

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

– Steve Bourne

Well, here is my last president's report for the journal. As I indicated after the Mulu AGM, I won't be seeking re-election as I feel it is time for someone else to lead ACKMA. There are many memories to reflect on which will be done at the Tasmanian conference – some people should be afraid!!

Two reminders on the conference – get your registration in to assist our hard working conference organisers and as Andy Spate said at the Mulu AGM, some new blood on the committee would be most welcome. Please get yourself nominated if you feel you have something to contribute to the running of ACKMA.



Wet Cave 'waterfall'. Photo: Steve Bourne.

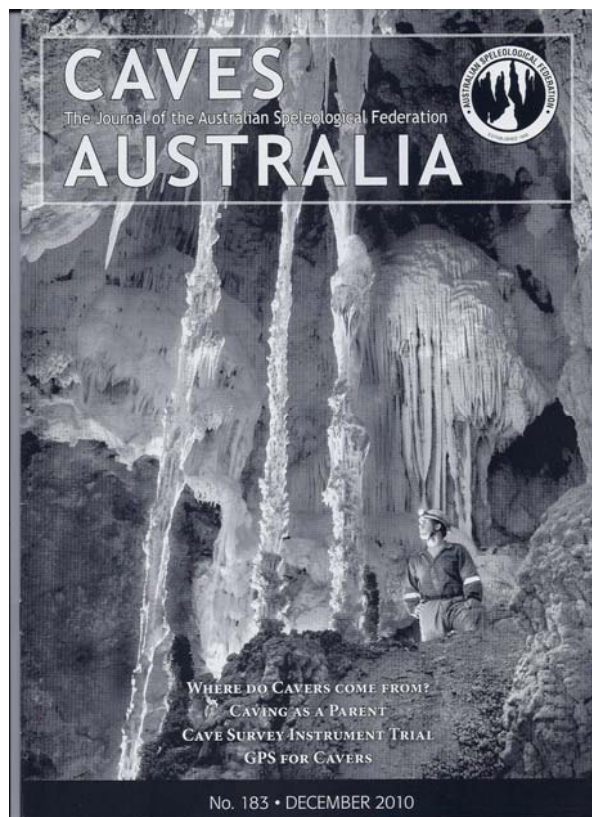
After years of drought or very low rainfall in Australia, the weather well and truly changed in the later half of 2010. We had some startling images of Wee Jasper and Gunns Plains and then the skies opened over Naracoorte in December.

Over 100mm fell in a little over an hour following 200mm in the previous fortnight that had left the ground saturated. The ceilings in the office in the Wonambi Fossil Centre and Fossil Laboratory fell in after gutters could not handle the water. Water flowed into caves at levels I had never seen creating waterfalls in Wet Cave, at last it lived up to its name!

A fossil excavation first filled with water and then was lost as the entire sediment floor against the cave wall collapsed. All show caves required

varying levels of work before they could be opened to the public and the surface required a huge cleanup. Just what Deborah and her team needed ten days prior to Christmas!

Since then we have seen Gunns Plains flooded again, the Mole Creek Caves region with huge rains and Capricorn Caves cut off for visitors for a period with the Rockhampton floods. I wish all cave managers well post flooding and hope visitation picks up to offset periods where no visitors could get to their sites. It sure has been a tough time for some of Australia's cave operators.



The most recent ASF journal *Caves Australia* (No. 183 – December 2010) – once again a great read – has a short note on an upcoming movie titled *Sanctum*.

This 3D action thriller by James Cameron (creator of *Titanic* and *Avatar*) and Andrew Wight involves cave divers and their efforts to survive adverse and unexpected conditions. The website reads:

'The 3-D action-thriller Sanctum, from executive producer James Cameron, follows a team of underwater cave divers on a treacherous expedition to the largest, most beautiful and least accessible cave system on Earth. When a tropical storm forces them deep into the caverns, they must fight raging water, deadly terrain and creeping panic as they search for an unknown escape route to the sea.'

It reached our screens on 3 February, and I am sure many members will see it. I mention it because Blanche Cave at Naracoorte 'features'. You won't see familiar scenery, but many of the sounds you will hear as cavers scrape, climb,

clamber and squeeze to escape their predicament were recorded in Robertson Chamber, a small section off the main visitor section in Blanche Cave. Peter Horne contacted me asking if I knew somewhere to record the sounds the film makers were after.

The crew spent a day in the cave recording sounds and also spent a day in one of the sinkholes in Mount Gambier. Take a look at the movie trailer and images at <http://trailers.apple.com/trailers/universal/sanctum/gallery/>. I hope the movie is as good as the imagery and the promo blurb.



Richard Roxburgh in a scene from 'Sanctum'.

The Jewel Cave redevelopment Grand Opening was 9 February. I received an invitation to attend as ACKMA president, and a mini disc 'video invitation'.

The contents of this remain a mystery as I have been unable to play the disc, despite trying several computers, DVD player and a mini disc video recorder. We had a presentation of the proposed development at the Margaret River conference and I look forward to seeing the result. Anne Wood graciously obliged to represent ACKMA on my behalf, I hope the day went well

and the redevelopment achieves what it set out to do.

The ACKMA president email receives a small number of enquiries. Most are simple requests and easily dealt with. Others require a little more thought. One stands out in recent times, a request from a group wishing to buy our URL, <ackma.org<!!

Anorexia Can't Kill My Appetite (ACKMA) made several rather persistent advances but their desired purchase price of \$25 fell short of what the committee felt was reasonable for our auspicious name. Isn't this interesting?

ACKMA stands for a group supporting members with a serious eating disorder and our ACKMA supports high levels of gluttony at conferences. They might want to change their name!

I look forward to catching up with everyone in Tasmania – see Tony Culberg's update below... AND see you there!



Water damage in the Wonambi Fossil Centre at Naracoorte. Photo: Steve Bourne.

19th Australasian Conference on Cave and Karst Management – ULVERSTONE, TASMANIA – 8-13 MAY 2011 PROGRESS REPORT

– Tony Culberg, Conference Convener

The organising committee – Cathie Plowman, David Butler, Chris Sharples, Greg Middleton, Serena Benjamin and Tony Culberg – believe that it is all under control! We have been encouraged by the registrations received so far and we are delighted with the number of papers offered. It is especially pleasing that authors are using the template designed by Rauleigh Webb.

The committee is supported by David Wools-Cobb in Ulverstone, Trish and Geoff Deer at Gunns Plains, Stephen Blanden also of Gunns Plains, Deb Hunter of Caveside and Nic Haygarth of Perth (Tasmania), all of whom will be providing practical support on the field days and pre and post conference caving trips. Trish and Geoff Deer have a special responsibility. Not only is the Governor of Tasmania opening our conference, he is also visiting Gunns Plains Cave after the official opening. Trish and Geoff have had to clean up

Gunns Plains after severe flooding and the cave currently remains closed due to extensive damage to switch boxes. Tasmania had floods at the same time as Queensland, but did not get the publicity!

Accommodation is being coordinated by David Butler. David is at present dealing with a major outbreak of a virus affecting abalone and is working very long hours in the field at Bicheno. If your emails to him are not being answered that is the reason! Abalone is a major export from Tasmania and solving the virus problem is vital.

For those who have not yet registered, please act now. Transport in and out of Tasmania can be tricky to arrange, especially if you wish to bring your own vehicle. Discount airfares are available, but you need to buy as soon as you find suitable flights.

