

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

- Peter Dimond

I write this, my first report as such, having just been elected as President of ACKMA, and at the conclusion of another successful Conference. I accepted the Presidency with some trepidation, having to follow a line of very illustrious predecessors. On behalf of all members, I would like to sincerely thank Brian Clark, who has guided the Association in the role over the last two years.

The 14th Australasian Conference on Cave and Karst Management has been exceptional, and superbly organised by Mick and Annette Chalker, Andy Spate, and their Organising Committee. We saw a great attendance of over eighty delegates, similar to that of the last two events. Apart from Australia, delegates came from Korea, North America and the Philippines, together with a contingent of sixteen from New Zealand.

We start this ACKMA year with some changes to our Executive Committee. Aside from myself, we have Cameron James succeeding Professor Dave Gillieson as Executive Officer, with Dr. Grant Gartrell taking over as Treasurer from Dennis Rebbeci – a position the latter has held with great distinction for over eight years. I wish to thank the retiring office bearers for their tremendous contribution to the Association. The Committee also has Jackie Taylor and Lana Little as new members, with Mia Thurgate in a changed role, and I wish them well. As for myself, I did not seek any office, let alone the ultimate one, in our Association, but I am honoured to have been elected for the coming year. A nice dinner, some very good wine, and Kent Henderson can be very persuasive (the photographic proof is adjacent – Ed!)

A little about myself, perhaps. I am a retired farmer and am presently the Director of the Waitomo Museum of Caves, a position I have held for the past eight years. I have always had an interest in caves, growing up on a farm that itself is a karst landscape. I was an active member of the New Zealand Speleological Society (NZSS), and President of it for two years. In my younger days I did some part time guiding at Waitomo Caves. I have been a member of ACKMA for sixteen years (i.e: a Foundation Member – Ed.), and served as New Zealand Vice President for two years (1993-95). I have attended nine conferences, and was Convenor of the 12th Conference (at Waitomo) in 1997. In the year 2000, I was honoured by being elected a Fellow of ACKMA.

As so to the future. Our next Annual Meeting will be a Yarrangobilly Caves in New South Wales on the weekend of 11 – 12 May 2002, and our next Conference at Chillagoe/Undara in North Queensland from 5 – 12 May, 2003. I have previously visited both locations, and I can thoroughly recommend them. In particular, I urge all members to put the next Conference dates in their diary NOW – it is not to be missed!

Finally, the lifeblood of any Association is its members, and financial members at that. All members will receive their annual invoice with this Journal, and I urge each of you to meet your financial commitment as soon as possible. Likewise, I enjoin each of you to seek out and encourage new members. There are plenty of potential members out there, please assist in attracting them to our wonderful Association.