

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dan Cove

Sitting to write my column for the journal, I found myself gazing out the window at my garden (as I often do) and was struck by how Spring-like it was with flowers blooming, the grass growing and blossoms and leaves covering the tress once more. An early Spring after the mildest Winter I have known had me recalling Professor Williams' excellent and thought provoking presentation at the Waitomo ACKMA Conference on the science of climate change and the potential for future warming in the southern hemisphere. Climate change is, naturally, highly relevant to cave management. Caves may be repositories of past climatic information over extended time periods and I have talked with a number of scientists who are excited over the information that may be extracted from serious study. The management implications for cave conservation in a world of changing climate and more highly variable weather patterns including more extreme weather events are also areas that need further consideration. And, for show cave operators, caves and cave tours offer the opportunity for communicating these issues and for public education. Once again, the issue presents challenges and opportunities for ACKMA.

Wrenching my gaze away from my garden, I am pleased to report that the ACKMA committee has continued to be a dynamic force and has been moving ahead in several areas. Thanks to Tim Moulds, ACKMA now has a Face Book page, one that has attracted a good number of followers in a short period of time. Any ACKMA members who are on Face Book I encourage to have a look at, and contribute to, this new and developing site. Webmaster and I.T guru Rauleigh Webb has very generously volunteered his time and expertise to begin the construction of an ACKMA database, whilst other Committee members have been working at a timely review of the ACKMA constitution, of committee

members roles and responsibilities and developing guidelines and processes for such future actions as sponsorship and a guide exchange program. Once again, I would like to commend all members of the Committee for their energy and enthusiasm.

I am also delighted to report that the profile of caves and of show caves in particular is set to get a boost in Australia. Ecotourism Australia has just set up a new 'Forum for Geotourism', with intent to raise the profile of geotourism in Australia. This will be a theme at the upcoming Global Eco Conference to be held at Noosa in November. I was asked to join the inaugural steering committee of the forum, and the opportunities for cave systems (one of the oldest forms of geotourist attraction in the world) to be at the forefront of a national initiative was discussed at our first committee meeting last week. I am hopeful that ACKMA's network of show caves will be able to play a prominent part as amongst the country's foremost geo-sites.

And how full of excitement the future seems? The ISCA Congress in November 2014, closely followed in Australia by the IUCN World Parks Congress in Sydney (with field trips to Jenolan Caves being planned) and now we have the next UIS Congress in 2017 also! Interesting times indeed.



Coming Events	
2014: 5-11 May	ACKMA Annual General Meeting and Cave Guides Workshop Yarrangobilly, New South Wales
2014: 2-8 November	International Show Caves Association, Jenolan Caves, Australia
2015: May	ACKMA Conference, Naracoorte Caves, South Australia
2016: May	ACKMA Annual General Meeting and Cave Guides Workshop, Rockhampton, Queensland
2017	International Union of Speleology, Penrith, New South Wales