

From the President



This history project and indeed all the ASM celebrations happening in 2009 have their origins in the meeting of Council held on the Gold Coast in 2006. It was at that meeting that then President, Julian Rood, had an inkling that our Golden Jubilee was approaching. It is perhaps a reflection of the fact that we can so quickly lose track of the past that no one could definitively name our year of foundation. After subsequent research revealed the significance of 1959, Council quickly agreed that 2009 should be a special year of celebration for us.

The first meeting of the Society was in Melbourne and the national meetings that immediately followed were linked with that of other Societies, most notably those of ANZAAS. Our membership grew rapidly and by the 1970s we were running an essentially autonomous meeting with the host city rotating between our major population centres. By chance, 2009 was Perth's 'turn' and our Golden Jubilee meeting became the responsibility of the WA Branch. This is perhaps particularly fitting since it reinforces the fact that we have created a truly national Society and that microbiology is a discipline that is thriving across the entire country.

A large number of Society members contributed to the production of this history. These include the members of the *Microbiology Australia* Editorial Board under the guidance of the *MA* Chair, Ailsa Hocking and *MA* Editor, Ian Macreadie. We are also indebted to the staff at the National Office who helped Way Back When historians sift through hidden boxes of material found there, and to the state branches for making material available from, in some cases, archives stored in old cardboard wine casks. In addition, several members responded to our general call for photos, some of which you will see in the following pages. Finally, much of this history is drawn from the recollections of some of our many distinguished members. We are particularly grateful to them for providing the time to be interviewed and to proof the later drafts.

For past and present older members of the Society, I hope this history is a happy reminder of the times and events that you lived through and contributed to. Younger Society members will find this to be an entertaining document. It will help you understand that the strength of ASM as we know it today was the product of many creative and dedicated individuals who worked very hard to grow the discipline of microbiology in Australia. I hope it will also be an inspiration to carry on their good work.

Hatch Stokes
President ASM