

# The Australian Society for Microbiology



bringing Microbiologists together

NSW-ACT Branch

## Syntrophy

Volume 22, AGM Issue, 2021

### From the Chair

By Jim Manos

Greetings to all our Branch members,

With the AGM and the end of my term as Chair fast approaching, I would firstly like to thank everyone who has stayed the course in these past 18 months of the COVID pandemic and the consequent lack of contact with members. We have adapted and gone virtual with almost all of our branch events this year. Online seminars and meetings provide both benefits and drawbacks, the benefit is that regional and remote members can be fully involved without having to travel long distances, On the other hand, the networking that results from meeting with colleagues face to face is absent. Thus, for some events we hope to be able to have both modes available in the future.

Some of our more exciting events in 2020-2021 were the ASM Summer Scholarships awarded to four aspiring young scientists for their summer research projects, the return of the Nancy Millis awards in March 2021, and the first ACT networking event (held in person) on May 27. Bugs by the Beach was a success in virtual mode as well as several interesting seminars during the year. I would also like to extend a special thank you to Nick Coleman for revamping the Branch page on the ASM website and also taking on the editing of our monthly *Syntrophy*. Nick, you have done a fantastic job on both fronts!

We would love to see more members nominating for a committee spot in the upcoming AGM to continue the great work of the branch! Please put yourself forward to join our wonderful team! The nomination form is below.

Join us for the upcoming AGM on August 25<sup>th</sup>! As post-AGM speaker we have an engaging talk by prominent virologist Prof. David Tschärke on “A CRISPR way to engineer large DNA viruses” (See below).

Stay safe and with my best regards

Jim

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Syntrophy is distributed via email to ASM members located in NSW and the ACT using details included on the ASM National Office Database.

Not yet a member? Join today!  
[www.theasm.org.au/membership](http://www.theasm.org.au/membership)

Submissions and enquiries can be directed to the Syntrophy Coordinator via the ASM NSW-ACT Branch Secretary.

Organisations with research opportunities, or companies seeking to fill positions are welcome to place an advertisement in an upcoming issue of Syntrophy. Please contact the Secretary with your details for inclusion.

For information on the NSW-ACT branch committee, events and awards, please see:  
<https://asm-nswact.org.au/>



THE ASM NSW-ACT BRANCH  
61<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL  
MEETING

AGENDA

Date **Thursday, August 25 2021**  
Location **Zoom meeting link upon registration, NSW-ACT members only**  
RSVP by August 24, 2021 on trybooking  
Time **6:00-7:00 pm.**

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the 60<sup>th</sup> ASM NSW-ACT Annual General Meeting
3. Chairperson's Report
4. Treasurer's Report
5. National Council Report
6. Reports from Special Interest Groups
7. Branch Award Winners 2020-2021
8. Election of Office Bearers for 2021-2022

POST AGM SPEAKER

**Prof. David Tscharke**

**Australian National University**

**A CRISPR way to engineer large DNA viruses**

**Speaker from 7pm, August 25, 2021**

**Zoom meeting link upon registration**

**RSVP by August 24, 2021 on trybooking; ALL ASM members welcome**

Register for AGM

NSW-ACT members only

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



Register for Post-AGM talk

All ASM members

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





## THE ASM NSW-ACT BRANCH

### Post-AGM Speaker

**Prof. David Tscharke**

**Australian National University**

#### **“A CRISPR way to engineer large DNA viruses”**

**Abstract:** The ability to engineer the genomes of viruses is required to advance our understanding of their biology and for their application as tools and therapies. For herpesviruses and poxviruses this can be challenging and time consuming because their genomes are too large to be manipulated in vitro. Over the past several years my lab has developed methods for the application of CRISPR/Cas9 methods to engineering these viruses. For herpes simplex virus, the story is one of predictable biology and rapid success. However, for poxviruses, initial results were disappointing and confounding, but a shift in perspective led to an unexpected and more interesting outcome. This is a talk about investing in the development of tools and methods, a crucial aspect of microbiology that is too often under-rated.

