has become a very effective means of communication at all levels of the Society. The National Office is now able to send information e-mails to all members or groups of members on behalf of State branches and SIGs. On the new membership renewal forms you will once again be able to nominate your SIGs of interest and I hope this will promote greater dialogue between the SIGs and members.

The Melbourne Scientific Conference has now been finalised and the ASM has benefited from a very healthy profit. Once again I would like to acknowledge Jan Tennent and her team for hosting an outstanding scientific meeting. Finally, a reminder to members to consider nominating for an ASM Award.