

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

- Peter Chandler

I find myself in the unexpected position of having suddenly become the President of this esteemed organization for five months, having previously been unfamiliar with the constitutional details!

The Dimond Family, Waitomo Museum Staff and Waitomo Residents, and ACKMA members, were all shocked to learn of the death of our President and friend Peter Dimond on 22 December 2002.

I first met Peter and John Ash in 1983, as a science graduate and caver, then interested in a temporary position at the Waitomo Caves Museum. Many Waitomo residents have got Peter to thank for setting them up here – in my case, with my initial job, as my marriage celebrant, and with a piece of land in which to build a house.

The Museum, from its beginnings in a room of the Waitomo Hotel to what it is today, is certainly a tribute to Peter's vision, personality and hard work, and the organisation I believe has got community support to continue with Peter's Dream.

Members of the Museum have generously compiled Peter's Obituary, which appears in this Journal.

The Australian Bushfires have been a great human tragedy this summer, which it seems most dramatically almost destroyed the Yarrangobilly Caves House (which happily was saved), and did incalculable damage to huge areas, including both the Yarrangobilly and Wee Jasper karst areas.

The 84 years since the last fire event there, and the 440,000 years of carbon layers deposited in Jersey Cave at Yarrangobilly certainly means January 2003 was history in the making. As I write this, Local Maniapoto Department of Conservation Officer, Ross Barnes, is in Australia assisting with the fire effort.

As Yarrangobilly was the location of 2002 ACKMA AGM weekend, and was visited during the 1987 Conference, I will be greatly interested in reading Andy Spate's article on the fires and their effects elsewhere in this Journal edition.

This being the last journal before the Chillagoe and Undara Conference, we all look forward to a fantastic week – courtesy of Lana and her team. If you cannot make it to the Conference, we no doubt will see you all in the near future.



The President, Peter Chandler (left) with predecessor, the late Peter Dimond