

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dan Cove



Dan Cove deep in thought during the ISCA Congress held at Jenolan Caves 2014.

Photo: Steve Bourne

Attentive ACKMA members (which I am sure means all members!) may have noticed the absence of a President's column in the last Journal. I think that I was rather in a puddle of exhaustion at the time following the conclusion of the 7th Congress of ISCA at Jenolan Caves, with my laxity covered by the redoubtable Steve Bourne – thanks Steve!

The 7th Congress of ISCA was a highly successful event, and a wonderful opportunity for the International show cave community to interact with their Australasian colleagues. The gathering reinforced for me just how important such associations are, and how vital they are for successful cave and karst management. Although this is broadly true of all environmental management, it is particularly relevant to management of cave systems that can be irreversibly damaged so quickly through application of poor management practices. Associations such as ACKMA bring together such a weight of experience and knowledge that should be drawn upon by anyone serious about long-term resource management. I have always believed that collaboration and consultation are vital aspects of cave management requiring the synthesis of expertise from often disparate fields. I am hopeful that the upcoming ACKMA Conference at Naracoorte will highlight this importance yet again.

As many members will also be aware, I am now no longer directly involved in this management having resigned as Cave Operations Manager at Jenolan as of last December. This was a very hard decision for me, and one not made quickly or lightly. However, it was ultimately the right decision for myself and for my family. Long term Jenolan Guide and ACKMA member

Peter Walsh has been appointed as Acting Manager following my resignation.

I am looking forward very much to the Naracoorte Conference and hope to see a good turnout of members. Given the issues and challenges facing cave and karst management currently, the need for a strong Association with a strong voice of advocacy is more relevant than ever. The Committee has been working hard recently – particularly through Dave Smith and John Brush – on the revision of the Rules of the Association and this will be an important matter to address and hopefully to finalise at the Conference. But most important in my mind is the reinforcement of the value of ACKMA and establishing a positive direction and agenda for the coming years. I know that this will be a strong theme of the Conference, and am hoping for a good and constructive discussion.



Jenolan Caves House, November 2014.

Photo: Steve Bourne