

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dan Cove

And so we begin 2014. I extend best wishes to all ACKMA members for the New Year which I hope shall be happy and healthy for all. I know that it shall certainly be busy!

I have begun receiving increasing numbers of requests for information concerning the rapidly approaching ISCA Congress to be held at Jenolan in November this year and thought that I should cover some key points concerning times, the program and attendance by ACKMA members.

For a start, I should make clear that this Congress is the most important event of the International Show Cave Association, being held only once every 4 years. Attendance is generally strong, and the level of initial interest and expressions of interest from International visitors suggests that Jenolan will be at or very near to capacity for accommodation over the week of the Congress itself. Although I am naturally keen to see as great a participation rate and attendance from ACKMA members as possible, I must also state that preference in booking accommodation and registration will have to be given to ISCA members. There may well be the possibility of interested ACKMA members being billeted with Jenolan staff, or accommodated off site also in Oberon (1/2 hour travel), and we are currently investigating the option of shuttle services. We will have much greater clarity on availability of on-site accommodation after opening of initial registration to ISCA members in early March.

The Congress itself will run from 2 to 8 November and will feature a program that will be familiar to attendees of the 2013 Waitomo Conference, with paper session in the morning and activities most afternoons. There will also be meetings of the various commissions of ISCA, and sessions devoted to the General Assembly of the Association and election of Directors. A call for abstracts has already been circulated (a process driven by the tireless Andy Spate who has also made the rash promise to coordinate the post Congress field trip as well as offering invaluable assistance in overall planning). In thanking Andy, I must also express gratitude for the assistance and advice of Julia James, who has offered useful guidance on the structure of the draft program as well as generously offered to lead special activities at Jenolan during the Congress itself. At Jenolan, I am being ably supported in the increasing blur of organisation by Scott Melton, Sasa Kennedy and Domino Houlbrook-Cove who are all taking on additional workloads without protest.

I gratefully acknowledge that we have also received financial support early in the organisation process, with two major sponsors. Acoustiguide of Australia are our major Diamond Sponsor, with Weidmuller – well known to ACKMA members of course – generously committing

as our Silver Sponsor. I am very grateful to the support of both these leading companies who have already brought so much to cave management in the areas of interpretation and cave lighting.

There is no doubt that the Congress would provide enormously beneficial to ACKMA members, particularly of course those directly involved in show cave management. An anticipated 140 international delegates will represent all continents with the exception of Antarctica, and gather with the intent of furthering collective understanding of the best approaches to management of show caves. My own experience has been that ISCA dramatically broadens your approach to cave management, and offers the freshness of a truly international perspective. I will hope to send out soon, via journal and ACKMA mailing list, additional information that will be of interest to ACKMA members and that will assist members in planning and booking.

Very briefly, in non-ISCA news, I am also proud to be able to provide news of another win for Jenolan Caves. At the 2013 Qantas Australian Tourism Awards held in Sydney 7 February, Jenolan won the category of "Heritage/Cultural Tourism" against competition that included Port Arthur Historic Site and Venture NT. This was a great achievement and recognition for the hard work and commitment of the whole Jenolan team. It is also always great to get some cave-focused publicity attendant to the Awards win, and raise the public profile of cave management in Australia.



*Dan Cove accepting the National Tourism Award for Jenolan Caves*