

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Peter Chandler

Last month many of us met at the Ulverstone, Tasmania 'Wilderness Karst' ACKMA conference, despite personally not taking part in pre or post caving trips it was still a great week and thanks again go to the Tasmanian organising committee and their many helpers. The programme was really well prepared, being officially opened by The Governor of Tasmania who took the time to have a personally guided tour of Gunns Plains with Geoff Deer afterwards.

Highlights for me included meeting Professor Arrigo Cigna who attended and shared a small portion of his expertise gained over his lifetime. Second, by chance touring King Solomons cave for the first time and being with Neil Kell who re-lit the cave not so many years ago, and third, having first learned about Dismal Swamp at the 1999 Mt Gambier conference, and again at Ulverstone before visiting the site with its perhaps controversial development by Forestry Tasmania. I could go on.

I write this while sitting out a rainy day in Collingwood, Northwest of Nelson, waiting to bike the Heaphy Track. Access to this track is for a three year wintertime trial, having been closed since the gazetting of the Kahurangi National Park around 15 years ago. Access to wilderness areas is certainly an issue karst managers also have to deal with.

A key to our ACKMA organisation functioning, with a year between official gatherings is without doubt communication, email being an essential tool on a daily/ weekly basis. Published quarterly, the Journal certainly provides a permanent record of the organisation, here I would like to acknowledge the huge contribution since 1987 of Kent Henderson, as Publications Officer, the journal evolved from an occasional and modest newsletter to what we can be proud of to date - Thanks Kent!

With a new Publications Officer elected at the Ulverstone AGM, we look forward to Steve Bourne, our immediate past President putting his personal touch to our Journal - please support our Journal editor!

I would like to take this opportunity to thanks those who elected me to this position, though I did fill in as president on the passing of Peter Dimond, in 2003 It is noteworthy that Andy Spate remains an Office bearer as our International Relations Officer having been President over 20 years ago- we are all fortunate for Andy's continued involvement at this level.

And throughout my presidency I welcome contacts from any members with any cave and karst Issues, which I am sure someone in our organisation is well qualified to deal with.



*The new ACKMA committee. From front left clockwise; Dan Cove, Dave Smith, Cath Sellars, Peter Chandler, Libby Chandler, Geoff Deer, Andy Spate, Steve Bourne, Kirsty Dixon and Sasa Kennedy  
Photo: Ross Anderson*