



# Victorian News

The Australian Society for Microbiology VIC Branch Newsletter

October 2019, Vol 525

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**Submission Deadline: 11th of the Month**

**Find us on Facebook: The Australian Society for Microbiology (ASM) - Victorian Branch**

**Find us on Twitter : [@ASM\\_VicBranch](https://twitter.com/ASM_VicBranch)**



# Contact Details

## **Victorian Branch ASM:**

The Australian Society for Microbiology  
Victorian Branch  
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Weblink: <http://victoria.theasm.org.au/>  
Email: [catherine.satzke@mcri.edu.au](mailto:catherine.satzke@mcri.edu.au) or  
[asmvicbranch@gmail.com](mailto:asmvicbranch@gmail.com)

## **ASM National Office:**

9/397 Smith Street, Fitzroy VIC 3065  
Tel: 1300 656 423  
Fax: 1300 655 841  
Email: [admin@theasm.com.au](mailto:admin@theasm.com.au)  
Weblink: [www.theasm.org.au](http://www.theasm.org.au)  
ABN 24 065 463 274

## **Victorian Branch Committee:**

Chair: Catherine Satzke  
Email: [catherine.satzke@mcri.edu.au](mailto:catherine.satzke@mcri.edu.au)

Secretary: Sarah Baines  
Email: [bainess@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:bainess@unimelb.edu.au)

Immediate Past Chair: Karena Waller  
Email: [klwaller@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:klwaller@unimelb.edu.au)

VSP Coordinator: Lauren Zavan  
Email: [l.zavan@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:l.zavan@latrobe.edu.au)

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Priscilla Johanesen  
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Email: [jake.lacey@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:jake.lacey@unimelb.edu.au)

All notices should be emailed to: [l.sonneveld@alfred.org.au](mailto:l.sonneveld@alfred.org.au)



# ASM Vic Branch Committee Working Groups

The ASM Victorian Branch Committee has several 'formal' positions such as Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. Recently, we have added some informal groups into our committee structure. These Working Groups (WGs) will provide a framework to organise events and initiatives for the membership, and the broader Victorian microbiology community. We envisage that the WGs will evolve over time. Information on the current WGs is provided below.

The ASM Victorian Branch Committee continues to strive to advance the science of microbiology in Victoria and to provide value to the membership. If you are interested in any of the events or initiatives organised by a particular WG, or have a suggestion for new ways in which the committee can support the membership, please contact the WG leaders below.

## **Medical Microbiology**

**Members:** Seema Kanade (WG leader; [seema.kanade@dorevitch.com.au](mailto:seema.kanade@dorevitch.com.au)), Sarah Baines, Louise Sonneveld

**Purpose:** To engage members of the ASM Victorian Branch with expertise or an interest in clinical and academic (research) medical microbiology.

## **One Health**

**Members:** Steve Petrovski (WG leader; [Steve.Petrovski@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:Steve.Petrovski@latrobe.edu.au)), Jacqueline Heath, Chris Stubenrauch, Mary Valcanis

**Purpose:** To promote microbiology research in cross-disciplinary areas including environment, food, veterinary and human health.

## **Regional Engagement**

**Members:** Christine Seers (WG leader; [caseers@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:caseers@unimelb.edu.au)), Steve Petrovski, Catherine Satzke

**Purpose:** Established to encourage and provide ASM members with assistance in the organisation of microbiology-related events, to be held in non-Melbourne metropolitan regions of Victoria.

## **Skills, Education, Engagement, Communication (SEEC)**

**Members:** Jacqueline Heath (WG leader; [jhea@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:jhea@unimelb.edu.au)), Priscilla Johanesen, Seema Kanade, Karena Waller, Lauren Zavan.

**Purpose:** To foster the professional development and career support of student, early career and senior members of the Society, including academics, researchers and working microbiologists.



# Public Health Night

22<sup>nd</sup> August 2019

## - Event Report -

Public Health Night 2019 was hosted by the ASM Victorian Branch in conjunction with the Doherty Institute Cross Cutting Disciplines in Public Health and held at the Doherty Institute. The event was chaired by Dr. Mike Catton, Director of the Victorian Infectious Diseases Reference Laboratory (VIDRL) and Deputy-Director of the Doherty Institute. Six excellent speakers from VIDRL, the Microbiological Diagnostic Unit Public Health Laboratory (MDUPHL), and the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) updated the nearly 100 attendees on three diverse and interesting topics.

