



Australasian Mycological Society

Annual General Meeting 2022

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Introduction

We seem to have begun the journey out the other side of the COVID tunnel. While there are still cautions to take, we are glad to see borders opening and the ensuing opportunities for travel and networking resume. Thanks to the generous support of our members and the council, AMS has weathered the quiet and come out in a very strong position. We have many new members, including new students and labs joining us. This has been in part due to our busy year of Virtual Seminars, an upcoming Symposium, Research and Travel Grants, and an expanding presence on social media.

The Council is going strong with all members of the council nominating to remain in their positions for 2022-2023. Their contributions at our monthly meetings have been supportive, creative, and enthusiastic and we look forward to working together going forward. We are hoping that a mycology student from New Zealand will nominate to become our second student representative.

In the meantime, here are some highlights from the year that was 2022 (and a bit of 2021!).

Finance and membership

We are in a stronger position this year with our memberships increasing substantially. We've had more expenses and events to plan, but our income has also increased with the contributions of those joining our AMS family. We've also tried to give more benefits to our members including the opportunity to apply for the Research and Travel Grants, get discounted rates for our symposium, and get access to Seminar recordings ahead of schedule. Additionally, we have formed good relationships with the New Zealand

Microbiological Society, the Queensland Mycological Society, the Australasian Plant Pathology Society and FungiMap which whom we have been collaborating on several projects over the year.

Currently we have 94 Active members including students associated with Lab Memberships. This year alone, we had 76 Memberships added or renewed. There are 35 Concessional Memberships, 47 Full Memberships and 2 Lab Memberships as well as 2 generous Sustaining Memberships from Elaine Davison and Philip Jacobson. This was a gross Income to the society of \$3,963 for 2021 and \$7,322 for 2022 before PayPal Fees.

Even better, the symposium this year is not being run at a cost to us. With the generous support of the New Zealand Microbiological Society, so there will likely be no charge to us, as we are well integrated into the conference, and the last registration numbers indicated that our symposium was pretty much in line with the main conference.

Virtual Seminar Series

We've had an incredibly successful year of [monthly seminars](#). Registrations have been through the roof with over 60 registering on average each month. We had a minimum of 24 people attending each seminar but an average of 37 with a maximum of 57 for Wayne Boatwright's Introduction to Fungal Specimen Collection and Preservation. This year we had people logging in from all over the world including Australia and New Zealand but also United States, United Kingdom, South Africa, China, Canada, and for the first time New Caledonia, Brazil, and Antigua and Barbuda. Our talks, including those from

2021, have been uploaded to our YouTube Channel with the permission of our speakers, but only AMS Members have access to the talks initially, before we make them publicly accessible months later.

For 2023 we hope to emphasise the breadth of our society to cover all fungi and fungal-like organisms (such as Oomycetes and Myxomycetes), but also an array of research fields including medical, biotech, chemical, ecological, applied and field mycology. As with this year we also like to feature storytellers like QMS President Wayne Boatwright, but we're also open to students presenting new research and of course traditional Mycology and Taxonomy.

Our final speaker for 2022 will be an up-and-coming American Professor, Jessie Uehling, who was a Postdoc of Rytas Vilgalys at Duke University, and now runs her own Mycology Lab at Oregon State University.

Research and Travel Grants

We had two [Research Grants](#) available for 2022, to the value of \$3000 each. This year we also collaborated with FungiMap who were funding their own Citizen Science awards. We advertised together and allowed for members of each organisation to apply for either award. The range of applications was incredible and we are excited for all the Mycology research to come. Interestingly, we had planned to prioritise one grant for an early career researcher but in fact all of our applicants were ECRs. It was a hard decision for the Application Committee to make but we ended up awarding grants to Aaron Brace at Edith Cowan University, and Allison Mertin from the University of Melbourne. Congratulations to both awardees. We will be giving both Aaron and Allison a chance to present their work next year at a Virtual Seminar.

Since we haven't held a symposium or meeting for the last few years, the generous contributions from AMS Patrons Pam and David Catcheside for the Dr Jack Warcup Memorial Prize have gone unused. Traditionally, the Prize is awarded to the best student talk at the Annual Meeting. For 2022, with the approval of Pam and David, we

decided to redirect two of the three available prizes towards a new Student Travel Grant to assist students in getting to the AMS Symposium in Wellington in November. In addition, the society has decided to award a third prize for the same amount.

We'd like to announce that the winners of those Student Travel Grants are Aindreeya Alcova, Eloise Martin and Weixia Wang. Thank you to all the applicants and to Pam and David for their ongoing support, without which these prizes would not be possible.

AMS Symposium 2022

This year, AMS is joining with the New Zealand Microbiological Society to hold the [2022 AMS Symposium](#) as a satellite meeting on 25th November after the main conference which runs at the same venue from 21-24 November. Now that international borders have opened, this is intended to be a fully in-person opportunity, without a hybrid or virtual offering.

