

# POSITION VACANT — no later than May 2021??

## Journal Editor (unpaid)

### EDITORIAL

Welcome to the first digital-only edition of this Journal. This edition reports on a number of matters that are of an entirely conventional nature (as later described) but also on a number of matters that are unprecedented in the life of the Association (as they have been inflicted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions which it has applied to the movements and social lives of Australian citizens).

Before turning to the more usually expected matters concerning conventional content in this edition, it is appropriate to commence by recording the efforts of Jodie and Scott and others in planning and making the arrangements for the (now abandoned) Jenolan Conference. Hopefully, this present abandonment will be transmuted into a conference at Jenolan in 2024, as noted in the outcomes of the 31 May 2020 Annual General Meeting.

That AGM, the committee meeting held preceding it and that held subsequently to follow up on matters arising were conducted using Zoom, an internet technology with respect to which I suspect that most of us were entirely unfamiliar until the advent of the virus-dictated new reality of the world thrust upon us. I confess that I was particularly impressed by how well behaved the 36 members of the Association who Zoomed in to the AGM were. My past experiences of groups of cave enthusiasts over the years (including but by no means confined to the 2001 Wombeyan Conference; smaller groups of my own caving friends; and my return to an AGM at Naracoorte last year - after an absence of 17 years from ACKMA meetings) had all been rather more boisterous than the well-behaved “electronic mob” over whom Andy Spate presided on 31 May.

Matters of substance arising from these administrative processes are discussed elsewhere in this edition.

However, as is discussed in the report concerning the Association’s offer of data loggers to show cave sites, out of times of darkness it is sometimes possible to see and seize opportunities that might otherwise not ordinarily have arisen. The suggestion by Rauleigh Webb; acted upon enthusiastically by Andy, Dave Gillieson and Andy Baker; and readily endorsed by the outgoing committee is an example of a *carpe diem* opportunity.

Similarly, the pragmatic adoption of the zero-dollar fee regime for the Association’s current financial year is not only a recognition of the financial impact that the virus has imposed on employees at show cave sites (and, more generally in the community) but also provides a useful potential recruiting tool. I confess that I was quite struck, as I swiped right or left on my iPad screen to see

all those participating in the AGM (a swiping process with which I was only previously theoretically aware being happily, monogamously committed to Leanne for over a quarter of a century), by the very high percentage of the male participants whose beards were either grey or, like those of Andy and me, were white. I hope that the fee regime will permit a refreshment of membership and an influx of younger members (indeed, I secretly fantasise that such recruitment might uncover a replacement editor!).

I look forward to working with Ian Eddison, our new president (whose profile is also published later in this edition), over (**not more than**) the next three editions of this Journal. As I indicated in the March edition, I have **very, very, very reluctantly** agreed to continue for up to a further year beyond the two-year term as editor I accepted in order to support my friend, Andy, in his presidential role. If there is no emergence of a successor as editor for the Wellington AGM next year, it is necessary that I make it expressly clear that I will be walking away from this role at that time.

Finally, on administrative matters, I want to record my personal thanks to Andy for his support during his recent tenure as the Association’s president. Our interaction during these past two years of my editorship has been a high point of my friendship with him, a friendship that commenced more than 30 years ago at Yarrangobilly Caves over a Glad-bag full of tossed salad when I encountered him for the first time (in our then NPWS roles as Minister and Cave science officer).

To return to more mundane and conventional Journal matters, this edition leads off with yet another interesting travelogue from Steve Bourne - this time concerning his visit to south-western Madagascar. I note that he has speculated, toward the end of his article, on the possibility of a further visit to the area. Whilst the state of my ageing knees no longer legitimately permits any fantasies on my own part of emulating such journeys, I nonetheless look forward to future vicarious enjoyment of Steve's expeditions in this Journal (whether in my final three editions or at some later time).

Steve's contribution is accompanied by my own rambling discussion of my visit to La Roque St Christophe in the Dordogne region of France during January of this year. It is the second (and final) instalment of my writings concerning those of my cave-related fantasies that remained able to be fulfilled. Unfortunately, the pandemic-imposed shutdown on travel necessitated the abrupt cancellation of a trip to South America with my wife that had been planned for April this year. Thus, for the foreseeable future, my own cave-related travelogues must be put on hold.

## EDITORIAL continued

This putting on hold of travel has also impacted the proposed vulcanospeleology symposium on Sicily, an invitation for participation in which had been extended by John Brush in the March edition. Information on the postponed timing of this conference appears later.

Although the pandemic has, effectively, rendered the “Around the show caves” segment largely obsolete, Pete Chandler has provided a round-up of what has been happening (or not happening) in Waitomo for this edition.

The recent AGM confirmed the dates for the 2021 Guides’ School and Association AGM (with accompanying seminar on the impact of last summer’s bushfires on our cave and karst resources) to be held in Wellington, New South Wales, in May 2021. A poster for this appears on the back cover.

Finally, I record that I was surprised and humbled to be elected a Fellow of the Association at the AGM. The citation for my nomination is later reproduced and I ask you, dear readers, to note that the words are not mine, but are those of my friend Andy.

Stay well and stay safe.

**Tim Moore**

### NOTE THE DATES:

- **2021 - Wellington - Guides Training (3-5 May 2021), AGM (6 May 2021) & Fires Workshop (7 May 2021) see notice on the back cover**
- **2022 - Takaka, South Island, New Zealand (Full Conference)**
- **2023 - AGM Weekend: TBA - volunteer for location welcome**
- **2024 - Jenolan (Full Conference)**

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