

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dale Calnin



It was an absolute privilege to attend the 2017 ACKMA AGM held in spectacular Te Anau in New Zealand. It was an unforgettable week and one of the most enjoyable ACKMA gatherings that I have had the pleasure of attending and I have no doubt that this journal will be rich with articles rightfully praising the efforts of our New Zealand hosts.

It was indeed a sensational ACKMA event and all would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of our wonderful Te Anau hosts. Congratulations to Neil, Laura, Lucy, Thomas and the rest of the amazing Real Journeys team and thank you for your warm hospitality, and for sharing with us the beautiful part of the world that you live in.

ACKMA gatherings are always a fantastic time and it was great to catch up with the 60 or more ACKMA attendees and to hear of all the exciting things happening in their respective patches. Cave operations in Australia are very busy places with always something exciting happening. I do believe we need to profile this better and I therefore strongly encourage all our cave sites to be more vigilant in sharing all your good news stories in cave and karst management in the ACKMA journal.

As to the business of the weekend itself, both the Executive Meeting and the AGM were highly productive sessions and I would like to commend the committee for its work particularly in addressing the issue of ACKMA membership and helping to implement a viable business and financial framework for the future.

One of the highlights was certainly Dave Smith's ACKMA Life Membership Award, recognising his many years of dedication and service to cave and karst management. Thoroughly deserved and on behalf of everyone Dave, congratulations and well done.

It was great to see some new members added to the executive committee. A lovely blend of youth and experience with the appointments of Jodie Anderson to the committee and Jordan Wheeler to take on the position of Membership Officer and of course, Andy Spate to Australian Vice President and Tony Culberg to the important position of ACKMA treasurer. I take this opportunity to also acknowledge the valued contribution of outgoing committee members, Treasurer Deborah Craven-Carden and Executive Officer Dan Cove.

The decision to proceed with the ACKMA Cave Guide Survey to help enhance training for better cave guiding I feel is a real positive of the organisation and I encourage all those involved with cave guiding to support this wonderful and worthwhile initiative. I strongly believe that ACKMA's guidance again in this area will be most beneficial and well warranted for all.

The 22nd ACKMA Conference will be held in the beautiful Margaret River Region of Western Australia and promises to be another event not to be missed. Congratulations to Attractions Manager Mark Delane and Margaret River Busselton Tourism Association for their successful bid and I am sure it will be very well attended by our ACKMA members.

I am looking forward to continuing to work with the committee as we continue to further the objectives of our association and I congratulate them on their energy and enthusiasm displayed already since our meeting at Te Anau. There are exciting times ahead for ACKMA and I look forward to seeing you all at Margaret River Western Australia in 2018.



*The AGM at Te Anau Scout Hall with the leftovers(!) of lunch in the foreground. We were well catered for.
Photo: Steve Bourne*