

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dale Calnin

It was an absolute thrill for me to attend the recent Guides' School and ACKMA AGM at Capricorn Caves in early May 2016.

To catch up with the ACKMA family is always a special time; the pleasure of renewing old friendships and the reward of fostering new acquaintances.

It was indeed a memorable time spent in which I have received nothing but praise and complimentary feedback and I have no doubt this journal will be packed with accolades from those who attended about the wonderful time experienced at Capricorn Caves

On behalf of ACKMA I would like to thank and congratulate Ann Augusteyn and her fabulous team for their warm and inviting hospitality on hosting such a delightful event.

To run a successful business operation you must have a great team and Ann certainly has something that is quite special. You can clearly see why they have been so successful in winning a number of tourism awards.

The Guides' School provided a couple of days of pure enjoyment and entertainment, together with the introduction of a number of new faces. Amidst the enthusiasm, fresh ideas and laughter, I found myself thinking on a number of occasions "Am I looking at the future of ACKMA?"

The week only got better as the weekend approached with the arrival of ACKMA members from various locations in



*L-R. Anita Eddison, Ian Edison, Ted Matthews, Dianne Vavryn, president Dale Calnin and Tom Shortt, during the Caves Guide's School.  
Photo: Steve Bourne*

Australasia for the Annual General Meeting. It was fantastic to see a number of "old faces" we had not seen for a while, who remain very important to our organisation.

This was the first ACKMA gathering since the sad passing of our friend Elery Hamilton-Smith consequently there were a number of fitting tributes that flowed for 'the father of AKCMA' and to someone who made us so much richer for having known him.

At the Annual General Meeting we saw a changing of the guard in our Executive Committee with positions of President, Executive Officer and Treasurer all renewed.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge the wonderful contribution, leadership and guidance of our past president Dan Cove. Likewise to our outgoing Treasurer Grant Gartrell and Executive Officer Dave Smith, who we thank for their tireless contributions over an extended period of time.

As for my election as the ACKMA President, I say it is an honour and a privilege. It is something that is certainly out of my comfort zone preferring normally to "sit at the back of the bus" and let someone else take on the responsibility. But after reflecting on the enormous contributions that others have made, I thought it was time to at least take my turn.

The good news is that Dan will remain on the committee in his new position of Executive Officer with Cath Loder who now takes on the important role of Treasurer.

I look forward to working with them and the rest of the committee as we continue to move ACKMA forward as an active and relevant organisation.

To finalise the good work achieved by the ACKMA committee in our business and administration systems, will make us stronger and allow us to focus more on the planning and management of Cave and Karst. The road ahead will provide many challenges as we continue to maintain our leadership position in advocating strong conservation values, building public support and awareness.

Our show cave operations face testing times and therefore it is important we work with our government departments and agencies to help influence positive change rather than passive reaction to it.

I am encouraged by the energy and passion shown at Capricorn Caves and therefore confident the next few years will be positive for our organisation.

I am looking forward very much to seeing you all again at our next ACKMA AGM at Te Anau, New Zealand in May 2017.



*Ann Augusteyn addressing the Cave Guides' School. We all experienced the "Magic of Capricorn Caves".  
Photo: Steve Bourne*