

President's Report from Andy Spate

I write as your new President.

Mark Delane and his team gave us a wonderful conference at Margaret River. The pre-conference tour went well and one hopes that post-conference activities were equally successful. Great caves! Great people! Kirsty and I gave the wineries a miss but went to the Ginviversity instead. Wine, whether made from water or not, is a little light on! Great presentations which included several themes new to ACKMA – fire impacts on karst processes; tree-rings as indicators of climate change; human bacteria invading show cave ecosystems and Scott's great story on 'Enid Blyton – a Closet Caver'. Possibly the most enjoyed presentation of the whole conference.

We welcomed our first Japanese member in the person of Erie K Ando. Katie Coleborn was the recipient of the Ken Grimes Award, talked about the role of fire on karst processes. Erie was the runner-up. Miles Pierce and Peter Robertson received the Elery Hamilton-Smith Award for the best Journal article, *Relighting Federal Cave Buchan Victoria using the Sun's Rays, Buchan*, with John Brush and Paul Williams as runners-up. Congratulations to all seven.

Your Committee is little changed. Dale has stepped down from the Presidency to become the Australian Vice President and we welcome Cathie Plowman to the Committee. Our other new Committee member is Tim Moore as Publications Officer – more on Tim below. I urge you all to write for the Journal – even a few words and an image or two about happenings at your sites will be grist to Tim's mill. We have about 24 show and adventure cave operations in Australia and I don't know how many in New Zealand (can somebody provide me with a number?). Just a few paragraphs once a year on your happenings will help fill the Journal—make your editor happy—and provide us all with news of our activities across Australasia.

So, who is the unknown Tim? A Judge in the NSW Land and Environment Court. He has been interested in caves and caving since his teens. He has been a quiet ACKMA member for ~25 years.

He and his children regularly visit both show and wild caves.

In 1991 – after a trip through Kubla Khan with Andy Spate - he introduced the pioneering *National Parks and Wildlife (Karst Conservation) Act 1991 (NSW)* – legislation based on a Cabinet submission that Tim had personally drafted [and I was woken up in the very early hour of ~3 am by a parliamentary draughtsman wanting a definition of karst!]. This *Act* is the most progressive karst legislation in Australia and probably New Zealand, if not wider across the globe.

Leaving aside his various Court appointments, he was the Member for Gordon in the NSW Parliament from 1976 to 1992 and NSW Minister for the Environment from 1988 to 1992. From 1993 to 1996, he was an Assistant Secretary in the Department of the Prime Minister and

Cabinet and Secretary to the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation. He is also a nationally accredited mediator – may be handy in ACKMA Committee deliberations? But, he is happy to be Tim for ACKMA.

Moving on to other ACKMA issues:

- We must establish definitive program for our next conferences, AGMs and Guide Schools. We have not much at present and this is deeply worrying. We need to know – very soon – about:

- * AGM and Guide School in 2019. The AGM must happen about May according to the incorporation rules but the vital Guide School can be held anywhere at any time. But we need both! And better together, maybe? One issue here is that an AGM host may not have the expertise to run a guide school. AGM 2019 may be Naracoorte ...
- * ACKMA Conference in 2020. This might be Jenolan ...
- * Guide School and ACKMA 2021 – needs someone to put their hand up.
- * Conference 2022 – maybe North Island, New Zealand? Need to put the NZ in there because from Tasmanian perspectives there are two North Islands!

- So get onto this and make a bid.

- We did have a circuit of conferences every eight years in north NZ and another eight years later in the South Island with Oz sites interposed. We need to re-introduce this circuit or similar. Of the 24 Oz show cave operations obviously, some are not able to host either a conference or AGM/Guide School. Clearly the same applies in New Zealand. It looks like that we may be getting this under control again so we have some ideas for our collective plans.

Other issues we face include:

- Establishing better relationships with management agencies. Any ideas on how to do this would be greatly appreciated by your committee.
- Building our membership base. Again your ideas please.
- Reaching out to a few show cave operators who don't relate to, or we don't see at, ACKMA.
- Establishing an archive of ACKMA's administrative history. I call on all long term members to search their papers for any minutes, committee reports and so on and get them to me or John Brush as hard copy or preferably digitized.
- Guide survey. We need to finalise (deadline 30 June) and develop approaches for the future of guide training
- ACKMA history. It would be good to try and summarise our history over and above the administrative work.

There will probably be much else. Please feel free to make suggestions.