NZMS has been extremely accommodating and despite the additional travel required for Australian participants, registration costs have been kept extremely low. Included in the registration cost is morning and afternoon tea and lunch on each day for which you register. There is also an optional field trip on Thursday afternoon (24 November) with NZMS delegates to the nearby Zealandia – the world's first fully fenced urban ecosanctuary. Delegates can also join us for an AMS dinner on the Friday night. Our Plenary Speaker is Dr Alison Pouliot, co-author of *Wild Mushrooming* and Author of the *Allure of Fungi* and we have a great program of speakers for the day.

We will also be holding a special event over the course of the Symposium. We're inviting attendees to find and bring along fungi-or-mushroom-inspired items to go into a silent auction. These items will be displayed throughout the day and attendees can make bids and win those items to take home with them at the end. Items might include *Agaricus* earrings, vintage mushroom ID books, crocheted morels, mycelium magnets... really, anything mycologists

would appreciate, but that is also biosecurity-friendly for international travel. All money raised from the silent auction will go towards funding research and networking opportunities for Australian and New Zealand Mycologists in 2023. There is still time to register and attend the Symposium so please get in touch or go online to register.

AMS Newsletter, Website and Social Media

The bi-monthly [AMS Newsletter](#) has been a very collaborative effort this year. Each Council Member has a chance to put the newsletter together, including a research highlight, society news, Mycological events and Seminar updates. We hope our members have been enjoying them and we continue to reach out for content in the form of research papers, fungi-photos, researcher news, job opportunities and events.

Our [website](#) has been expanding throughout the year with the generous support of Dee Carter. It continues to be updated regularly and is a fantastic resource for fungal enthusiasts within the society and in the general public.

Something new we have this year is a [RedBubble Merchandise store](#). Currently we have two designs available which you can get printed on items such as stickers, t-shirts, bags and coffee cups. We're also taking submissions of photographs and drawings or other art to include on our store, with all proceeds going towards the activities of the society such as funding research grants and holding events.

On social media we have surpassed the milestones of 1000 followers on [Twitter](#). A seemingly insignificant achievement, but in fact our visibility means that when we advertise events or share research, we can reach 10s of thousands of Twitter users. Our Tweets are regularly shared by the Westerdijk Institute, Pedro Crous, various microbiological societies, and even people like Nate Byrne from ABC News.

On [Facebook](#) we've also changed our target audience to include all Members, not just students. We have over 1900 Followers on Facebook. We try to ensure all our news is shared

across both platforms. We have a [YouTube Channel](#) to which all our Seminars are uploaded. We have a small presence on [LinkedIn](#), so feel free to join that group there, and there's even been a bit of talk about starting an Instagram page. Once again, please send through or tag us in anything fungi-related that you would like to share more widely.

AMS Subcommittee in Fungal Education

The [AMS Education subcommittee](#) this year is still on hiatus. Please let us know if you'd like to join the subcommittee. We get quite a few enquiries from people wanting to study mycology and the resources that the Fungal Education Subcommittee has compiled in the past have been invaluable.

AMS subcommittee in Fungal Conservation

This subcommittee is co-chaired by Tom May and Peter Buchanan of the [Australasian Fungi Conservation Group](#) (AFCG). Tom will present their report on the group's recent activities. If you would like to become involved with the AFCG please contact Tom via the AMS website.

ICPP2028

At the last AGM we announced that we were supporting a bid by the Australasian Plant Pathology Society to host the [2028 International Congress of Plant Pathology on the Gold Coast](#). This might be considered old news now, but we are so excited to share that our bid was successful. The AMS will be holding a satellite meeting alongside ICPP 2028 and we hope that the event will draw upwards of 2000 delegates and their families to southeast Queensland in August 2028. We feel that what made our bid stand out was how we emphasised the location as a tropical holiday destination and how we plan to make the conference a family-friendly event with options such as childcare, family excursions and fieldtrips before and after the event. The Executive Planning Committee is seeking members for the many subcommittees we will have, so if you'd like to be involved, please contact myself or Andrew Geering, the President of APPS.

Looking Ahead

We plan to continue with the Virtual Seminar Series for next year and we are already looking to fill spots in the calendar, so please nominate yourself or someone else with an interesting story to share. We are yet to discuss plans for forthcoming AMS Meetings and what form that will take. Travel has opened up but there are still major hurdles to accomplishing this for many members, one of which is cost. In forthcoming Council Meetings, we will be talking at length about how and where we next meet. Although our seminars will be ongoing, we all love and

appreciate the chance to get together for a more social occasion. If you have any suggestions or ideas, please get in touch as we'd love to hear from you.

Next year we will also be opening up nominations for [the International Mycological Society Young Mycologist Award](#). The Daniel McAlpine Medal will be awarded to an Australasian mycologist no more than 12 years out from their PhD. Nominations are curated by AMS and submitted to the IMA by January 2024.

Finally, I would like to thank the 2022 AMS Council: Johanna Wong, Jordan Bailey, Bevan Weir, Anna Hopkins and Jonathan Plett, and our student representative Christina Stephenson. I also thank Dee Carter for her support and website work, our many seminar speakers for 2022 and of course, our incredible members who've stuck by us and contributed to the advancement of Australasian Mycology.



Dr Tracey Steinrucken

President of the Australasian Mycological Society