



# EDITORIAL RAMBLINGS



First, an apology. In the last Journal, I erroneously reported that Dave Gillieson was not continuing as our Executive Officer. Clearly, I misunderstood a previous conversation with him, for which I sincerely apologize. Dave, who has done a fantastic job in the position, will definitely be a candidate for re-election as Executive Officer at the coming ACKMA Inc. AGM at Buchan.

Speaking of the Buchan AGM weekend on 16-18 June, the program and booking form is again herein. Please get the Booking Form into Dennis Rebbechi as soon as possible (Closing Date: 13 June – very close!!). The \$35.00 fee covers the dinner on the Saturday Night, and the cost of the meeting room at Buchan.

Goodbye (sort of) and Hello (sort of)! The “goodbye” is for Ernst Holland, who retires as Karst Resources Manager of the Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust at the end of June. The irrepressible Ernie, a Life Member of ACKMA, has made an unparalleled contribution to cave and karst management in Australasia and internationally. However, it’s not really goodbye, as he will be doing lots of cave and karst things in the future, and will remain active in ACKMA. I am certain all ACKMA members will join me in wishing Ernie well in his “retirement”. The “hello” is to Andrew Fletcher, who was appointed as General Manager of the Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust on 31 January, following the retirement of Ted Reedy in August last year. Andrew has been a member of the Trust’s Executive for the past five years. He was appointed as Manager of Jenolan Caves in August 1994 and then the Trust’s Corporate Business Manager in April 1999. As a result, Andrew is no stranger to any of us, and we wish him well in his new position.

Wasn’t the 5th Australian Karst Studies Seminar wonderful!! I am certain the 50+ attendees will all agree! A full wrap up is elsewhere in these pages, and several karst management-related papers presented thereat are here within! It is hoped the 6th Australian Karst Studies Seminar will be held at Margaret River, Western Australia, in 2002.

The biennial Cave Guides Gathering (Gabfest) was held at Wombeyan Caves on 28 February – 3 March. Mick Chalker advised me at Wellington Karst Studies Seminar that, as of then, registrations had been received from over twenty guides from around the country, with others expected. Undoubtedly, it will yet again be a most successful event. A report will appear in the June Journal.

ACKMA member Dave Gill has advised that Dr. Jim Thorsell (IUCN, UNESCO), the evaluator for the Gunung Mulu National Park (Sarawak) World Heritage Listing, has advised him (unofficially) that he will recommend to the UNESCO meeting in November at Cairns, that Mulu receive World

Heritage status. A provision will be the recommendation to the Sarawak State Government that certain extensions to the park are constituted as a matter of priority and Oil Palm Estates are kept beyond a thirty kilometre radius from the park boundary. This is great news, indeed. Dave particularly wishes to thank all those people who have contributed to research and cave exploration at Gunung Mulu, without whose efforts this would not have come about. They include, amongst many others, our own Prof. Dave Gillieson and Prof. Elery Hamilton-Smith.

Contemporaneously, a *Media Release* (21 February) from the Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust announced that after intensive negotiations with the Malaysian Government and management of the Mulu Caves in Sarawak, Jenolan Consultancy has been awarded the contract for the development of an Integrated Management and Development Plan for Mulu National Park, as it relates to its principal show caves. Clearly, the Trust is held in high regard by the Malaysian authorities after its initial consultancy at Gua Tempurung. At this stage, it is not clear which Jenolan staff will be involved in the project.

Things are astir at Hasting Caves, in Southern Tasmania. The new Interpretation Centre and accommodation infrastructure set-up at Hastings is in the final planning stages, and a public consultative meeting was recently held. Unfortunately, I understand due to a cost blow out, the construction of planned surface karst walks have been excised from the project at this stage, together with some works on additions/surrounds to the thermal pool area. Construction is expected to start in May this year after all Local Government approvals have been obtained and a subsequent capital works approval by the Tasmanian State Parliament. Unfortunately, the re-development plan, doubtlessly as a result of the tight budget, does not include remediation of the toilets in the Newdegate (tourist) Cave car park, the effluent from which effectively empties, I understand, into a doline upstream from Hot Springs Creek and the Thermal Pool. However, better news is that money will be spent inside the cave on new lighting and additional rehabilitation works.

Details are now out on the Karst Management course of Charles Sturt University (Bathurst campus) that are proposed to begin near year, following a sponsorship from the Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust. The three parts of the course are a Graduate Certificate in Applied Science (Karst Management) – commencing Autumn 2001, Graduate Diploma of Applied Science (Karst Management). – Autumn 2002, and Master of Applied Science (Karst Management) – Autumn 2003. The course is being designed to allow

cave/karst managers to gain appropriate formal qualifications. Full particulars are herein.

Long since, all delegates to the 13th ACKMA Conference at Naracoorte last year, and other members so ordering, will have received the Conference Proceedings, either the CD ROM or Hard Copy version. I have been advised by some that, on their CD ROM copy, a few of the links to papers were not working properly. If so, effected people are welcome to contact me, and I will supply a new copy (gratis) from an updated Master Copy received from our Information Officer, Peter Bell. Copies of the CD ROM are still available @ \$60 each (postage included), but only five copies of the Hard Copy Proceedings remain unsold (so order quickly!!), @ \$35 each (postage

included). Orders and payment to ACKMA Treasurer, Dennis Rebbechi.

Speaking of Peter Bell, he does a fantastic job as the webmaster of the ACKMA Home pages – which are updated regularly, and now contain details of the coming ACKMA AGM at Buchan, plus the booking form. Check it out at:

<http://www.netserv.net.au/cwork/ackma99/index.html>

And finally, the adjacent article “Cave dweller surfaces” appeared in the Melbourne *Herald-Sun* on 14 February. Fascinating stuff, don’t you think!?! Okay, which cave manager will be first to emulate this “feat’ in Australasia? Personally, I can’t wait!! Well, perhaps I can wait.... Hope readers like my new header – more bats!!!