

CONFERENCE COMMENTS

A number of delegates were kind enough to send in feedback on the Conference. Here are some snippets:

Neil Collinson wrote:

When the details of the Queensland conference were outlined at the previous conference AGM in Wee Jasper, I just knew the Chillagoe and Undara conference was a must do, and I wasn't disappointed. Being a first time visitor to Queensland the heat took a little getting used too, especially considering the mountains around home were receiving the first dusting of snow at the time I left Te Anau in New Zealand.

As a commercial cave operator and being heavily involved in Fiordland tourism, the highlights were definitely the site inspections of the developed caves at Chillagoe and Lava Tubes at Undara.

I was particular impressed with the interpretation observed at Chillagoe, not only in the caves but also during the walk to Mungana, the interpretive techniques and style Danny Chew used were particularly inspiring.

The relatively recent development of infrastructure at Undara was impressive and having previously seen three TV travel shows featuring Undara it was great to actually experience the lodge, outback, the tubes and Savannah Guides first hand. Again all operations are a credit to all involved.

During the conference the diversity papers presented catered for all needs, providing an excellent insight to some of the scientific and conservation work being undertaken throughout various ACKMA outposts. I just learnt so much!

Having been to four conferences now without presenting a paper I think it must be my turn to return the favour, look out for a paper on Te Anau at the next conference. Finally the ACKMA comradeship was superb, the organisation just wouldn't be the same without the diverse membership and Kent to bring us all together. Great to catch up with you all.

Deborah Carden wrote:

The Conference was an excellent event from many perspectives. It was great to see the old faces and meet the new. Having a diverse range of participants (Australia, Alaska, British Columbia, Malaysia, Korea and New Zealand) really did highlight the relevance of the 'Sharing the Resource' theme. Integrated land management is obviously the best practice in most of our places, to ensure sustainability of karst resource management.

Chillagoe with its mineral-rich lava and limestone landscape and Undara with its lava and granite were such interesting places. Rich in indigenous species – bird life noisier than we were, bats with better eyesight than all of us, two pythons that could have had us for dinner (yes, okay, one *we* could have had for dinner), numerous wallabies

and a few cane toads (that I thought were beautiful in a cane toad sense) adding interest.

Those of us intent on hosting the 2005 conference in New Zealand spend quite a bit of time taking notes. Having field trips in the afternoon stops many from sleeping on the job. And having historic and natural heritage addressed really adds to the interest of a place – people in the landscape always appeals.

While all papers were interesting Alaskan, British Columbian, Tasmanian and New Zealand papers were especially relevant to Conservation in New Zealand.

The Tasmanians deal with issues very similar to the New Zealand West Coast and much can be learnt from their experiences. Very many thanks to the convenors for a memorable conference.

Brian Clark wrote:

Well, here we are back in Mulu safe and sound after another great conference from my perspective, and a great introduction to ACKMA from Robert Gani's perspective. From me I would like to say thank you to all (except Brett who did his best to corrupt him) who went out of their way to make Robert welcome.

It has been a very big eye opener for me to understand exactly what it is like for our delegates from other countries to a) visit Australia and b) have to interact with a very tight-knit group such as ACKMA. I for one have learned that we need to get in early to make new comers welcome and included because we can be a frightening lot to other cultures.

Structurally the conference was well balanced in general, but it is a pity the workshop didn't go as planned. It would have been a very useful exercise. Perhaps next time we should program it as a morning activity rather than in the evening.

During the conference I admit to having been a tad critical about the length of field excursions at the cost of time for papers at Undara and got my hand rightfully smacked for doing so.

It seems the conference organisers were not over-run with offers to present. This surprised me, and I think members, we need to look inside ourselves and reconsider what we can put into the conference rather than just thinking about what we expect to get from it.

Yes I know it just another case of pots calling kettles, but I know from a personal point that complacency is contagious. Let's hope that the new convenors get stuck with the unenviable task of having to cull papers to what is barely tolerable. Hope to see you in Mulu soon!