



Victorian News

The Australian Society for Microbiology VIC Branch Newsletter

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2020-2021 Calendar

Event	Date
ASM2021	31 st May – 3 rd June, 2021
BACPATH2021	27 th September, 2021

Events

ASM Membership Offer 2020 – Report

As we entered 2020, none of us could have predicted that we would largely be working from home, if at all. Conferences were cancelled and meetings were relegated to zoom. We therefore kickstarted our ASM Membership Offer to help subsidize the cost of Victorian memberships to the ASM.

Our applications closed on August 10, 2020 and we were able to subsidize 16 memberships: 5 full members and 11 student members. This subsidy was spread across Universities (La Trobe, Federation University, and Monash University), Institutes (MCRI and Burnet Institute) and Industry. After 6 months, we asked for feedback from our recipients and we were pleased to find that these offers were “incredibly helpful” where they allowed our members to “[explore] things in microbiology” and “keep in touch with the microbiology community, while providing access to relevant microbial zoom seminars”.

Contributed by Christopher Stubenrauch and Catherine Satzke

ASM Membership Offer – 2021 Closes at 5pm on 26 June 2021

We are pleased to announce that ASM Vic branch is offering 2021 ASM membership subsidies to Victorian members of the Australian Society for Microbiology (ASM).

Members of ASM are able to access free and/or heavily discounted events at the state and federal level and receive the Microbiology Australia magazine. The Victoria branch of ASM generally organises at least 10 events each year, including social events, seminars, and workshops, which are normally free to members.

Applications close at 5pm on 26 June 2021.

Eligibility Criteria:

- Enrolled/employed through a Victorian institution, or a resident of Victoria.
- Current ASM member (any type). Alternatively, see 'how to apply' for hardship exemption.
- Experiencing financial hardship and expected to benefit from ASM membership

How to Apply:

Step 1) Complete the form below to apply.

Step 2) Email a copy of your ASM membership receipt to our branch Treasurer Christopher Stubenrauch (christopher.stubenrauch@monash.edu). If you are experiencing financial hardship, such that it is impractical for you to pay membership in advance, please contact our branch Chair Catherine Satzke (catherine.satzke@mcri.edu.au).

Assessment:

Each application will be reviewed by a subcommittee of the ASM Vic branch in confidence. If we receive more applications than we are able to support, awardees will be randomly selected once eligibility criteria are met. We will liaise with awardees to facilitate payment of the subsidy, such as via direct bank transfer.

Further Information:

Please note that de-identified information and non-identifying short statements may be used in reporting and/or communication.

For further information, please contact Christopher Stubenrauch (christopher.stubenrauch@monash.edu).

ASM Vic Branch Mentoring Program (ASMMP) 2021 - Call for Mentors and Mentees.

Applications close June 4 2021

Would you like to foster the career development of microbiologists? Or Do you feel you would you like some advice and support from a mentor?

The ASM Vic branch is running a 6-month program (starting July 2021) involving one-on-one mentoring for ASM Vic members.

The program will involve one-on-one mentoring with the expectation of mentors meeting with their mentees for approximately 1 hour per month/6 months

Why be a Mentor?

- Contribute to the career development of microbiologists
- Gain an understanding of the challenges facing younger microbiologists that could be relevant to your own workplace
- Gain personal satisfaction from giving back
- Help shape the microbiology leaders of tomorrow

Why be a Mentee?

- Obtain independent guidance to assist in your career development and goals
- Build professional networks
- Gain knowledge of the sector
- Improve communication skills and self-confidence

Expressions of Interest are now open for both mentors and mentees

Apply to be a mentor here:

<https://forms.gle/fdJ3zbfKEYkBoKqN8>

Apply to be a mentee here:

<https://forms.gle/XL3Yk6Giv9kVec7Q9>

Further Information:

Any enquiries can be emailed to: Sam Manna (sam.manna@mcri.edu.au)

Upcoming VIC Branch Events in 2021

We have a wide variety of ASM Vic Branch events being planned throughout the year including:

- Student/Early Career Mentoring
- Student focused events
- Trivia Night
- Microbial Art Prize
- Microbial Bioinformatics Workshop
- Agriculture and Veterinary Symposium
- Food Microbiology
- Regional Events

These will be a mix of online and in person events, so stay tuned for emails and future announcements and don't forget to renew your ASM membership.

