



*Roy Robins-Browne*  
President of ASM

I recently returned from Hobart, where I attended another hugely successful Annual Scientific Meeting of our Society. The conference attracted many outstanding international and Australian participants, who spoke on a wide range of topics. The overall theme of 'Planetary Health' worked well with a number of speakers alluding to this vitally important issue in their presentations.

General microbiology meetings of this type appear to be falling out of favour, partly because specialist conferences are luring potential attendees away. I believe, however, that general meetings, in particular smaller ones with around 500 participants, still have much to offer. Where else could you hear leading authorities speak on the latest developments in active learning, the pathogenesis of listeriosis, the microbiology of coral reefs, the biophysical properties of biofilms, novel diagnostic method in clinical micro, and strategies to develop more effective meningococcal vaccines,

within a few hours of each other? I also felt that the new format of combining three 20-minute symposium talks with three 10-minute proffered papers into a single 90-minute session worked well. This is likely to become the standard format for many symposium sessions in future.

The social program was another a big hit, highlighted by a 'Tastes of Tasmania' Welcome Function and a Rubbo Celebration, with a DJ and photo booth.

Meetings of this type are the result of hard work by many people. Although it may be unfair to single out individuals, I must give special mention to Anthony Barker, the LOC Chair; John Bowman and Tom Ross, the Scientific Program Coordinators, and Dena Lyras, Chair of our National Scientific Advisory Committee (NSAC) for making this meeting so successful.

I also want to thank those members who attended the Annual General Meeting and voted unanimously for changes to our Constitution. The key changes are intended to make our Society more inclusive by smoothing the pathway to MASM, and by allowing Associate Members to vote at General Meetings. Other changes will allow more flexibility in setting the program for the Scientific Meeting and in the determining the membership of NSAC.

Next year's Annual Scientific Meeting in Brisbane promises to be another memorable one. Do yourself a favour and mark the dates 1–4 July 2018 in your diary now. I look forward to seeing you there.

