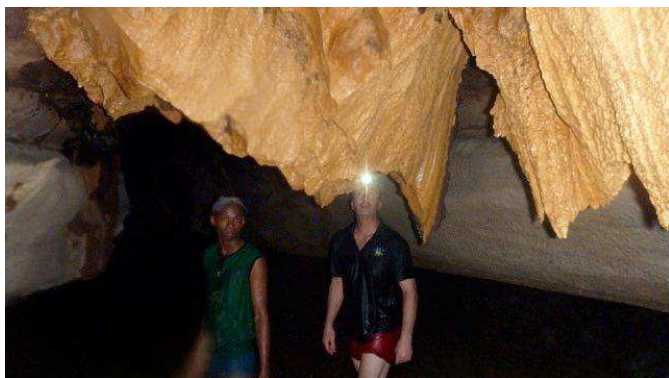


FROM THE EDITOR



Your editor caving Madagascar style, with guide Deleogue
Photo: Greg Middleton

I enjoyed a month-long trip to Madagascar and South Africa in September. Lots of caves, adventure and a mere 5,000 photos. You don't want to come to a slide show at my place for a while. Space prevents a report for this journal, as we have three important pieces; cave and karst policy and guidelines from Western Australia, and the ACKMA rules adopted at our May AGM and approved by the Victorian Office of Business and Consumer Affairs.

The Policy and Guidelines for the Protection and Management of Caves and Karst were driven by ACKMA member John Watson, who has provided a rough chronology of their development below. I had written to the Director of Parks whilst still president of ACKMA seeking an update on these documents, and was pleasantly surprised to receive a letter and copy recently, albeit several years after my letter.

- 2008 - Preliminary draft distributed widely within the agency - Western Australia (WA) Department of Environment and Conservation at the time - now, WA Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPaW). Draft also circulated widely to other Australian State conservation agencies, to external cave and karst specialists in both WA and most other States.
- early 2009 - revised draft prepared after consideration and incorporation where possible of the ~150 substantive comments and other suggestions received
- May 2009 - talk by John Watson at ACKMA biennial conference Margaret River - further comments sought and received from attendees during and post conference
- April 2010 - latest drafts of policy and operational guidelines tabled by John at ACKMA Meeting, Mulu - additional comments sought and some received
- delays in process due to re-structuring and some modification of agency roles. Also, from early 2012 John no longer working on state-wide policies for DPaW
- March 2014 - final policy and guidelines signed off - a couple of weeks before John retired from DPaW

John Brush provides a report from a trip he and Marjorie Coggan enjoyed in Iceland visiting lava caves with unpronounceable names. They look spectacular although the temperatures do not appeal.

Congratulations to Susan White, another ACKMA member who has been recognised with Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the General Division. Susan's OAM recognises her service to science, particularly to speleology and youth. Her contribution in both fields dates back over 50 years.

Kent Henderson recently advised me that he was in far north Queensland in late August. Her writes: *"I visited erstwhile ACKMA member, Dr Claire Baker, and her partner Marcus, at their remote property north of Mareeba - for a pleasant lunch, chat and local tour. Their property contains significant rainforest and when Claire isn't doing the odd bit of uni lecturing, she spends her time looking after many wallabies and copious other*



Claire Baker, Kent Henderson and friend
Photo: Kent Henderson

wildlife, not to mention her horses. She even flits off every six months to view glowworms - she is still a human dynamo!"

This journal contains information on the Guides School and ACKMA AGM, to be held in Rockhampton May 2016. The last time ACKMA held its meeting at Rockhampton was 2008, and I look forward to getting back there and seeing the good work Ann and her team are doing. Ann has secured some excellent speakers and the Guide's School will be really worthwhile for all cave guides. I have known John Pastorelli for over 10 years and used his services at Naracoorte several times, with excellent results. Guides; start putting proposals forward to your managers, and if not successful there, start saving. Attendance at this school is fully tax deductible as professional development.