

AUSTRALIAN SPELEOLOGICAL FEDERATION
Inc.

ANNUAL REPORT
December 2004

2004

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ANNUAL REPORT 2004

**Presented by the President, John Dunkley,
Dover, Tasmania, January 2005**

To be presented at Annual General Meeting

ASF TREASURER – Annual Report 2004

To be presented at Annual General Meeting

CONSERVATION COMMISSION REPORTS 2005

NATIONAL CONVENOR

Nicholas White

There are many aspects of cave conservation. The issues that grab attention are those which pitch developers against conservationists, however for karst, many detrimental changes are much more subtle than the actual quarrying or drowning of a cave system. Surface land use changes on karst areas may produce dramatic changes within caves and underground aquatic ecosystems. Continuing urbanisation of the coastal strip north of Perth is having detrimental effects on karst. In Western Victoria and the Lower South East of South Australia, it is karst aquifers, which are threatened with overuse and pollution from local and broad scale sources of contamination. Caves themselves can be easily damaged both deliberately by vandalism and by graffiti. These are symptoms of problems of overuse on the karst of Australia most of which is not by cavers!

The ASF has a Code of Ethics and Conservation and a Minimum Impact Caving Code. These codes govern the way we conduct our own caving. They have now been adopted as part of a number of management plans for karst areas. Both codes are currently under review. Your input, thoughts and ideas on improvements are needed now. If you are not familiar with the codes, they are available on the ASF webpage at www.caves.org.au. Please address comments to me (nicholaswhite@netspace.net.au) or Evalt Crabb (evalt@shoal.net.au)

Better management of caves and karst areas has to be one of the foremost objectives of the ASF. With many karst areas now in formal reserves and parks it is the quality and sensitivity of management, which is of paramount importance. Thus, it is important for ASF and its member clubs to participate in the development of new management plans and to be heard by managers when you believe that there are problems, which need addressing. A number of Parks in various states have advisory committees it is important that where karst is represented that there be members with karst expertise on the committees. Do not leave it to other experts; put your hand up and volunteer. This is not something that the Conservation Commission can coordinate but we can assist you in representing the caving and cave conservation perspective.

I published an article in Caves Australia on Geoindicators. It is important that we have objective measures of changes in caves. These changes may be natural or caused by visitors. At the moment we know that tracking of mud on formation or trampling of floors are detrimental to caves but we have few simple ways of measuring the changes. I would be interested in hearing of anyone using methods to measure changes whether it be by using photographs or penetrometers etc.

The National election brought out differences in logging policies for Tasmanian "old growth" forests between both sides of politics. In the event, the Coalition government was returned. We are still trying to ascertain whether important karst areas of Tasmania become better protected because of the Federal election promises. It is probable that this will be the case as a number of cave and karst catchment areas which were "marked" as not to be logged to protect special values will now be protected more formally.

I am aware of several clubs that have organised the cleaning of rubbish in caves or restoration by cleaning of formation and track marking. These initiatives are an important part of ensuring that heavily visited recreational caves are not trashed. There is a case to recognise such efforts if further categories of ASF awards are created in the present review of the ASF Awards system.

The Conservation Commission, of necessity, needs to focus on nationally important issues. This can be summarised as working towards "better protection and management" of Australia's karst estate. Sometimes our efforts will be directed at a single developer (quarry proposal), but in other instances it will be ensuring that protected karst areas receive better management. Many of our conservation efforts need better written material to use in supporting our arguments for protection, better management, protection of cave inhabitants or of karst aquifers. This is where our records and documentation of where caves are, their extent and what they contain are so valuable. Several proposals for publishing are afloat all of which will assist us in National recognition of the importance of caves.

A number of important issues are mentioned below.

Jenolan

The future management of Jenolan, Wombeyan, Abercrombie and Borenore has necessarily taken a lot of my time this year. The campaign to have the Trust reinstated has been conducted by Keir Vaughan-Taylor and several others. This has involved numerous meetings on their part as well as an active campaign of lobbying politicians. The NSW Legislative Council, as a result of this lobbying, has held up the proposed legislation, vesting these reserves in the Parks Service. To date, no model for governing these reserves has been enunciated which provides the accountability of the existing Trust structure. If we believe in best management of karst and caves, then this campaign has to continue to a satisfactory resolution.

Nullarbor

The WA report below discusses the creation of several small caves reserves on the Nullarbor. There are also recent moves by government agencies to advance some strategic planning for the WA Nullarbor. I have made several enquiries about the Nullarbor and World Heritage listing in Canberra, Perth and Adelaide. Suffice to say it is in a too hard basket. ASF will need to develop a "circuit breaker" and perhaps the best way would be with our own promotion probably in the form of a book. It is many years since "The Caves of the Nullarbor" was published. There has been lots of successful exploration and scientific research undertaken since then to add to our understanding of the karst.