Virtual BacPath2021 27th September 2021

Due to the current and on-going situation with Covid19, the BacPath2021 organising committee have decided to postpone this year's conference, to be held in QLD, until 2022. We currently envisage that we will hold the conference at the usual time (last week in September 2022), with final dates subject to venue availability and our ability to book.

We are hoping that by then things will be back to normal, and we can enjoy a full in person conference. We will provide updates on this as things progress, and hope you appreciate that this was not an easy decision. In lieu of this decision, the organising committee have decided to organise a short, online 'mini' conference.

This virtual BacPath2021 will be aimed at final year PhD students and early career post docs (<https://www.trybooking.com/BPPZW>), and abstracts should be sent directly to John Atack (j.atack@griffith.edu.au). We plan to select abstracts for short (10 min) talks only, with 8-10 talks planned for.

Virtual BacPath 2021

Monday 27th Sept

10-1 pm AEST

9.30-12.30 pm ACST

8-11 am AWST

Submit an abstract if you are a final year PhD student or early career (<5yrs) post-doc

Keynote speakers



Catherine Satzke

Murdoch Children's Research Institute,
Melbourne

Synergism and antagonism of bacterial-viral co-infection in the upper respiratory tract



Tim Barnett

Telethon Kids Institute,
Perth

Host-dependent resistance to antifolate antibiotics

Registration for Zoom seminar is essential

<https://www.trybooking.com/BPPZW>

Free for ASM Members \$5 donation for Non-ASM Members

Registrations close 8am (AEST) Sept 27th

Submit abstracts direct to j.atack@griffith.edu.au by 5pm (AEST) Aug 27th

The Australian Society
for Microbiology
Bringing Microbiologists Together

News and Views

Employment Opportunity: Research Fellow Position at the Monash University

A Level A research-only academic is expected to contribute towards the research effort of the university and to develop their research expertise through the pursuit of defined projects relevant to the particular field of research.

The appointee will use computational biology approaches to investigate capsule locus diversity and genomic epidemiology of *Klebsiella pneumoniae*, a World Health Organization priority pathogen. *K. pneumoniae* has been listed as a priority target for development of novel control strategies due to growing rates of multi-drug resistant strains that are extremely difficult to treat. Its polysaccharide capsule is a key vaccine target, and genomic analysis of its capsule synthesis loci has indicated extensive capsule type diversity across the population.

However, until now there has been limited serological typing data with which to fully understand the relationship between capsule genotype and phenotype, which is a key prerequisite for successful vaccine design. In collaboration with researchers at the Statens Serum Institut (Denmark), we aim to address this knowledge gap through fine-scale analysis of *K. pneumoniae* capsule synthesis loci and comparison to newly generated serological typing data. The appointee will contribute to this and related projects by performing the comparative genomic analyses, interpreting the data and contributing to results communication.

Key Responsibilities

Specific duties required of a Level A research-only academic may include:

1. The conduct of research under limited supervision either as a member of a team or, where appropriate, independently and the production or contribution to the production of conference and seminar papers and publications from that research
2. Involvement in professional activities including, subject to availability of funds, attendance at conferences and seminars in the field of expertise
3. Limited administrative functions primarily connected with the area of research of the academic
4. Development of a limited amount of research-related material for teaching or other purposes with appropriate guidance from other staff
5. Occasional contributions to teaching in relation to their research project(s)
6. Experimental design and operation of advanced laboratory and technical equipment or conduct of advanced research procedures

7. Attendance at meetings associated with research or the work of the organisational unit to which the research is connected and/or at departmental, school and/or faculty meetings and/or membership of a limited number of committees
8. Advice within the field of the staff member's research to postgraduate students
9. Other duties as directed from time to time

Key Selection Criteria

1. The appointee will have
 - a doctoral degree or equivalent level of research experience with a strong bacterial genetics and/or computational microbiology component
2. Demonstrated analytical and manuscript preparation skills
3. Ability to solve complex problems by using discretion, innovation and the exercise diagnostic skills and/or expertise
4. Well-developed planning and organisational skills, with the ability to prioritise multiple tasks and set and meet deadlines
5. Excellent written communication and verbal communication skills with proven ability to produce clear, succinct reports and documents
6. A demonstrated awareness of the principles of confidentiality, privacy and information handling
7. A demonstrated capacity to work in a collegiate manner with other staff in the workplace
8. Demonstrated computer literacy and proficiency in the production of high level work using software such as Microsoft Office applications and specified University software programs, with the capability and willingness to learn new packages as appropriate
9. Experience in bacterial genetics, working with DNA sequence data and annotations
10. Experience using basic command-line tools for data analysis and/or the R programming language

Enquiries

Dr Kelly Wyres, kelly.wyres@monash.edu

Further Information and apply At:

<https://careers.pageuppeople.com/513/cw/en/job/619112/research-fellow>

Renew and Update your ASM Membership

The main objective of the Australian Society for Microbiology (ASM) is to advance the science of microbiology in Australia.

