

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dale Calnin

You can be sure there is always something happening in Cave and Karst Management and I am constantly reminded of the passion and commitment of our ACKMA members towards the conservation and protection of our cave systems.

I have always admired the efforts of our ACKMA leaders but I now hold a greater appreciation for the work carried out behind the four walls of the ACKMA committee, which can often be a thankless task.

Our Publications Officer Steve Bourne produced another great ACKMA journal in June that featured mostly the Rockhampton conference gathering, and I have no doubt this edition will again be full of exciting and interesting material. How Steve manages to find the time to juggle everything is amazing and a true testament to his dedication to ACKMA.

The committee have continued their review of our membership list to ensure those receiving the publication, either electronically or in print are current members, but we now need your help.

As you would appreciate, membership is incredibly important to the longevity of ACKMA; to maintain a vibrant organisation and more importantly that we are sustainable into the future. Therefore, I encourage members to renew your membership now.

To help build our numbers, I also feel that ACKMA needs to embrace the recruitment of cave guides who add that vital ingredient to cave management and the delivery of cave experiences. The membership form can be easily found on the website and ask that completed forms be sent to both Cath Loder and Steve Bourne.

On behalf of everyone I would also like to congratulate Cath on the safe arrival of their new baby boy Isaac George Loder. Cath is rapidly adjusting to the demands of motherhood and endeavouring to catch up with ACKMA stuff in her spare moments.

It is great to see that the energy and enthusiasm displayed by our cave guides at Capricorn Caves continue with the launch of the ACKMA Guides Community Group Facebook site. Congratulations to Jodie Anderson and Roslyn Hogno for implementing this initiative and I encourage not only ACKMA members but all guides at our many respected cave operation sites, to get on board. The site provides a wonderful platform for cave guides, managers and staff from across Australia and New Zealand to share thoughts, ideas techniques and experiences.

Other great work being done on behalf of ACKMA includes submissions to the draft Paparoa National Park Management Plan NZ and also the Kosciuszko National Park Management Plan NSW, which have implications for several important karst areas. Many thanks to Mary Trayers, John Brush and others that have contributed significantly to those responses.

Over the past month or so we have all been truly tested with some extremely sad and difficult times. The sad passing of our dear friends and long-standing ACKMA members Ken Grimes and Brett Farquharson has left us with heavy hearts. Our sincere condolences and thoughts are with both Janeen and Lesley, and families.

Fellow of ACKMA and good friend, John Ash is on the mend following a nasty fall off a ladder while pruning branches at the family home. John received a punctured lung and was in a great deal of pain. We hope his recovery is progressing well

with the prospect of a return performance of "Captain Speedo" next year at Te Anau?

Once again major weather events have caused havoc a number of our commercial cave sites. Our good friends and active ACKMA members Trish and Geoff Deer of Gunns Plains Cave in Tasmania have dealt with the impact of another major flooding event. When I last spoke to Geoff, their cave tours were up and running again but still with a high number of lights needing repair or replacing.

There have been exciting times at Buchan with fossilized animal remains found in a cave forty years ago finally identified as the White-Footed Rabbit Rat, or *Conilurus albipes*, an extinct native mammal. This discovery reminds us how important the protection of our native wildlife is, how permanent extinction is and why we spend so much effort controlling feral predators to protect vulnerable species.

Neil Collinson, New Zealand Vice President and Operations manager of TE Anau/Manapouri, has put together an excellent and exciting program for our ACKMA AGM event in Te Anau next year. The program content looks very attractive to cave guides while also delivering the objectives of the organisation. Neil worked on a similar concept as the Capricorn Caves event and hopes to keep the continued combination of the guide school workshop together with the ACKMA AGM.

Really good work Neil and team and we are so looking forward to visiting you in May 2017.

Until next time take care everyone and keep up the excellent work you do in Cave and Karst Management.



President Dale thanking catering staff at the Waitomo Hotel, Waitomo, New Zealand at ACKMA 2013. ACKMA heads back to New Zealand in 2017, this time to Te Anau.

Photo: Steve Bourne