**Bio:** David is a virologist and/or an immunologist, with interests in herpesviruses, poxviruses, CD8<sup>+</sup> T cells and antigen presentation. He started out at the University of Adelaide for undergraduate study and PhD – falling into a crevasse somewhere between virology and immunology during honours, from which he has never quite returned. He tumbled through postdoctoral training at Oxford University, the US NIH and QIMR before coming to rest and starting his own lab at ANU in 2006. Since then, he has held teaching and research positions as well as NHMRC and ARC Fellowships. He is currently the Head of the Division of Immunity, Inflammation and Infection at the John Curtin School of Medical Research, ANU.



**Zoom meeting link upon registration**

**RSVP by August 24, 2021 on trybooking**

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

**ALL ASM members welcome**





**THE ASM NSW-ACT BRANCH 2021  
NOMINATION FORM**

It's that time of the year again when we begin to prepare for the ASM NSW-ACT Branch Annual General Meeting. Nominations are required for the Secretary and Committee members. Note that applicants for the Secretary position must have previously served for at least 12 months on the Committee. If you feel there is more you can do for your ASM, now is a good time to fill in the Nomination form and become part of an energetic and motivated Committee.

**Please send all nominations to the Branch Secretary Tim Newsome:**  
EMAIL: [tim.newsome@sydney.edu.au](mailto:tim.newsome@sydney.edu.au)

**All nominations must be in writing. Only current ASM members may nominate and be nominated.**

**We, the undersigned, wish to nominate:**

**Print Name.....**

**For the position of (please tick):**

- Secretary (2 year term)**
- Committee member (1 year term)**

**Proposer:**

Print Name.....

Signature.....

**Secunder:**

Print Name.....

Signature.....

**I accept this nomination:**

Print Name.....

Signature.....

Phone.....

Email.....

Date:    /    /

# ASM NSW-ACT Branch Committee Members (2020-2021)

## **Chairperson**

Jim Manos, The University of Sydney

## **Chairperson-elect**

Maurizio Labbate, The University of Technology Sydney

## **Treasurer**

Christopher Harmer, The University of Sydney

## **Secretary**

Tim Newsome, The University of Sydney

## **Committee**

Nick Coleman, The University of Sydney

Mohammad Hamidian, The University of Technology Sydney

Karl Hassan, The University of Newcastle

Alan Heritage, Heritage and Associates, CAPSIG

Tom Jeffries, Western Sydney University

Slade Jensen, Western Sydney University

Anukriti Mathur, Australian National University

Martina Sanderson-Smith, The University of Wollongong

Jai Tree, The University of New South Wales

Thiru Vanniasinkam, Charles Sturt University

Heema Vyas, The University of Sydney (Casual nomination July, 2021)

## ASM NSW-ACT Branch Events

### 2020

- 20 August, ASM NSW-ACT Annual General Meeting, Invited Speaker: Dr Amy Cain (Macquarie University), by Zoom (164 registrants).
- 29 October, ASM NSW-ACT special seminar: Prof Peter Lewis (University of Newcastle) and Pro Antoine van Oijen (University of Wollongong), by Zoom (57 registrants).
- 2 November, ASM NSW-ACT special seminar: Nick Evershed (Guardian journalist), by Zoom (116 registrants).
- 13 November, ASM NSW-ACT special seminar: Dr Danielle Ingle and Dr Claire O'Brien, by Zoom (65 registrants).
- 20 November, 4<sup>th</sup> Bugs by the Beach (Newcastle), supported by ASM NSW-ACT branch, Keynote speaker: Prof Linfa Wang (Duke NJS) (50 attendees).

### 2021

- 24 March, ASM Nancy Millis Student Awards Night, by Zoom.
- 14 May, ASM NSW-ACT special seminar: A/Prof Yann Boucher (National University of Singapore) by Zoom (23 registrants).
- 27 May, ASM NSW-ACT Microbiology Group Networking Event in Canberra, JSCMR (60 attendees)

## ASM NSW-ACT Branch Awards

### The Nancy Millis student award

- Elizabeth Peterson (UTS) was the winner of the Nancy Millis student award
- Winton Wu (UNSW) was the winner of the ASM NSW-ACT branch student Travel Award
- Finalists: Ahmed Mohammad, UTS, Mozammel Hoque, UTS

### Undergraduate microbiology awards

- Thi Than Tung Pham, CSU
- UNE, WSU, MQ

### Summer scholarships

- Callum Kay, ANU
- Daniel Neville, UNSW
- Tsung-Yu Pai, UTS
- Lucy O'Shannessy, USYD

## Special Interest Group Reports

No reports provided.

