

Editorial

Christian Bom

Welcome to the first edition of the ACKMA Journal for 2022. I sincerely hope you have all had a good start to the year. For those working at tourist caves, it has been great to see international guests arriving again so I hope we will start getting busy again soon.

Recently we (Capricorn Caves) have started to welcome school groups back to the caves once again for their annual camp. As a guide that has worked in caves for seven years now, it brings me great joy to see the look on the face of these young ones when they see the caves for the first time. It is a place that brings a sense of awe and wonder to all, and a great teaching opportunity. Environmental education is at the heart of what we as cave guides do.

I know I am preaching to the converted here, but quality interpretation of the incredible environments we work in, whether from a guide's perspective or a scientific perspective, is one of the most effective ways that we can protect these environments long into the future.

Our dedicated ACKMA committee and distinguished members have been hard at work with ever-evolving conservation issues that are arising world-wide.

As many of you would be aware, there has been great concern for the Cave and Karst environments of Brazil due to proposed changes to environmental legislation. Andy Spate has written a letter with input from David Gillieson to the Ministry of Mines and Energy, the Planning Department and government department that deals with biodiversity issues (IPAMA). A big thanks to Andy and Dave for their efforts.

As always there are plenty of conservation issues on the home front too, with development proposals in several karst precincts. ACKMA's strong voice on these matters is having an impact on these proposals, although there is always more work that needs to be done from the greater community to stand against what will ultimately have detrimental effects on our valuable karst environments across Australasia.

In the meantime, there is some great work being done to gain a greater understanding of our impacts on caves. As many readers will know, Dr Liz Reed has been conducting studies on the impacts that lights have to the cave environment, predominantly on biofilms and invertebrates. As many of our show cave operations use fixed lights, this research will no doubt help us adapt to the current understanding and begin finding new ways to lessen our impact.

I would also like to announce that my wife and I are about to start our own tourism business, therefore I intend to step down as the ACKMA journal editor at the next AGM coming up on the 14th May. This has been a difficult decision. I have learnt a lot in this role and have gained some valuable skills. If you are interested in potentially taking over this role, please let me know and I can tell you more about what it entails. Previous experience is not necessary.

Dave Gillieson has also indicated that he wishes to step down from the position of ACKMA Treasurer at the May AGM. The position involves working with our Webmaster Rauleigh Webb to maintain the membership database. She/he supplies Rauleigh with bank statements every couple of months so he can update the financial status of members. The Treasurer also maintains our bank account with Bendigo Bank and initiates funds transfers, with one other authorized person to co-sign. The main income is the individual membership payments, by bank transfer, PayPal or (rarely) by cheque. Donations to the Honorary Life Members (HLM) fund are kept in the same account but are tabulated as a separate item and summarized in the database. She/he prepares the annual financial statement of the Association which is presented at the AGM. The statement is also supplied to the Secretary, along with the Minutes of the AGM and a completed submission form, so she/he can lodge our annual return to the Victorian Office of Consumer Affairs. So it's not a hard job but it needs someone who has good financial management skills or is happy to learn them.



We recognise the traditional people of the lands of all our members and editorial contributors.

ACKMA acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet and work, and all Traditional Owners of country throughout Australia. We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' continuing connection to land, place, waters, and community. We pay our respects to their cultures, country, and elders past present and emerging.

ACKMA recognises the unique role of Māori as Tangata Whenua and embraces Te Tiriti o Waitangi recognising Māori as tino rangatiratanga of Aotearoa/New Zealand while embracing the three guiding principles of the Treaty – Partnership, Participation, and Protection. We will endeavor to implement bicultural policies and practices that incorporate and value Māori cultural concepts, values, and practices.