

MERIT REWARDED!

- Kent Henderson



Chester Shaw receives his *Illuminated Address* as a Life Member of ACKMA – AGM 2003

“He later became a Ranger, and then Ranger in Charge, and in those days there were a lot more Rangers at Mole Creek than there is today. During this time he was also Cave Manager and responsible for all Guiding and Ranger staff and all Cave and Karst issues at Mole Creek. He held this position until January 2001 when his dedication to his career was to be his downfall. While collecting water samples he damaged an existing health problem, and was forced to retire, as this problem is now irreparable.

“Many problems have arisen at the Mole Creek Caves since his departure, and almost daily he is approached by both rangers and guiding staff for advice. In his quiet manner he both sympathises when they have problems and advises when asked. When historians and researchers contact Mole Creek base for info they are advised to contact Chester, and he is only willing to assist in any way he can.

“Since his retirement he has travelled extensively and been able to fulfil his desire to visit all Caves in Australian Show Caves. Caves and Karst are not only Chester’s passion, but his life. In his 35 years in the caves, he has overcome major health problems and disabilities.

“Even now he is approached by coach companies and schools, asking him to take them on tours, but of course this is no longer possible. Chester has certainly left his mark on the Mole Creek Caves, and most of the Caves history sits safely between his ears, just waiting for someone to ask for information”.



New ACKMA Fellow, Peter Bell, pictured at *Caveworks*.
Photo: Arthur Clarke

The three fellows elected were Robyn McBeath (our new President), Dave Smith, and Pete Bell. All three have made outstanding contributions to Cave and Karst Management, and to ACKMA, over many years. Again, their nominations were unanimously endorsed by the Committee, and the subsequent Annual General Meeting.

At the recent ACKMA Annual General Meeting at Undara on 10 May, one new Life Member, and three new Fellows of ACKMA were elected. Our new Life Member is Chester Shaw. His award, the rarest and highest ACKMA can bestow, came as a complete shock to him! The process for Life Membership in ACKMA is that the existing active Life Members put forward a nomination to the Committee, and if approved, that name then goes forward to the subsequent AGM. Chester’s nomination was unanimously supported by the existing active Life Members, the Committee and subsequently by members at the AGM. His citation read as follows:

Interestingly, Robyn nominated Peter Bell, and Peter Bell nominated Robyn, and neither had the slightest idea what the other was up too! All wonderful stuff! Congratulations to each of them!

“Chester started at Mole Creek Caves as a teenager, and in those days he was a Cave Guide, this was the obvious start of his passion of all Cave and Karst interests. In these early days of guiding at Mole Creek there were no ticket offices or waiting shelters. Chester had to shout from the cave entrance to the car park to inform visitors it was time to go on a tour. All ticket money was carried by him, in a bag around his waist.



New ACKMA Fellow, Robyn McBeath, with Chester Shaw