The following talk summaries have been provided by the speakers:

### **Mycobacterium tuberculosis: Transmission Update.**

Presented by Ee Laine Tay (DHHS) and Kristy Horan (MDUPHL)

In 2018 MDUPHL in conjunction the Victorian DHHS and the Mycobacteria Reference Laboratory (MRL) at VIDRL aimed to sequence at least 500 retrospective isolates from the MRL collection and began sequencing all *M. tuberculosis* isolates in real time. At the end of August over 1000 isolates had been sequenced including the 500 retrospective isolates. The Victorian *M. tuberculosis* has isolates representing all major international lineages, consistent with a large proportion of Victorian cases being epidemiologically linked to non-Australian born individuals or travellers. Using phylogenetic analysis and single-linkage clustering, 21 clusters of 3 or more isolates that were considered related to each other were identified. Some of these relationships supported the available epidemiological data. However, in some cases the identification of genomic relationships informed further epidemiological investigations, resulting in interventions to prevent further spread of *M. tuberculosis* within the community. In summary, this pilot project has resulted in the development of sustainable laboratory and bioinformatic pipelines that has been incorporated into workflows at MRL and MDUPHL. In addition, the use of genomic data has enhanced epidemiological investigations.

### **Candida auris: Superfungus.**

Presented by Donna Cameron (DHHS) and Courtney Lane (MDUPHL)

*Candida auris* is an emerging healthcare-associated pathogen that presents a serious global health threat. It is often multi-drug resistant, difficult to identify with standard laboratory methods and has been associated with outbreaks in hospital settings. In July 2018, the Victorian DHHS was advised of a *C. auris* isolate from a patient previously hospitalised overseas. Contact tracing commenced in two hospitals the patient had been admitted to on return to Australia. A second case was identified, also with a history of hospitalisation overseas and admissions to the same hospitals as the first case. Whole genome sequencing was performed on isolates from both cases and on two further epidemiologically unrelated cases. Phylogenetic analysis revealed putative transmission between the first two cases and suspected overseas acquisition in the remaining cases. Following identification of these cases, the Victorian *C. auris* guideline for health services was developed and will be released early September 2019. The

guidelines outline screening, laboratory and infection prevention and control recommendations for the identification and management of *C. auris* cases.

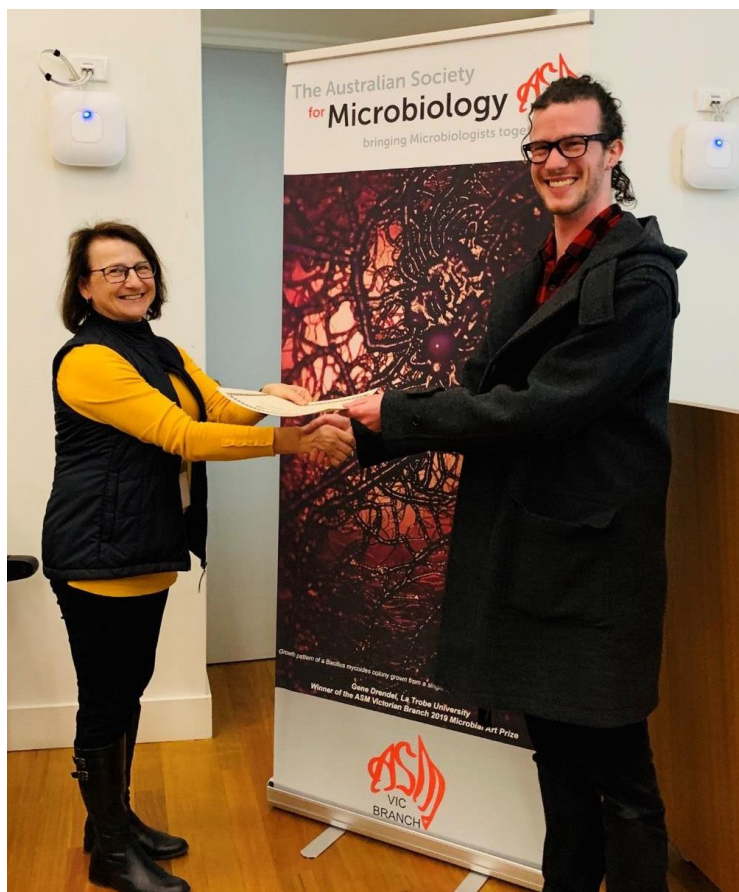
### **Measles: Making a Comeback.**

Presented by Janet Strachan (DHHS) and Suellen Nicholson (VIDRL)