The society does this through the production and promotion of reading material, lectures, seminars, symposia and demonstrations on topics relevant to microbiology, as well as establishing and maintaining suitable standards for the practice of microbiology as a profession.

The ASM also promotes the awareness of microbiology and its role in everyday life, and actively liaises with governments and other professional bodies at both State and Federal levels in support of its members and the profession.

It's that time of year when your membership is due for renewal. Don't forget to update your details so you don't miss out on all the members benefits including:

- Reduced conference registration,
- Free entry to many of our Victorian branch events
- Access to the new online community
- Professional development opportunities
- Eligibility for many ASM awards

Don't forget to recommend your friends and colleagues to join us.

If you have finished your PhD and have been working for the last two years in the field of microbiology you should consider applying for a professional membership MASM.

Professional membership eligibility criteria:

- Completed an academic qualification in microbiology at degree level or alternative qualifications acceptable to the Council; and
- Have satisfactorily completed two years of postgraduate work to advance the discipline of microbiology.

If you meet these criteria, all you need to do to obtain a declaration form a referee who is a MASM or FASM financial member of the society, your curriculum vitae and academic record/copy of degree and submit online.

For more information see.

<https://www.theasm.org.au/professional-membership-masm>

If you have 10 years or more experience in the field of microbiology and are a ASM MASM you should consider applying to become a Fellow of the Australian Society of Microbiology (FASM)

Fellows of the Society are those microbiologists who, through a process of peer assessment, are determined to be either specialists in their field, or scientists who have made a significant contribution to the profession.

Fellowship is the higher qualification of the ASM which is granted by the Council on the recommendation of the National Examinations & Qualifications Board.

Fellowship eligibility criteria:

- A financial MASM member of ASM at the time of applying for the fellowship.
- At least 10 years' experience in the field of microbiology.

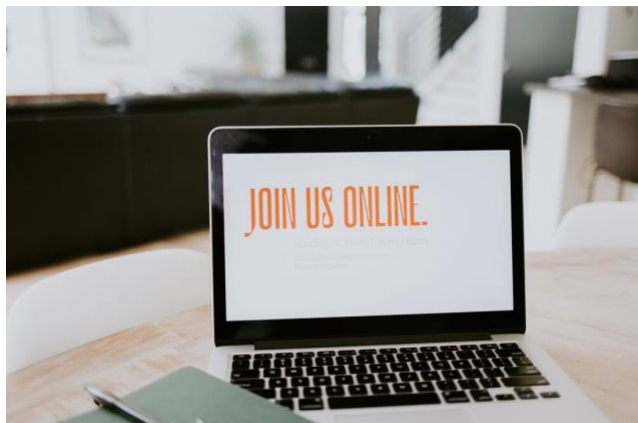
Required Supporting Documents:

- Curriculum Vitae, including details of your tertiary and other relevant qualifications, a list of your major publications.
- Completion of a FASM Referee Declaration (form downloadable below).

Further details can be found on the ASM National Website

<https://www.theasm.org.au/fellowship-fasm-1>

The ASM online community



We are excited to launch the ASM online community to members. A space where you can communicate to individuals or your special interest groups, share branch events, post announcements such as employment opportunities and scholarships, or request protocols and strains.

Now you don't have to wait for the next meet-up to connect with other members.

Please log in, explore, set up your profile and introduce yourself in one of our forums.

To login:

- Go to: <https://community.theasm.org.au/>
- Click the "Sign in" button located at the top right corner.
- The first time you login you will need to set up your password. Click the "Can't access your account?" link.
- Enter the email address on file with ASM and then click the "Send Password Link" button.
- Check your email for the link to set up your password.

