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### Published four times a year by:

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

### Copy Editor:

Ceridwen Clocherty

Graphic Designer: Gordon McDade

Advertising Sales Manager: Gary Davidson

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ISSN 1324-4272

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## Vertical Transmission



*Keryn Christiansen*

President ASM

I have just returned from holidays, during which I reflected on how wonderful it was to be a microbiologist. I visited the geothermal areas in the Yellowstone National Park in the USA and saw the most fantastic bacterial mats – deep reds, bright greens and yellows with intricate patterns and swirls surrounding the boiling water, mud and geysers.

This was the area that gave us *Thermus aquaticus*, whose DNA polymerase has become such an integral part of our research and diagnostic tests. To see what can exist in nature and to know the connection with my everyday working life gave me enormous pleasure. However, I'm now back at my desk and the thoughts of holiday fun are fast receding!

The programme for 2007 Annual Scientific Meeting in Adelaide is progressing well due to excellent planning by the local organising committee chaired by Andrew Lawrence with input from the National Scientific Advisory Committee.

The diverse programme will cater for all ASM members. The Rubbo Oration will be given by the world renown virologist Robin Weiss, the plenary sessions by high calibre international speakers on topics from biofilms to microbial forensics, and the symposia will feature Australians with expertise in their chosen fields. The

preliminary programme is featured in this edition of *Microbiology Australia*.

This is your meeting. This is the opportunity for you to present your research work and your laboratory experience. I urge you to note the closing date for abstract submission and to start preparing now. The sharing of science, meeting new people with like interests, and networking are such rewarding experiences that attendance at the ASM Annual Scientific Meeting should be high in your priorities.

For members in Victoria and Tasmania, the Bi-State Conference is approaching and gives further opportunity for information presentation and knowledge acquisition. Each Branch shows great commitment in providing a forum for local members – this is as it should be, members working for the benefit of other members. This is what makes the ASM such an enriching Society.

In between scientific meetings, your Executive is working on your behalf. Negotiations are proceeding through our Past President, Julian Rood, to establish a joint postgraduate travel scholarship. This, potentially, will provide an avenue for funded attendance and scientific presentation at either an American or British meeting and a visit to a research laboratory by an Australian PhD student. A similar exchange programme is proposed for student members of these overseas countries. We will keep you informed of the progress of this exciting proposal.

The visiting speaker programme (VSP), an essential component of the Society's commitment to members, has been re-evaluated with changes being made to the process with the aim of improving communication and enhancing Branch satisfaction. A VSP Subcommittee of the National Scientific Advisory Committee will be formed to assume responsibility for identifying speakers and coordinating a programme of visits. As well as providing suggested speakers in consultation with Branch members, this committee will work to ensure that a

speaker's appearance is scheduled in a way to optimise exposure to as many members as possible. Each Branch will be guaranteed at least two visiting speakers a year, averaged, if necessary, over a 2 year period.

Lastly, the Special Interest Group (SIG) by-laws are being examined and will be changed to improve clarity. The SIGs are an important voice for members. Participation in a SIG can significantly enhance your professional experience. New SIGs are welcome – if you see an unmet need, please discuss with like-minded colleagues and send a proposal to the ASM Council.

The strength of a Society is dependent on the level of participation of its members. We, the Executive and Council, will strive to provide you with the best possible programmes and science advocacy, but we are dependent on your participation as well.

## New Members

### NSW

Kay Watts  
Robert Arpas

### Queensland

Nuki Samana  
Wenbin Chen  
Glen Hewitson  
Jai Tree  
Dominic Beale  
Paul Evens

### SA

Patricia Haheisy

### TAS

Nathan Dick

### VIC

Aaron Fielder  
Amy Peart  
Mirella Matotek  
Mary Ntostas  
Dayna Spencer  
Mathew Thomas  
Nihal Kodikara  
Rebecca Wilde  
Collin Taylor

### WA

Victoria D'Abbrera  
Yvette Marsh

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