# ASM NSW-ACT Branch 60<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting 2020 Minutes



Date: Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> August 2020

Venue: Online by Zoom meeting

Attendance: 37

Meeting opened: 1800

Meeting closed: 1900

Chairperson: Jim Manos

Minute taker: Tim Newsome

## Attendees

Veronica Alozie-chidi, Susan Badman, Anthony Baker, Dee Carter, Catherine Dawson, Alicia Fajardo Lubina, Hilary Fong, Evan Gibbs, Ian Grainge, Mohammad Hamidian, Peter Hansen, Chris Harmer, Liz Harry, Karl Hassan, Md Mozammel Hoque, Slade Jensen, Muhammad Kamruzzaman, Jasvinder Kaur, Maurizio Labbate, Ruiting Lan, Pappu Mandal, Anukriti Mathur, Poonam Mudgil, Tim Newsome, Susie Pluviano, Alaska Pokhrel, Nicolý Polizogopoulos, Carl Ramirez, Binod Rayamajhee, Martina Sanderson-Smith, Jai Tree, Thiru Vanniasinkam, Carola Venturini, Helen Vertoudakis, Ruth Zadoks, Jim Manos.

## Apologies

None received.

## Minutes of the 59<sup>th</sup> AGM, 2019

Previous minutes proposed by Mitchell Brown. Seconded by Slade Jensen.

## Chairperson's report (Jim Manos)

The Chairperson thanked all the committee members for all their hard work throughout the year. The Chairperson expressed gratitude to retiring committee members Andrew Robinson, Daniel Tuipulotu and Denisse Leyton, and executive committee members, Tim Newsome (Secretary), Chris Harmer (Treasurer), Mitchell Brown (immediate past Chairperson). He welcomed Maurizio Labbate into role of Chairperson-elect following this evening, and looks forward to a bright year ahead as we slowly overcome the restrictions of COVID-19. He welcomed new committee member Anukriti Mathur, and looks forward to working together in the year ahead.

## 2019-2020 NSW-ACT Branch committee

### Chairperson

Jim Manos, The University of Sydney

### Immediate Past Chairperson

Mitchell Brown, Westmead Hospital

### Treasurer

Christopher Harmer, The University of Sydney

### Secretary

Tim Newsome, The University of Sydney

### Committee

Nicholas Coleman, University of Sydney

Mohammad Hamidian, University of Technology Sydney

Alan Heritage, Heritage and Associates, CAPSIG

Tom Jeffries, Western Sydney University

Denisse Leyton, Australian National University

Andrew Robinson, University of Wollongong

Martina Sanderson-Smith, University of Wollongong

Jai Tree, University of New South Wales

Daniel Tuipulotu, Australian National University

Thiru Vanniasinkam, Charles Sturt University

## Events (2019-2020)

### 2019

- 19 August, ASM NSW-ACT Annual General Meeting, Invited Speaker: Prof Mike Cox (University of Wisconsin-Madison), 'Experimental evolution of extreme resistance to ionizing radiation in *Escherichia coli*' (35 participants).
- 23 August, ASM NSW-ACT Seminar, Clinical Microbiology presentation at Charles Sturt University, Mitchell Brown, 'Careers in Clinical Microbiology' (24 participants).
- 21 November, ASM NSW-ACT Seminar, 'The role of *Clostridium difficile* spores and virulence factors in enteric damage and disease', Prof Dena Lyras (ASM President, Monash University, 24 attendees).
- 13–14 November, 'Bugs by the Beach', (Wollongong, 86 participants)
- 4 December, CAPSIG Seminar, 'Gut Microbiome and Health', 3 speakers (80 participants).
- 4–6 December, 'Yeast Products and Discovery' (105 participants)
- 5 December, ASM NSW-ACT Christmas event, The Rocks Brewery (Alexandria, 40 participants).



## Events (2019-2020) (continued)

### 2020

- 31 January, Sydney Micro (one-day meeting), 8 speakers (86 participants).
- 24 March, 'COVID-19: Diagnosis, management and control', Dr Matthew O'Sullivan, Westmead Hospital and ICPMR, by Zoom (286 participants).
- June 11, ASM NSW-ACT Seminar, 'Viral Metagenomics at the Human-Animal Interface' Prof. Edward C. Holmes (University of Sydney, 80 participants)
- 20 August, ASM NSW-ACT Annual General Meeting, Invited Speaker: Dr Amy Cain (Macquarie University), by Zoom.

