

Scientific Meetings of the Society

The first few Scientific Meetings consisted of a single stream of proffered papers with sometimes a symposium or a plenary address, but as the numbers attending increased, organisers introduced poster sessions, workshops and concurrent sessions of oral presentations as effective alternative methods of presenting information. As commercial sponsorship increased the Society was able to invite overseas scientists to address plenary sessions and to be key speakers at symposia and satellite meetings. A recent innovation has been the presentation of an oration by the NZMS Orator.

2001	Gerald Tannock	University of Otago
2002	Diana Martin	Environmental Science and Research
2003	Hugh Morgan	University of Waikato
2004	Clive Ronson	University of Otago
2005	John Tagg	University of Otago

Until 1996 NZMS Annual Conferences, consisting of a scientific meeting and the Annual General Meeting, were held during the common university vacation weeks in May or August but recent changes have allowed for more flexible timing. Some Scientific meetings have been held in conjunction with other societies. The 1977 meeting in Dunedin took the form of the first International Microbial Ecology Symposium sponsored by the Union of Microbiological Societies and the Royal Society of New Zealand. In 1980 the Society held a combined conference with the Australian Society for Microbiology in Dunedin. Since then the two societies have held joint meetings alternately in New Zealand and Australia at intervals of four years or so. The Annual Conference has also been held as a combined meeting with other societies including the Biotechnology Association, the Systematics Association of New Zealand, the New Zealand Immunological Society, the New Zealand Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, the New Zealand Society for Biochemistry and Cell Biology, and the New Zealand Society for Plant Physiology.

Peripheral features of the Conferences have been; visits to places of microbiological interest; (brewery visits have always been well supported), and Trade displays mounted by corporate members and other companies, which have become increasingly sophisticated.

However, no account of the NZMS Annual Conferences is complete without mention of the social functions, which are, very properly, regarded as a most important element of the activities. The first meeting concluded with what is now called a "Happy Hour" fuelled by saveloys and beer by courtesy of the President. Similar social functions followed subsequent Conferences until a change was made at the 1966 Rotorua Conference where the organisers arranged a dinner with entertainment provided by a Maori cultural group. The conference dinner has continued to be the major social function coupled with the more recently introduced "mixer" at registration time. NZMS Conferences are famous for their friendly, informal atmosphere- members know how to enjoy themselves and the locals ensure that visitors experience the host venue's unique cultural and culinary delights.