

ACKMA President Report June 2021

Ian Eddison

The ACKMA committee and some members have been particularly busy on a number of fronts since my last report in June 2021. This has included numerous online meetings with relevant key stakeholders and emails between committee members who then contributed to build our responses. You can be pleased that there is an active committee representing ACKMA and the management and conservation ethics we instill in our constructive communication with others who are responsible for caves and karst landscapes.

As your president, I am supported well by those who lead our organisation.

To summarise for you I list these activities below. A lot of commitment by various people went into this work of late.

- Australian Fossil Mammal Site, Naracoorte Inter-agency Community Reference Group. ACKMA was invited to nominate a representative to this group and you may recall email communications inviting submissions. We thank everyone who nominated. In particular we thank our former outgoing representative Kevin Mott and thank all those who nominated and announce and thank Brian Clark for accepting the role for ACKMA.
- Jenolan Caves Stakeholder Group. Recently Jenolan Caves formed this Stakeholder Group. ACKMA wrote to the current director of Jenolan Caves supporting the initiative and offered access to our member expertise if and when required.
- Mt Etna caves. This well known conservation battle of the past raised its head again as a change of quarrying material and expansion was proposed by the operator. ACKMA responded following online meetings and numerous communications and telephone calls. We lodged concerns with the Livingstone Shire Council as well as the Queensland Government.
- Nullarbor green energy proposals. There is a significant plan for a 'Green Energy Hub' in the Nullarbor in Western Australia. This is solar and wind farm energy but also includes developing the production of green hydrogen and ammonia. ACKMA has concerns about the push for green energy overriding the need to conserve the existing natural environment such as the very significant karst in this region. On top of that, this is huge in scale and there is a lot more work ahead for us to digest the coming proposals and to advise on them. For now we have written to the Western Australian government and the federal government to show the scientific research that has been done on the karst of the region, demonstrating its significance.
- Pinagrealan Cave and nearby quarry Philippines. After receiving a request to sign a petition to protect Pinagrealan cave from the impacts of a nearby quarry we researched a little deeper. This resulted in addition to including our signature on a petition to writing to the Philippine government. The quarry continues but the site is of historic significance for the Philippines and we formally added our support to protect Pinagrealan Cave.
- Kosciuszko National Park. There has been both a revision of a Plan of Management and a Draft Yarrangobilly Precinct Plan to digest and respond to. This involved considerable discussion, consideration and exchange of communications to provide a thorough submission. There was also a request to add a signature to an open letter to the Premier of New South Wales in an advertisement in the Sydney Morning Herald on the Kosciuszko National Park.
- Liaison and relationship building with the ASF and NZSS. A positive relationship between ACKMA and the ASF has been evolving and I am pleased to report we have formally established a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between our two organisations. Indeed, the ASF has hosted some of the online meetings mentioned above and we have shared draft communications to ensure we have strong but unique submissions on those issues we both respond to. The MoU has then been used as a draft to create a similar formal agreement between ACKMA and the NZSS. Our three organisations have communicated on the Australasian Celebration of the International Year of Caves and Karst. Indications are that the NZSS will be responding with communications to develop an MoU between them and ACKMA.
- 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 are providing four \$500 vouchers for each of the divisions of the creative competition. Check out the conditions and get creative!
- Atmospheric Data Logger project. Despite the challenges with restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this project continues with data coming in and analysis being conducted by Professor Andy Baker enabling a better appreciation for all our members. This project funded by ACKMA, assists tourist cave sites across Australia, New Zealand and South Africa 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 has been defying the pandemic restrictions by exhibiting in Queensland. Specifically Capricorn Caves and Charleville. Do consider how you might be able to work your town in with this team and especially for those of you who work in caves 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. We look

forward to presentations at our October online meeting in conjunction with Wellington Caves.

- 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.
- Caves 2nd Edition is soon to be launched. Author Professor David Gillieson has printed copies and the official launch will be at our online meeting in October. This is an exciting new must have book.
- The Guide School and ACKMA meeting. These online activities hosted by Wellington Caves are approaching. Get your registration in now. The Guide School, more precisely the EcoGuide Certification is 20 & 21 October facilitated by Savannah Guides and our meeting is on 23, 24 October. The online sponsor is Weidmuller who have been a cave lighting specialist of many years in Australasia. These will be accessed via ZOOM for those who register and pay a very modest \$20 AUS. daily access fee. The ZOOM will be managed by Savannah Guides and David Gillieson.

- Inland Rail Grant submission. In the early planning of our EcoGuide training and ACKMA meeting, we explored the professional help of an events company for technology and presentation fineness. This is what led to the Weidmuller sponsorship. We sought additional funds in a grant submission from Inland Rail which was unsuccessful however the task was considerable and led to other considerations such as our Public Liability coverage. Our needs have also changed surrounding our event and there is less of a need now for an additional sponsor. The Weidmuller support remains and we value this ongoing relationship.

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.

Ian Eddison

President

The Australian Cave Cricket Poem

Australian Rhaphidophoridae

I'm a very special critter you know, and quite ancient too.

I date back in time, to Gondwanaland.

Even without wings, I got from place to place, until those land bridges closed.

Apart from a few relatives in far north Queensland, we don't talk about them.

I'm confined to the southern & south east of the land.

I'm a little like you, I prefer caves too.

In fact, they're my home, larva, granite, limestone, heck even sandstones.... Which all you southerners know.

You may have passed me on the way in.

I'm brown, sparsely hairy, with long and slender drumstick golden spotted legs. My wife who can be bigger than me, may get in your way – watch your step! She carries my future ME's.

She'll bury these eggs in the substrates that you see, so take it easy and let her be!

I don't bite, and I certainly can't chirp, like my ancient acoustic allies do.... but I give a mighty fright.

You'll see me jump at you from a height, Get out of the way! I could be endangered or endemic you see..... That's something very special about me.

We're often fought about by you, called troglaphiles or troglonexes.

There doesn't need to be a fuss, it's all the same to us.

We just like to keep cool and come out at night to feed.....

Deep in the forest we can be seen munching on leaves, but our favourite piece of dinner is another critter if it happens to be.

After this, it's back in the cave it seems, where we can be found in large clusters making a scene.

This is where we mingle and meet with our relatives from Junee-Florentinee....

See, off the mainland we rule in large numbers from the north to the sea.

I think that's just enough about me, but, we'd like to thank Entomologist Aola Richardee.

I'll leave it at that, but please respect and be kind to me,

I'm the very special 2020 Australian cave animal of the year you see....

Written by Sil Iannello

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