## Branch Priorities

- Enhancing our digital presence (retired our State website. Using Facebook and twitter, and contributing to the national website. Nick Coleman will assist with Syntrophy, as Su Badman will retire in November.
- President Dena Lyras came to our November 2019 Committee meeting. We discussed the sponsorship issue and why we are forging closer ties with JAMS. Dena was in agreement that it was a special relationship worth fostering.

## Treasurer's Report (Chris Harmer)

Printed copies of the Branch financial report to 31 March 2020 were circulated at the meeting and are included in Syntrophy AGM Special Issue 2020.

## National Council Minutes

- ASM2020 in Melbourne is cancelled, may resume in 2021 (pending). Sydney meeting to follow.
- Sydney has begun organising -Jai Tree (Chair of LOC) and Martina Sanderson-Smith (Chair of Scientific Program) to head Local Organising Committee.
- Membership stands at 1777, NSW-ACT 508.
- 19 new FASM members.
- 58 new MASM members.
- Impact of COVID19!

## Reports from Special Interest Groups

None received.

## Branch Prizes

### The Nancy Millis award finalists

- Ada Lijuan Luo, UNSW
- Ahmed Mohamed, UTS
- Jonathan Williams, UoW
- Liam Cheney, UNSW
- Scott Mitchell, USYD
- Xiaojun Yuan, ANU
- Xiaomei Zhang, UNSW

In lieu of the Nancy Millis prize not being awarded due to National Meeting being cancelled, finalists were offered a cash prize of \$250 to submit an article in Syntrophy.

### Branch Prizes (continued)

#### Undergraduate microbiology awards

- Valeria Zak, WSU
- Nadia Katherine Saegenschnitter, UNE
- Brodie Frank Gillieatt, USYD
- Ashly Cox-Carroll, CSU

#### CSU Vet School Undergraduate Microbiology prize

- William Barkman

### Election of Office Bearers for 2020-2021

Continuing Executive Committee members, nominations not required: Jim Manos (Chairperson), Tim Newsome (Secretary).

Call for nominations for Chairperson-elect: single nomination from Maurizio Labbate (1-year term). Passed.

Call for nominations for Treasurer: : single nomination from Chris Harmer (2-year term), passed

Re-nominating Committee members: Mitchell Brown, Martina Sanderson-Smith, Jai Tree, Tom Jeffries, Thiru Vanniasinkam, Slade Jensen, Nick Coleman, Mohammad Hamidian, Alan Heritage, Karl Hassan.

New nominations received: Anukriti Mathur (Student member, JCSMR, ANU).

### Post-AGM speaker

Dr Amy Cain, Macquarie University, 'Examining antibiotic resistance in hospital ESKAPE pathogens'.

### Other business

No other business.

# ASM NSW-ACT State Branch Financial Report 2020-2021

## Bank Balances at 31 March 2021

Westpac Cheque:	132527	\$953.31
Westpac Spec:	363233	\$2,368.39
G&C Bank	S1	\$8,275.73
	S11	\$0.00
	S13	\$5,245.18
	I30 Term Deposit	\$85,000.00

**\$101,842.61**

## Bank Balances at 1 April 2020

Westpac Cheque:	132527	\$823.80
Westpac Spec:	363233	\$2,548.44
G&C Bank	S1	\$34.66
	S11	\$4.22
	S13	\$5,132.14
	I30 Term Deposit	\$85,000.00

**\$93,543.26**

<b>Opening bank balances 1 April 2020</b>		\$93,543.26
	Minus cash out	\$4,602.30
	Plus cash in	\$12,901.65
	Equals	\$101,842.61
<b>Closing bank balance 31 March 2021</b>		<b>\$101,842.61</b>

## Credits

Row Labels	Sum of Amount
5001 - Capitations	\$11,717.57
5005 - Interest received	\$1,055.12
5008 - General income	\$128.96
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$12,901.65</b>

## Debits

Row Labels	Sum of Amount
7004 - Catering	\$96.50
7006 - Awards	\$2,700.00
7011 - General Expenses	\$1,801.58
7010 - Bank Fees	\$4.22
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$4,602.30</b>