

## Andy Spate AM

Andy Spate's first cave was Jersey Cave at Yarrangobilly, in about 1953. His second was Cotter Cave in the ACT a few years later (it was an occasionally operated show cave). Casteret's *Ten Years Under the Earth* was a powerful incentive – as it was for so many of that age group of cave people.

In the late 1950s, he started working at Wee Jasper in Dip and, mainly, Punchbowl Caves – at the pointy end of the measuring tape – with the late Dr Joe Jennings – as a member of the Canberra Speleological Society (CSS). After that, he moved to Melbourne University and became heavily involved in the Melbourne University Mountaineering Club and as a founder member of the Victorian Speleological Association. He worked, at this time, with the late Professor Elery Hamilton-Smith AM on the habits of bent-wing bats and with the late Dr Les Hall OAM on horseshoe bats. Back to Canberra and CSS, he served as Vice-President and as Conservation Officer of the Australian Speleological Federation.

From about 1971, he conducted karst hydrological and geomorphological research work at Cooleman Plains and Yarrangobilly in Kosciuszko National Park, whilst working with CSIRO in association with the late Joe Jennings. In 1981, he joined the NSW National Parks Service as the Investigation Officer, Karst – the first professional karst position in the southern hemisphere, as far as we can ascertain. His research into karst continued.

He has also conducted research work in Antarctica on Holocene climate change and landscape development, as well as the habits of skua gulls and the role of salt wedging in the development of small-scale landform features.

He left the NSW National Parks Service after 20-odd years and established his consultancy firm, Optimal Karst Management. His consultancy has provided advice in all Australian States and Territories, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Vietnam, Taiwan, Indonesia, Sarawak, South Africa and, most importantly, South Korea.

Cave Tourism and Management Conferences had been conducted by the Australian Speleological Federation Inc (ASF) from 1973 until 1983. A conference was held at Waitomo, New Zealand in 1985 – clearly not orchestrated by ASF. By this time, Elery and Andy realised that there was a need for a separate organisation that represented others interested in caves and karst – cave guides, karst area managers, scientists and others not well-served by ASF's constitution and aims. The Seventh Cave Tourism and Management Conference (hosted by the NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service) visited all six show cave areas in New South Wales and voted the Australasian Cave Management Association (ACMA) into existence at Yarrangobilly Caves in 1987. ACMA became the Australasian Cave and Karst Management Association (ACKMA) at the following conference held at Punakaiki, New Zealand.

Since then, ACKMA and its members have conducted conferences, annual general meetings, guides' schools, and provided advice and submissions to governments across our region. Andy has been a continual supporter of our Association, serving as President, Vice-President, Executive Officer and Committee Member, on and off, since 1987.



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**(Supplied)**