Nicholson S<sup>1</sup>, Gibney K<sup>2,3</sup>, Strachan J<sup>2</sup>, Cross G<sup>4</sup>, Attwood L<sup>5</sup>, Healy J<sup>2</sup>, Stambos V<sup>1</sup>, Catton M<sup>1</sup>. <sup>1</sup> VIDRL, <sup>2</sup> DHHS, <sup>3</sup> Doherty Institute, <sup>4</sup> National University of Singapore, <sup>5</sup> Alfred Hospital

After prolonged periods of high vaccine coverage, Australia was declared free of endemic measles in March 2014. However, returning travellers from measles endemic countries may transmit measles to non-immune individuals in Australia. In Victoria between 2014–2016, 13% of reported measles cases occurred in individuals with prior measles immunity. Some of these had IgG avidity testing performed, and were found to have high avidity antibody, consistent with past measles immunologic responses, and referred to as 'measles re-infection cases'. Presented was a review of measles cases in Victoria over the last 10 years and what appears to be an emerging trend in a measles elimination setting.

Also, during Public Health Night, the ASM Victorian Branch presented the winner of the 2019 Microbial Art Prize and revealed the new banner with the winning image. Congratulations to Gene Drendel from La Trobe University, for his image Growth pattern of a *Bacillus mycoides* colony grown from a single spot as it spreads across an agar plate. Pictured is Gene receiving his prize from ASM Victorian Branch Deputy Chair Mary Valcanis in front of the new banner. Congratulations Gene!



Report contributed by Sarah Baines and Mary Valcanis



# ASM Vic Branch Trivia Night 2019



## -Event Report-

On the 17<sup>th</sup> of September 2019, the Victorian ASM branch held its 8<sup>th</sup> annual Trivia Night at the City of Melbourne Bowls Club (located at Flagstaff Gardens). The trivia was hosted by SPASIM and a total of ten teams competed comprising of a total of 64 participants. After the ten round competition the winning teams were; 1<sup>st</sup> The Binflies, 2<sup>nd</sup> The Crowns and 3<sup>rd</sup> Northby6west. And the wooden spoon went to the team "Tn502".



First: The Binflies



Second: The Crowns



Third: Northby6west



Last: Tn502

Special thanks for the evening must go to:

- Members of SPASIM (the Special Postgraduate Association for Students of Immunology and Microbiology at The University of Melbourne) led by Ashley Hirons, for organising such a great night of trivia for us all to enjoy.
- Sponsors for their generous support including Charles River, Crux Biolabs, Promega, Thermo Fisher Scientific and Qiagen, which allowed us to award prizes for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and last placed teams.
- City of Melbourne Bowls Club for the use of their fantastic venue and generous sponsorship.

With another successful Trivia Night this year, we look forward to continuing the tradition next year!



Report contributed by Steve Petrovski


## **ASM Vic Branch Summer Student Research Awards**

### **Apply Now!**

Applications for ASM VIC Branch Summer Student Research Awards are now open. Students are invited to apply for experience working in a laboratory over the 2019/20 summer months for a maximum of 8 weeks. Successful applicants will receive a \$1500 scholarship on completion of the project and a report. An abstract from the research project which will be published in the ASM VIC Branch Newsletter and Microbiology Australia.

For further details about the award and eligibility criteria please contact Priscilla Johanesen ([priscilla.johanesen@monash.edu](mailto:priscilla.johanesen@monash.edu)).

Applications close at 5pm on Friday 22nd November 2019.