ECR call for expressions of interest for Microbiology Australia

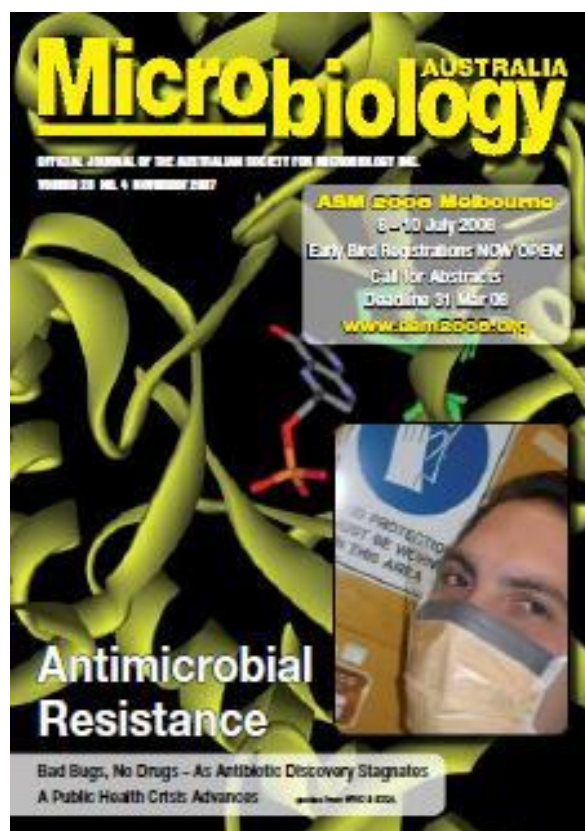
Early career (less than 5 years post-graduation) and student researchers who would like their area of research to be featured in Microbiology Australia are invited to contribute a proposal of their articles.

The Editorial Board will select up to 10 articles for invited submissions. Articles will be peer-reviewed and feature in the third issue of 2021 for publication in September.

As a guide, the article should be up to 1500 words, be targeted to the wider community of Australian microbiologists, and should describe the author's original research. Articles will go through the normal process of peer review and editing.

Please send Expressions of Interest (EOI) to editorasm@gmail.com before July 2021 and include a suggested title, name of the contributor, and contact details, (name of supervisor for students and a brief CV listing graduation year for early career researchers), and a brief abstract of fewer than 200 words.

All contributors must be members of the Australian Society for Microbiology.



Information on AstraZeneca Vaccine in response to new vaccine safety concerns

COVID-19 Immunisation Program

COVIDvaccinat@ddhs.vic.gov.au

As you may already be aware, there has been an update to the advice on the use of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine. This advice was provided by the Australian Technical Advisory Group of Immunisation (ATAGI). ATAGI is a group of medical and technical experts who advise the Commonwealth Minister for Health on the medical administration of vaccines in Australia, including COVID-19 vaccines.

There is evidence of rare but serious side effect involving thrombosis (blood clotting) after people receive their first dose of AstraZeneca vaccine.

The risk of developing this side-effect following receipt of the AstraZeneca vaccine is extremely rare.

The new age-based recommendations are made out of an abundance of caution and the benefits of the COVID-19 AstraZeneca vaccination outweigh the risks for the vast majority of people.

As a result of this evidence the Australian Technical Advisory Group of Immunisation (ATAGI) on 8 April 2021 provided the following recommendations regarding the Australian vaccination rollout:

The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine is preferred over AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine in adults aged under 50 years who have not already received a first dose of AstraZeneca vaccine.

This advice is based both on the increased risk of complications from COVID-19 with increasing age (and thus increased benefit of vaccination), and the potentially lower, but not zero, risk of blood clotting (thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome) with increasing age.

People who are under 50 years and are currently booked to receive their first dose of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine should contact their provider and reschedule their appointment.

AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine can be used in adults aged under 50 years where the benefits are likely to outweigh the risks for that individual and the person has made an informed decision based on an understanding of the risks and benefits. You should discuss your benefit-to-risk balance with your doctor.

People who have had their first dose of COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca without any serious adverse effects can be given their second dose. This includes adults under 50 years of age. People who have had blood clots associated with low platelet levels after their first dose of COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca should not be given their second dose.

The Commonwealth Department of Health will develop resources and provide more information about the benefits and risks of AstraZeneca vaccine.

