

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

– Steve Bourne

I would like to devote this report to considering the international exposure of ACKMA and reflect on the sphere in which the association is currently operating. ACKMA's membership is mostly made up of Australian and New Zealand members, with a small international membership.

That said, we have typically attracted international attendance at conferences and have supported some delegates attending through various avenues, e.g. Xiao Shizhen from China who attended the Buchan Conference. This often establishes long lasting contacts for the improvement of cave management beyond Australasia. When members committed to holding our Annual General Meeting at Mulu, I guessed we would get thirty or so attendees. The resounding interest demonstrates how ACKMA members are keen to explore beyond Australia and New Zealand.

Brian and his team are doing an outstanding job preparing for the AGM. I hope we will be hosting Malaysian dignitaries at a gala dinner in Miri prior to departing to Mulu – more information on this will be forthcoming. Brian has provided some in depth information on this, and I hope that everyone takes notice – after all, he has lived there for eight years! Seriously, I have been doing the hard yards with bush walking, preparing the body for physical exertions that Mulu will impose on one's body; other activities planned will come more naturally and require less specialised preparation...



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Andy Spate is heading to South Africa to Cango Caves to share his extensive cave and karst knowledge with staff there. I also view this as a 'reconnaissance' visit in preparation for the 2012 ACKMA AGM weekend scheduled for Cango. Hein Gerstner, the manager of Cango, has lured Andy to provide some training for his staff. As we heard at Margaret River, the sharing of expertise and improving the management of Cango is a key objective for Hein. ACKMA members have a considerable depth of knowledge and experience and I hope the Cango AGM can attract similar attendance to Mulu.

I am sure members recall David Summers excellent presentation outlining the objectives of the International Show Cave Association (ISCA) at our last conference. ACKMA had previously made a bid to host the 2010 ISCA Congress; Andy Spate attended the Bermuda conference to present the bid on behalf of Waitomo. This was unsuccessful despite the awesome Greg Martin powerpoint presentation and Andy's persuasive skills. Jenolan Caves has now become a member of ISCA and is preparing a bid for the 2014 ISCA Congress. I sincerely hope Jenolan and ACKMA are successful in winning the 2014 Congress. Our bid will be determined at the ISCA Congress in Slovakia this October.



*Being presidential
– ACKMA Conference 2009.*

While we are moving our AGM 'weekends' beyond Australia and New Zealand, ACKMA members have had substantial influence in many countries. Consider Brian Clark in South East Asia, Andy Spate, especially in South Korea, Greg Middleton's work on Rodrigues, Neil Kell who has taken his lighting skills to Eastern Europe and of course Elery 'everywhere!' There are many other examples. It would appear that ACKMA has quite an influence in cave and karst management well beyond Australasia and perhaps it is time to contemplate truly entering the international arena. When you replace 'Australasian' with 'International' Cave and Karst Management Association the acronym becomes 'ICKMA'. I then realised our New Zealand members are well ahead of this thinking because that is what they have been calling us for years!! See you in Mulu!!