# ASM VIC BRANCH CHRISTMAS PARTY!

**WHERE:** THE CRAFTY SQUIRE  
127 RUSSELL ST, MELBOURNE VIC 3000

**WHEN:** 5TH DECEMBER 2019 6:30PM TO 9:30PM

**COST:** \$10 ASM MEMBERS & \$40 NON-MEMBERS  
**TICKETS INCLUDE:**  
2 COURSE SIT-DOWN MEAL  
NON-ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES (LIMITED)

For catering purposes, please RSVP by 5pm Wednesday 20th November 2019 via <https://www.trybooking.com/BGNGK>

For further details contact:

Lauren Zavan ([l.zavan@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:l.zavan@latrobe.edu.au)) or Steve Petrovski ([steve.petrovski@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:steve.petrovski@latrobe.edu.au))





# asm 2020 VICTORIA



July 5-8

Melbourne  
Convention  
& Exhibition  
Centre

[www.theasm.org.au](http://www.theasm.org.au)

The Australian Society  
for Microbiology



bringing Microbiologists together

Visit Victoria #130894



Join us in Melbourne for good food, great coffee and amazing science!



Confirmed speakers:

Laureate Professor Peter Doherty  
Professor Elizabeth Grohmann  
Professor Denise Monack

Professor Jill Banfield  
Professor Graham Hatfull  
Professor David Murdoch

Professor Ferric Fang  
Professor Anne Helso  
Professor Sue Thomas

# Visiting Speakers Program

Do you know of an outstanding speaker coming to Australia?

If so, consider them for the Visiting Speakers Program (VSP).

This program is now coordinated by the ASM Executive standing committee and the National Office in consultation with State branches.

For more information, please contact Lauren Zavan  
([l.zavan@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:l.zavan@latrobe.edu.au)),

who is the VSP Coordinator for the ASM VIC Branch.

## Attention Microbiologists!

### Are you organising a microbiology-focussed event?

The main objective of the Australian Society for Microbiology is to advance the science of microbiology in Australia. The ASM Victorian Branch is keen to support local initiatives, with the potential to advertise or co-organise events. If you are organising a microbiology-focussed event or have an idea for a type of event that would appeal to the broader microbiology, please contact us to discuss the ASM Vic Branch may be able to assist.

Please contact Catherine Satzke ([catherine.satzke@mcri.edu.au](mailto:catherine.satzke@mcri.edu.au)) for more information

# ASM Member Awards Apply Now

The ASM offers a variety of awards to its members. Take full advantage of your membership by applying now for one of the awards listed below with deadlines approaching. For more details and additional awards please refer to the National webpage

<https://www.theasm.org.au/member-rewards>

The deadlines for all award applications are now **March 31<sup>st</sup>** of each year.

## Teaching and Learning

- ASM David White Excellence in Teaching Award
- ASM Teachers' Travel Award
- ASM USA Teachers' Travel Award

## Diagnostic and Clinical Microbiology

- ASM Lyn Gilbert Award
- ASM Clinical Microbiology Travel Award

## Research

- ASM Frank Fenner Award
- ASM Jim Pittard Early Career Award

## Post-graduate and Student Awards

- Millis-Colwell Postgraduate Research Travel Award
- NZMS Postgraduate Research Travel Award
- ASM Nancy Millis Student Travel Awards

## Contribution and Service

- ASM Distinguished Service Award
- ASM Honorary Life Membership Award



# ASM History SIG

## ASM Memorabilia

If any ASM members have significant ASM memorabilia that they would like to donate to the ASM archives or would like to suggest topics suitable for possible symposia at future ASM Annual Scientific Meetings, please send details of the memorabilia or suggested symposia topics to:

History SIG convener  
c/o Australian Society for Microbiology Office  
9/397 Smith Street  
Fitzroy VIC 3068

## How to join the Australian Society for Microbiology at a reduced rate!

Did you know that non-members can join the Australian Society for Microbiology at a reduced rate? Well, you can!

As a non-member, by paying the fee to attend an event hosted by ASM VIC Branch, you can use this amount to put towards an annual membership of the Australian Society for Microbiology.

To do so, please follow these instructions:

1. Register to attend the event hosted by ASM VIC Branch via the advertised trybooking link, and pay the attendance fee.
2. Attend the event, and then within 2 weeks after the event, go to the ASM membership area at <https://www.theasm.org.au/membership>
3. Choose the appropriate membership for you and then click on: [Click here to join or update your details](#)
4. Click 'Begin here' and create a Currinda membership profile for yourself. Then, pay the membership full fee.
5. Following payment, download the paid receipt (showing your payment) and email it along with your postal address to:  
Christine Seers, Treasurer VIC Branch [caseers@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:caseers@unimelb.edu.au)
6. A cheque refunding the event fee will be posted to you.

