

# ACKMA President Report June 2021

Ian Eddison

Your ACKMA President is personally very pleased with having just become a grandfather for the fourth time. This latest birth is a second grandson who has taken part of my name as his, so I am particularly honoured and pleased. Our daughter and grandson are doing fine. It is a sunny, calm winter's day in Bathurst today, but winter is certainly making its presence felt here and throughout Australasia. Today is 6 June 2021, the International Day of Caves and the Subterranean World. I have wondered what you are doing today. My wife, Anita, who works at Jenolan Caves, and I working at Wellington Caves, will not physically be in or around caves today but we certainly are talking about our love of caves and karst, the places we work and the upcoming meetings of ACKMA. You may be hesitant about the talk of travel. The latest news is about the ongoing challenges to do with COVID-19, shutdowns extended in Melbourne and construction of quarantine centres and planning for the future arrivals from overseas. This demonstrates that not only is the Australian government planning for the next months, but also the coming years ahead with similar challenges. We therefore might expect other crises along similar lines. We simply must adapt to this.

A week ago, Prime Ministers Ardern of New Zealand and Morrison of Australia met, made possible by two-way quarantine-free travel across the Tasman.

<https://www.pm.gov.au/media/joint-statement-prime-ministers-jacinda-ardern-and-scott-morrison>

I would like to think this will encourage you to consider travel carefully. In terms of our organisation, ACKMA has plans to meet at Wellington Caves, New South Wales, this October (registration details in this Journal), and in the Takaka region on the South Island of New Zealand within the next year. May 2022 is most likely. Neil Collinson and Pete Chandler are working on those plans in New Zealand. Shannon Corkill at Waitomo is also liaising on this event.

Our AGM was held on 8 May 2021. Thank you to those of you who joined us on our Zoom for that. Your ACKMA committee met a few weeks later and are tending to various administrative tasks and remain busy on a number of fronts.

**Liaison and relationship building with ASF and NZSS** - a positive relationship between ACKMA, ASF and NZSS is established and positive communications are ongoing.

There is a combined effort in the creative Celebration of Caves and Karst in Australasia competition. ACKMA, ASF and NZSS will contribute to a \$1,000 grand prize and Ledlenser is providing four \$500 vouchers for each of the divisions of the creative competition. More details are in this issue. Check out the conditions and get creative! Share details with your creative friends.

**Atmospheric data-logger project** - this project continues to gather momentum, with data coming in and analysis being conducted by Professor Andy Baker enabling a better appreciation for all our members.

Batteries are being installed for the next ongoing leg of data record. This project, funded by ACKMA, assists tourist cave sites to have factual data of temperature and humidity records. Andy Spate, David Gillieson and Andy Baker have all worked on making this a successful program. Additional effort is going into the possibility of formal research opportunities related to this project.

**Sixteen Legs** - this exciting travelling exhibition through Bookend Trust is currently in Capricorn Caves, Rockhampton, Queensland. When you visit Wellington in New South Wales this October, the exhibition will have been established there. Do consider how you might be able to work your town in with this team and especially for those of you who work in cave tourism.

**Cave tourism site restoration** - work continues for cave tourism sites following devastating bushfires and flooding. These include Jenolan Caves, Wombeyan Caves, Buchan Caves and Kelly Hill Cave. I trust key people from each of these sites will be able to prepare presentations at Wellington in October as well as updates in the ACKMA journal.

**'Best practice' guidelines for show caves** - input is invited from those managers who can contribute from recent experience in restoration and repairs following fires and floods, as well as other developments. This project really is an extension and update on past guidelines. Contact Andy Spate and David Gillieson.

**The Guides' School and ACKMA meeting** - these activities at Wellington Caves, New South Wales, are now scheduled for 20-24 October 2021. The Guides' School, more precisely the Eco Guide Certification, is 20, 21 and 22 October, facilitated by Savanah Guides, and our meeting (including 20 minute presentations) is on 23 and 24 October. Please plan to present and encourage your network of ACKMA friends to do the same. For our many overseas members who may feel restricted this year and, indeed, any of our members unable to physically attend may be able to participate on line. Technological communications' options are being explored and our good friends at Weidmueller have sponsored this event to the tune of \$5,000 in order to help link those members stranded elsewhere. We seek further funding to match this and aim to have a quality on line link showcasing different locations within the Wellington Caves operation.

I wish you all continued health, improved economic situations in your respective work- especially those show cave member sites. Please remember to promote the International Year of Caves and Karst and the themes 'Explore, understand and protect'.