David Ellis
President ASM
E-mail: president@theasm.com.au

The March issue of Microbiology Australia contained important information about the various awards and prizes available to ASM members. The closing date for most of these is 1 June 2004. I would like to encourage members to either apply for or to nominate a colleague for one of these awards - for full details see www.theasm.com.au.

The Annual Scientific Meeting and Exhibition offers an exciting programme covering all aspects of microbiology and registrations are now well advanced. Early bird registrations close on 30 June 2004 so don’t be late. Abstract submissions should be made online and are due by 14 May 2004, so you may still have a chance to get one in. The workshops on antibiotic resistance, biochemical ID, mycology and parasitology will be of major interest to many laboratories. All details regarding the Sydney meeting are on the website www.asm2004.org.au.

While on websites, the ASM site is currently undergoing a major revision.

This site will now be managed by the National Office and pages and/or links will be made available to all branches and SIGs. The National Office is working very hard and the staff are doing a great job; we have had a very successful membership drive, the finances are now back in the black and the conference organisation is going really well. Well done Chris, Janette, Meg and Lena.

I have just finished a national lecture tour organised by ASM and sponsored by Novartis – it was great to be able to visit all the branches. I see an opportunity for ASM to repeat this exercise with other Australian speakers. It would be ideal if we could set up a national speaker programme using Australian expertise to cover areas of interest to the members.

A special thank you to Tom Riley who has recently stepped down from both the Editorial Board and as coordinator of our International Visitor Programme. Tom has unselfishly served the ASM in these roles for at least 15 years and has made a major contribution to the society. John MacKenzie is also standing down as a long term member of the Editorial Board and I also wish to acknowledge his worthwhile contributions. Mary Barton will take over the International Visitor Programme. Tom Riley has recently stepped down from both the ASM to the Editorial Board of Microbiology Australia.

Finally, I would also like to congratulate the Editorial Board, especially Ailsa Hocking (Chair) and Penny Bishop (Editor) of Microbiology Australia for also doing a great job. I, like many members, have really enjoyed reading MA and the quality and variety of the articles have been excellent.

Cover illustration: Scanning electron micrograph (x20,000) of Streptomyces sp. producer of antimycin complex showing aerial mycelium with straight chains of spores. Courtesy D.I. Kurtböke and R. Locci, Department of Plant Pathology, University of Milan.