PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Robyn McBeath

My first year as President of ACKMA is complete and another Annual General Meeting will have been by the time this journal is being read. I thank all outgoing Officers for their support of ACKMA over the past year and express my appreciation to those that stood for re-election.

After fifteen years of continuous service to ACKMA as Vice President, President, Executive Officer and the past six years as Karst Science Officer, Andy Spate has stood down from the committee. On behalf of all members I thank Andy for his commitment and generous support of all things ACKMA. No doubt Andy will continue to be a very active member.

In 1990 whilst exploring a cave on the Nullarbor, Rolan and Stefan Eberhard discovered two thylacine skeletons. A follow up trip to this chamber by Lindsay Hatcher found a third thylacine, this one mummified.

The material, in a remarkable state of preservation, was recently removed by the Western Australian Museum and the mummified head (opposite) has been put on display at the National Museum, Canberra.

Activity on the Nullarbor continues with a recent expedition to carry on the collection of vertebrate material from three caves in Western Australia. These caves found by caving clubs (VSA, CEGSA & SRG) in 2001 contain a rich source of *megafauna* including the first complete marsupial lion skeleton found and many new species of extinct Kangaroos. Scientists and cavers John Long, Gavin Prideaux, Geoff Deakon Dirk Megirian, Lindsay Hatcher, (a CaveWorks guide) and Mark Norton made up the team.

The Nullarbor is one of the largest karst regions in the world. However, due to its remoteness and extent it is difficult to protect. Recent research is revealing much valuable and important information such as bone deposits, and cave fauna.

These discoveries add significantly to the many karst values of the Nullarbor, but increasing pressures are threatening their conservation. Perhaps it is time to revisit appropriate protection of this outstanding karst area.