

## Exceptional service to microbiology recognised in the Northern Territory

**29 July 2020**

Darwin microbiologist Professor Phil Giffard has been recognised for his exceptional service and contributions to science by the Australian Society for Microbiology (ASM) with the society's Distinguished Service Award.

Prof Giffard is the Head of Laboratory Science at Menzies School of Health Research (Menzies) and Professor and Assistant Dean for Research and Innovation in the College of Health and Human Sciences at Charles Darwin University (CDU).

His expertise is in the development of innovative genetic analysis technologies, and bioinformatics, and more generally in the formulation and application of these approaches to address questions of immediate relevance to the population of northern Australia.

Prof Giffard said he was honoured and humbled to be recognised for his career which has included working on a number of projects that have led to the discovery of the diversity and genetic analysis of the *Staphylococcus aureus* complex, *Streptococcus pyogenes*, and *Chlamydia trachomatis*.

"We found that what is more broadly known as golden staph is not in fact a single species and that sequencing shows the species are different and unique to varied geographic locations.

"Based in the Menzies laboratory in Darwin we were the first to undertake the full genetic sequence of ocular strains of chlamydia from Australia and create an innovative genotyping method which is quick and economic and could be used to increase the evidence base for interpreting the detection of sexually transmitted infections in the community," said Prof Giffard.

Prof Giffard joined Menzies in 2008 from the Queensland University of Technology. He is an investigator on 16 research grants and has published 118 academic papers.

Up to ten ASM Distinguished Services awardees are chosen in any one year and the recipients are announced and presented at the ASM Annual General Meeting.

Professor Dena Lyras, President of the ASM, said: "the Distinguished Service Award recognises exceptional service and contributions to microbiology and the ASM over a sustained period of time".

"Professor Giffard has given generously to both the Society and the discipline of microbiology, especially in microbial genetics and genomics, and we thank him for his support and outstanding contributions," Prof Lyras said.

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# MEDIA RELEASE

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## **Menzies School of Health Research**

Menzies School of Health Research is one of Australia's leading medical research institutes dedicated to improving Indigenous, global and tropical health. Menzies has a history of over 30 years of scientific discovery and public health achievement. Menzies works at the frontline, joining with partners across the Asia-Pacific as well as Indigenous communities across northern and central Australia. Menzies collaborates to create new knowledge, grow local skills and find enduring solutions to problems that matter.