The ATAGI advice has significant implications for the Victorian rollout of the Australian Government's COVID-19 vaccination program, which will need to be

worked through over the coming weeks. In the interim, state COVID-19 vaccination services will provide:

1. Access to Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for eligible adults aged under 50 years who are part of a priority groups identified Commonwealth prioritisation framework (eligible Phase 1a and 1b).
2. Access to the AstraZeneca COVID-19 for eligible adults aged under 50 years requiring a second dose or eligible adults over 50 years requiring a first dose.

The Victorian Government will continue to work closely with the Australian Government on the COVID-19 vaccine rollout. State COVID-19 vaccination service capacity is dependent on the supply of Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine and AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine.

Please see the attached communique and FAQs. As more information and resources are developed by the Commonwealth Department of Health we will share these with you. Victorians who have any questions about their health or about AstraZeneca should speak to their doctor.

Contact and Society Details



Vic Branch Committee

Chair: Catherine Satzke
(catherine.satzke@mcri.edu.au)
Deputy Chair/Public Health: Mary Valcanis
(valcanis@unimelb.edu.au)
Secretary: Sarah Baines (bainess@unimelb.edu.au)
Treasurer: Chris Stubenrauch
(christopher.stubenrauch@monash.edu)
Immediate Past Chair: Karena Waller
(klwaller@unimelb.edu.au)
VSP Coordinator: Lauren Zavan
(l.zavan@latrobe.edu.au)
Communications and Marketing (incl. Newsletter Editor): Jake Lacey (jake.lacey@unimelb.edu.au), Louise Miles, (lo.miles@alfred.org.au)

Committee Members: Maria Liaskos (M.Liaskos@latrobe.edu.au), Seema Kanade (seema.kanade@dorevitch.com.au), Priscilla Johannesen (priscilla.johanesen@monash.edu), Jacqueline Heath (jhea@unimelb.edu.au) Steve Petrovski (Steve.Petrovski@latrobe.edu.au), Harshini Weerasinghe (harshini.weerasinghe@monash.edu.au), Sam Manna (sam.manna@mcri.edu.au), Andrew Greenhill (Andrew.greenhill@federation.edu.au)

Committee Working Groups

One Health: Steve Petrovski, Jacqueline Heath, Jake Lacey, Chris Stubenrauch, Mary Valcanis.
Medical Microbiology: Seema Kanade, Sarah Baines, Maria Liaskos, Jake Lacey
Regional Engagement: Andrew Greenhill, Catherine Satzke, Steve Petrovski
Skills, Education, Engagement and Communications: Jacqueline Heath, Priscilla Johannesen, Karena Waller, Seema Kanade, Lauren Zavan, Harshini Weerasinghe, Sam Manna.

Submissions: Deadlines for ASM Victorian News is the 5th of the Month. All notices should be emailed to Jake Lacey (jake.lacey@unimelb.edu.au).

Find us on:

Website: <http://victoria.theasm.org.au/>
Twitter: [@ASM_VicBranch](https://twitter.com/ASM_VicBranch)
Facebook: [The Australian Society for Microbiology \(ASM\) - Victorian Branch](https://www.facebook.com/ASM-Victorian-Branch)



Becoming a Member: 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
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.

Upgrade to a professional membership (MASM): to be eligible for MASM, you must have: Completed an academic qualification in microbiology at degree level or alternative qualifications acceptable to the Council; and have satisfactorily completed two years of postgraduate work to advance the discipline of microbiology. If you meet these criteria, all you need to do it obtain a declaration form a referee who is a MASM or FASM finical member of the society, your curriculum vitae and academic record/copy of degree and submit online. For more information see. <https://www.theasm.org.au/professional-membership-masm>

Visiting speakers' program (VSP): 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), who is the VSP Coordinator for the ASM VIC Branch.

Organising events: 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) for more information

Advertisements: Would you like to advertise your event, job vacancy or other news item in our newsletter? If so, please contact Jake Lacey (jake.lacey@unimelb.edu.au) Advertising rates are: Not-for-profit adverts: free of charge and For-profit adverts: \$50 per advert.

ASM History SIG: 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

ASM National Office:

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

Victorian Branch ASM:

The Australian Society for Microbiology
Victorian Branch c/o: 9/397 Smith Street, Fitzroy VIC 3065
Weblink: <http://victoria.theasm.org.au/>
Email: catherine.satzke@mcri.edu.au or
asmvicbranch@gmail.com

A list of the other ASM branches can be found online at <http://www.theasm.org.au/>