

FROM THE EDITOR

The December journal contained a glaring error; I wonder how many readers picked it up. I was contacted by John Brush soon after the printed copy had reached everyone, and he pointed out the caving trips he described in his paper were in Slovakia, not Slovenia. Embarrassing error given I had visited the caves and several of us proof read it. Apologies John and the corrected version has been placed on the website by webmaster Rauleigh Webb.

Trevor Worthy is known to many ACKMA members, especially the New Zealand members, as a palaeontologist and keen caver. Trevor attended the 2005 Westport ACKMA conference and show cased some of his research sites at Honeycomb Hill Cave. Trevor recently published some of his research suggested that Australia's and New Zealand's iconic birds; the emu and kiwi, descended from a common ancestor. The ABC website reported his findings;

New Zealand's iconic kiwi bird may have an Australian ancestor, according to new research that suggests it evolved from a bird that flew to the island nation from Australia. Palaeontologist Trevor Worthy of Adelaide's Flinders University said fossilised remains suggested the flightless bird did not evolve from the extinct giant moa, as has long been assumed. Instead, he said an ancestor of the kiwi dating back 20 million years discovered in the South Island was more closely related to another giant flightless bird, the emu. Dr Worthy, himself an expatriate New Zealander, says it appears the fossilised South Island bird and the emu evolved from a common ancestor, which originated in Australia but also spread to New Zealand. "If, as the DNA suggests, the kiwi is related to the emu, then both shared a common ancestor that could fly," he said. "It means they were little and volant (able to fly) and that they flew to New Zealand." Dr Worthy said it was not uncommon for birds to "jump" from Australia to New Zealand, citing the Mallard duck, the little banded dotterel and the cattle egret as three species which regularly fly back and forth. But he said the research, published by the Society of Avian Paleontology and Evolution, was not conclusive. "We need to find wing bones to put the theory beyond all doubt," he said.

If proved true, the finding might be a bitter blow for many New Zealanders. New Zealanders have long complained about their trans-Tasman neighbours appropriating everything from champion race horse Phar Lap to actor Russell Crowe. Any Australian claim to the kiwi is likely to intensify the rivalry.

Mary Traves drew our attention to some previous research that had come to the same conclusion. New Zealand vice president Dave Smith refuted any notion of rivalry over the findings, stating; "No rivalry at all, always thought kiwis had primitive relations over the ditch."



*Trevor Worthy with moa fossils in Honeycomb Hill Cave, 2005
Photo: Steve Bourne*

ACKMA was invited to comment on the Ngootyoong Gunditj Ngootyoong Mara, South West Draft Management Plan, a management plan for Southwest Victoria. Southwest Victoria is one of the 2 major areas of volcanic caves in Australia and fortunately many of the caves are in the reserve system. There are also extensive limestone caves and karst features; Glenelg River National Park, Bats Ridge, Discovery Bay (Cape Bridgewater), Cobboboonee National Park, and areas around Tyrendarra. Although I have some knowledge of the area, its nowhere near as extensive as Dr Susan White's, who kindly prepared some comments on behalf of ACKMA. The plan is worth looking at as it takes a landscape approach to management rather than park by park and only covering protected areas. As with many of these plans, geological values are not covered as extensively as biological, something that Susan sought to rectify with her comments. Although ACKMA was invited to comment, our association was not mentioned as one with an interest in cave management. This was also noted in our feedback. Thank you to Susan for making the time to evaluate and comment on this plan.



ACKMA member Brett Farquharson was recognised in the Australia Day honours list for 2014. From the Yass Tribune;

Bowling's Brett Farquharson has been honoured with an Order of Australia and will attend a ceremony in Canberra later in the year where the Governor-General will present him with the medallion. Mr Farquharson said he was surprised when he heard news of the OAM and that he did not anticipate recognition or awards for the work he's done over the years.

"I started scouting at the age of eight and now I'm 65," he revealed. I always enjoyed scouting and never saw it as a service or anything like that. And the 40 years in the RFS was something that I saw as simply a job that needed to be done, nothing else."

Mr Farquharson has also volunteered with the Bowling Public School P&C, was involved with the Binalong Rescue Squad for around 15 years and is a founding member of Yass Cave Rescue. He said his daughter, Tina Cassidy, was the one behind his nomination.

"Yeah, I had a bit of a go at her but definitely thanked her for it as well. I know nominations like this aren't easy to put together and I'm definitely going to give her a big hug when I see her next."

Mr Farquharson said the process has given him a good chance to take a step back and reflect on what he has done over the course of his life.

"When you think about it, it's probably a lot of work, but I've never seen it as something to do because I might get an award for it. I've always seen it all as just what needs to be done."

However, this hasn't stopped him from looking forward to the awards ceremony.

"I've started to get fairly excited about it all. It's something I'm proud of and it's always good to be recognised, even if that is not the reason you volunteer."

Congratulations Brett from everyone at ACKMA.

In this edition, Ann Augusteyn reflects on 25 years at Capricorn Caves, an outstanding achievement. We also have updates from Naracoorte and the South Island of New Zealand. Sasa Kennedy enlightens us with her paper on technology and its use in interpretation. John Brush takes us on a caving trip in the USA with another insightful trip report. Nicholas White recounts some memories of Lloyd Robinson; many members will have met Lloyd at the Western Australian conference. Sadly Lloyed passed away recently; I have enjoyed reading about his caving exploits which have been recounted in several caving newsletters. Dan Catchpoole continues his story of James McKeown, a notable character in Jenolan Caves' history. Scott Melton reviews two new books on Jenolan Caves, which both look like great additions to a caver's library. Most importantly, the journal has information regarding the AGM and Caves Guides' Workshop at Yarrangobilly in May - see you there!

Coming Events	
2014: 4-7 May	Cave Guides Workshop Yarrangobilly, New South Wales
2014: 9-11 May	ACKMA Annual General Meeting Yarrangobilly, New South Wales
2014: 17-22 August	International Workshop on Ice Caves, Idaho, USA
2014: 2-8 November	International Show Caves Association, Jenolan Caves, Australia
2015: 8-15 May	ACKMA Conference, Naracoorte Caves, South Australia
2016: May	ACKMA Annual General Meeting and Cave Guides Workshop, Rockhampton, Queensland
2017	International Union of Speleology Congress, Penrith, NSW, Australia
	Do you know of an event that may interest ACKMA members? Please send to publications@ackma.org