

ACKMA President Report February 2022

Ian Eddison

The International Year of Caves and Karst had been extended from 2021 to 2022 due to it being very difficult on an international scale to actually celebrate and attend events in any way during the recent pandemic. So continue to plan and celebrate caves and karst this year.

- The creative Celebration of Caves and Karst in Australasia competition, a joint initiative of ACKMA, ASF and NZSS had been well attended and the winning entries were notified 18th December 2021. The announcement of winners are published elsewhere in this issue.
- Well the new year got off promptly with online meetings on behalf of ACKMA with the ASF, an ASF Council meeting and a Wombeyan Caves Precinct Plan meeting. I also attended an ASF Special Interest Group (SIG) on the Nullarbor. I have found a welcoming within the ASF for ACKMA representation.
- I have made calls to important connections with Wombeyan Caves on their Precinct Plan but there was a great reluctance for engagement on the subject by those people. I was therefore left very concerned that the 'no comment' in either support or concern for any part of the plan meant an unnecessary political instruction to not discuss it. This coupled with no initial consultation with ACKMA (Also any cave related group) has caused great concern in the cave and karst communities. Yet, an amicable and lengthy telephone conversation with NPWS Blue Mountains, Assets & Infrastructure team leader regarding the Wombeyan Caves Precinct Plan occurred, which was reassuring. A response on behalf of ACKMA has been prepared.
- Participants of the EcoGuide course over 20-21 October 2021 are encouraged to complete their manual and interpretation example. I am very happy to assist in any way I can and so too are our friends who ran the training, Savannah Guides.
- A revision of the Hills of Gold Wind Farm, (Near Timor caves NSW) has meant a win for vegetation cover and

some distance has been gained from turbines from nearby craggy outcrops and caves.

- Brazil Caves and Karst has come under a revised and lower level of protection. Andy Spate has prepared a response on behalf of ACKMA to raise the importance of the Brazil caves and karst and to reject the lowering of its protection. We are concerned the government action is to pave the way for limestone mining.
- The Atmospheric Data Logger project continues and you should have seen reports updated. Despite the challenges with restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the team continue to support the various sites engaged in this research. Thank you Andy Baker, Andy Spate and David Gillieson.
- A new caves protection group has been formed in Australia - Australian Cave and Karst Protection Association (ACKPA). At this point I am uncertain of the need for this or the added strengths it may bring to certain threats to caves and karst. No doubt there is more to be heard on this.
- Found a fossil. I refer you to <https://www.foundafossil.com> please look at this and complete the survey <https://www.foundafossil.com/the-survey> as well as share it with the public. Sally Hurst recently visited Wellington Caves on her tour of fossil sites across NSW.

I wish you all a great 2022. Please remember to promote the International Year of Caves and Karst and the themes explore, understand and protect. Keep on guard against COVID and I trust you all stay well.

Ian Eddison

President



DEADLINE >>>>>

DEADLINE FOR JUNE JOURNAL

Could you please send through any articles for the **June edition of the journal** by the second Friday of May. **Friday 13th May 2022.**