

Editorial

One of my (what my friends would describe as many) eccentricities was that, as Minister for the Environment in New South Wales in the late 1980s and early 1990s, I rejected the traditional formal office boardroom photograph for the ministerial foreword, in the various annual reports for the National Parks and Wildlife Service during my period as its Minister. Instead, I arranged to have, for each of those reports during my tenure, an informal photograph to be taken at an appropriate site in the National Park system that reflected the values I held dear. One of those photographs was taken underground in Eagles Nest Cave at Yarrangobilly. The image was taken under the supervision of my now long-time friend, Andy Spate.

As consequence, it is with great pleasure that this edition contains three elements linking to that aspect of my past. The first of them is to be able to record that Andy has now been invested as a Member of the Order of Australia by her Excellency the Governor of Tasmania. His award not only recognises the importance of the contribution that Andy has made to cave management and karst protection on both a national and international basis, but also adds lustre to our Association by the implicit recognition of the values of the landforms and ecosystems that we all hold dear.

Second, I have the pleasure of publishing not one but two articles about Yarrangobilly in the “Around the show caves” section of this edition. I confess, when I received and read the piece about Yarrangobilly’s electric vehicle charging station, it reminded me of the various occasions when I stayed at Yarrangobilly in my ministerial days when the facilities were far less modern than now available to visitors to that comparatively remote location in Kosciuszko National Park.

This edition contains quite an eclectic range of material. This is headlined by the piece from Prof Dave Gillieson about present (and possible future) World Heritage protection for cave and karst locations. It is complemented by an article from our president that catalogues the activities available at the various show cave locations in Australia. Although prepared for publication in the newsletter of the US National Show Caves Association, Andy’s piece is nonetheless a useful reference compendium for all of us interested in cave management in this country.

Although there are no accounts, in this edition, of international cave wanderings (and their attendant spectacular photographs) that I have been able to bring you in past editions, I have been promised a piece from Steve Bourne for December in which he will recount his recent trip to Mulu in Sarawak. I also have the expectation that the March 2020 edition will contain an article concerning visits to the Neolithic cave sites in France at Lascaux Cave near Montignac and at Chauvet Cave near Vallon-Pont-d’Arc. Although the caves themselves are closed for protective reasons, their

museum re-creations look to be spectacular. I also anticipate a bonus report on a site visit to the troglodytic fortress at La Roque Saint-Christophe, a location some 18 kilometres downstream from Lascaux on the Vézère River.

I now turn to other matters for the future.

First, Scott Melton provides us with initial information concerning the Association’s 2020 Conference, the first of our conferences to be held at Jenolan Caves in the great state of New South Wales. More complete information concerning the conference will be published in the December Journal (including registration documents). Although the call for papers and posters will be circulated separately by email before the December Journal is published, the call will be repeated in that Journal. However, this is a preliminary call to ask our readers to start thinking what they might contribute to the conference’s proceedings or which colleagues they might stimulate to contemplate doing so.

The conference in May next year at Jenolan will also occasion a change of the guard at the helm of our Association as Andy has indicated he will pass the baton to a successor at the AGM to be conducted in conjunction with the conference. Importantly for me (and, more particularly, for this Journal), I indicated, when I took on this role from the Margaret River AGM in 2018, that my tenure as your editor would be for a maximum of two years. Those two years will expire at the Jenolan AGM. It remains my intention to relinquish the editorship on that occasion. I encourage readers of the Journal, particularly those of a younger generation than Andy and me, to contemplate raising a hand to volunteer to assume my role. I promise full cooperation in a transition process for the preparation of the June 2020 Journal.

Finally, on matters Jenolan, there is also a short note in this edition concerning the availability of financial assistance toward attendance at the Jenolan conference via the vehicle of the Ken Grimes Award, an award administered by a committee drawn from the life members of the Association.

As a further matter concerning this Journal itself, I note that, when I attended the AGM weekend in Naracoorte in South Australia in May this year, I received from Steve Bourne all of the back copies he held of the Journal. In this edition, I publish a table that sets out a list of the editions that I hold and how many copies I have of each of them. As can be seen, the list is fairly complete from the June 2011 edition (with varying numbers of copies of the following editions of the Journal). If any reader wishes to receive any (or many) of these back copies, please send my Associate, Ms Peta Dixon, an email at peta.dixon@courts.nsw.gov.au; let her know what ones you want; and we will post you the requested copies (assuming that, for those in limited supply, they have not already been taken following requests from fellow readers).