



Roy Robins-Browne
President of ASM

In 2014, Lisel O'Dwyer of Flinders University estimated the economic value of volunteering to Australia to be between \$200 and \$290 billion per year, which is greater than the amounts earned by mining, agriculture or retail (<http://blogs.flinders.edu.au/flinders-news/2014/10/31/volunteering-worth-290-billion-a-year/>).

I was thinking of this while considering the amazing contributions some of our members make to ASM by generously donating much of their spare time to benefit our Society and its members. These volunteers include members of various national and state committees, council members, conference organisers and ASM representatives on government committees, amongst others.

One of our key committees is the National Examinations and Qualifications Board (NEQB), whose role is to oversee the awarding of MASM and FASM. Membership of the NEQB has undergone a number of changes recently. These involved Peter Timms, who stepped down as Chair after a lengthy period of outstanding service. Peter's replacement is Julian Rood, a former president of ASM, who has returned to assist us once more. Another major change is the impending retirement of the Registrar, Tuckweng Kok, who will be replaced by Gary Lum (Registrar) and Kate Sieb (Assistant Registrar). The fact we need two people to replace Tuckweng speaks

volumes about his contribution. The three new members of the Board are Melissa Brown, Louise Hafner and Gilda Tachedjian.

Another key ASM committee is the Editorial Board (EB) of *Microbiology Australia*, whose members work diligently to bring out each new issue of the journal. Late last year, Chris Burke, Chair of the EB, retired after approximately 10 years of wonderfully effective service. His place has been taken by İpek Kurtböke, another tireless member of the EB, who has previously edited a number of special issues of *Microbiology Australia*. Other recent retirements from the EB include Geoff Hogg, Sharon Chen and Peter Coloe. We are currently advertising for early- and mid-career researchers to fill the vacancies created by these retirements.

Other positions currently being advertised are those of President-elect (to take over from me), Vice President Scientific Affairs (to take over from Dena Lyras), Vice President Corporate Affairs (to take over from Cheryl Power) and Vice President Communications (to take over from Jack Wang). Please note that if you are the successful applicant for any of these positions you will have a period of around 12 months to learn what the job entails from the incumbent, who will ease you into your role. These positions are extremely rewarding in many ways (except financially). I encourage anyone who may be interested to approach me or the incumbent for more information.

Finally, I would like to thank some other volunteers: Linda Blackall and her committee who organised the inaugural Australian Microbial Ecology (AusME) Meeting that was held in Melbourne in February. Given the large number of positive responses of those who attended the meeting, we have decided to hold another one in 2019, and possibly every two years thereafter. Please join me in thanking and congratulating everyone concerned.

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