**Please note:** you must complete the above process within 2 weeks following an event to take advantage of this offer. After this time, the event fee cannot be used to pay membership fees.

# MICRO NEWS and VIEWS

- ONE HEALTH: FUNGAL PATHOGENS OF HUMANS, ANIMALS, AND PLANTS  
[https://www.asmscience.org/content/colloquia.56?utm\\_source=facebook&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_term=&utm\\_content=&utm\\_campaign=](https://www.asmscience.org/content/colloquia.56?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_term=&utm_content=&utm_campaign=)
- Lifestyle is a threat to gut bacteria: Ötzi proves it, study shows  
<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/10/191018112136.htm>
- Fighting the herpes virus  
<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/10/191025075850.htm>
- Bacteria contradict Darwin: Survival of the friendliest  
<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/10/191011095910.htm>
- Fungus Behind Deadly Bat Disease Found in Northern California  
<https://www.the-scientist.com/news-opinion/fungus-behind-deadly-bat-disease-found-in-northern-california-66111>
- By targeting flu-enabling protein, antibody may protect against wide-ranging strains  
<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/10/191025094024.htm>
- Alcohol-producing gut bacteria could cause liver damage even in people who don't drink  
<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/09/190919142336.htm>
- Deformed wing virus genetic diversity in US honey bees complicates search for remedies  
<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/10/191024154106.htm>
- Fungus Found in Australian Soil Can Oxidize Gold  
<https://www.the-scientist.com/news-opinion/fungus-found-in-australian-soil-can-oxidize-gold-65933>
- Performance-enhancing bacteria found in the microbiomes of elite athletes  
<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/06/190624111441.htm>
- Family of crop viruses at the molecular level  
<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/10/191011112238.htm>
- Discovery in monkeys could lead to treatment for blindness-causing syndrome  
<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/10/191025145309.htm>
- Michelle O'Malley seeks greener chemistry through elusive fungi  
<https://www.sciencenews.org/article/michelle-omalley-sn-10-scientists-to-watch>

# World Antibiotic Awareness Week

## 18 – 24 November 2019

Misusing and overusing  
**ANTIBIOTICS**  
puts us ALL at risk

**Antibiotic resistant infections can lead to longer hospital stays, higher medical costs and more deaths**

Taking antibiotics when they are not needed accelerates emergence of antibiotic resistance, one of the biggest threats to global health

**Overuse of antibiotics can cause bacteria to become resistant, meaning current treatments will no longer work**

**YOU CAN HELP REDUCE ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE**

Always follow the advice of a qualified health care professional when taking antibiotics

**Antibiotic resistant infections can affect anyone, of any age, in any country**

It is the bacteria itself that becomes resistant to antibiotics – not the person or the animal

When bacteria become resistant to antibiotics, common infections will no longer be treatable

**HANDLE ANTIBIOTICS WITH CARE**

Reproduced from the World Health Organisation

<https://www.who.int/news-room/events/detail/2019/11/18/default-calendar/world-antibiotic-awareness-week-2019>

Contributed by Jacqueline Heath

# **Advertise in the ASM VIC Branch Newsletter!**

Would you like to advertise your event, job vacancy or other news item in our newsletter?

Advertising rates are:

Not-for-profit adverts: free of charge

For-profit adverts: \$50 per advert

If so, please contact Catherine Satzke  
([catherine.satzke@mcri.edu.au](mailto:catherine.satzke@mcri.edu.au))

# ASM VIC CALENDAR 2019

When planning meetings, please book dates with Catherine Satzke  
(Email: [catherine.satzke@mcri.edu.au](mailto:catherine.satzke@mcri.edu.au))

- **ASM VIC Branch Christmas Party - 5<sup>th</sup> December 2019, The Crafty Squire, Melbourne VIC**
- **ASM Annual Scientific Meeting 2020 – 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> July 2020, Melbourne VIC**
- **ASM Clinicon Meeting– 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> July 2020, Melbourne VIC**



July 5-8

asm2020  
VICTORIA

Melbourne  
Convention  
& Exhibition  
Centre

[www.theasm.org.au](http://www.theasm.org.au)

The Australian Society  
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bringing Microbiologists together

**Submission Deadline for November  
ASM Victorian News:  
November 11th 2019**

Email submissions to: [I.sonneveld@alfred.org.au](mailto:I.sonneveld@alfred.org.au)