Cape Range and Ningaloo Reef

This important karst province is currently proposed to go forward for World Heritage listing. This would be fitting given the exploration work of the Western Australian cavers, the cave biology undertaken by Dr Bill Humphries and the objections to mining that ASF took through an exhaustive appeals process. It is my understanding that this proposal will be delayed a year while protected zones for the Reef are negotiated.

Graffiti

Graffiti is an ongoing problem. In the last Annual Report I exemplified problems at Loch Ard Gorge, Port Campbell National Park, Victoria. This is one of the iconic Victorian tourism sites in all the State's promotional literature. Extensive graffiti disfigures the walls of the gorge and is also present in several caves at the foot of the cliffs. The Parks Service has now accepted that this is a problem! Some of the graffiti has been removed. A strategy for graffiti control is now being developed.

Riveaux Karst

The Riveaux Karst in Tasmania, where a number of caves were found during the development of logging roads, has now been the subject of study by various government personnel from different agencies, together with representatives from the Tasmanian Aboriginal Land Council and STC. It is apparent that the cultural values and the caves will now be protected. It is not at this stage clear how the Government will receive the report and whether logging of the karst will occur.

Living with Karst

The ASF would be well served with good interpretive literature and brochures that identify the values of caves and karst and how to live in such karst areas. Such material would be of benefit nationally. There are proposals along these lines from both Victoria and Western Australia. It is important that in addressing them we cover the broad national perspective and also address issues that are of local provenance.

Cave Biology and Ecosystems

Some of the most powerful legislation that involves caves concerns caves inhabitants. It is important that research is undertaken to identify, describe and study cave biota. Legislative protection is specific for invertebrates in some states but not others, but all States have levels of protection for biota which is quite absent for the caves themselves or the inanimate contents of the caves. It is important that cavers involve the biological community in identifying and studying cave biota.

Australia's New Heritage Laws

These new laws came into effect in 2004. They provide for a National Heritage List, a Commonwealth Heritage List, the creation of the Australian Heritage Council and the retention of the existing Register of the National Estate. Places listed under the new mechanisms will have much stronger and very real protection that was lacking under previous laws. It is uncertain to what extent it will add to protection for karst areas but this is a challenge for us to explore. Further information www.deh.gov.au/heritage

Geoparks

UNESCO has recently established “Global Network of National Geological Parks (Geoparks) with its main office in Beijing. This initiative presents useful links with the earth science community for karst and pseudokarst protection and management. The Conservation Commission has established links with the Australian representative on the UNESCO Geoparks board (Dr Susan Turner, Queensland), through our links with the Geological Society of Australia Standing Committee on Geological Heritage. It is early days as yet, but cooperation in these areas is often very productive in helping with karst conservation. This international thrust could assist karst conservation because many Australian land management agencies are severely deficient in geological expertise and sensitivity to earth processes.

CONSERVATION

Queensland Convenor – Peter Berrill

On March 13th 2004, after 42 years, all mining at Mt Etna ceased. All mining equipment has been removed and shortly the “Crushers” are to be removed for scrap metal. The rehabilitation is continuing with efforts now being concentrated on the Western quarry. Extra staff will be employed for this work. The Company has committed themselves to the long-term rehabilitation of Mt. Etna.

The issue at hand is post mining land tenure. The company has freehold of the land it has been mining and after rehabilitation wishes to pass the land on to a Government Department to be managed in conjunction with the National Park acting as a buffer. This is the result of negotiation between the Central Queensland Speleological Society (CQSS) and the mining Company. However the Government have stated that they are not interested in the land. As a result of many frustrating negative meetings of the Mt. Etna National Park Advisory Committee, the Company, Pacific Lime approached the Livingstone Shire Council to convene a meeting to discuss post mining land tenure. The meeting was well attended by Pacific Lime, National Parks, Mines Department, Queensland Museum, Local Aboriginal representatives, tourist departments and of course CQSS. The long and short of it is that again all government departments, as they have been doing for the past 42 years, have ignored and turned their back on the issue.

The CQSS representative took the floor and gave the Government representatives a stern reminder of the negative attitudes to the issue over the past 30 years. This resulted in the meeting voting in favour of the land being managed by the government with a conservation status acting as a buffer for the National Park.

The redevelopment of the Cammoo acquisition for the National Park is almost complete with a public opening in the New Year. However National Parks haven't kept to their part of the arrangements and refuse to open Chandelier Cave to the public. Assistant manager of the National Heritage Trust (NHT) Jillian Lee attended the last meeting and informed National Parks that they would prefer the Cave to be opened. CQSS are all out of energies on this issue and as a consequence of discussing the matter with President John Dunkley ,ASF made a positive submission to NHT prior to the last meeting of the Advisory committee. We will have to wait and see what the future brings.

Work on the Mt.Etna fossils by the Queensland Museum is progressing slowly with no major work as yet undertaken. The mining company have made arrangements, post mining, for the protection of the deposits and have removed and stockpiled some.

Scott Hocknull the palaeontologist undertaking the studies has taken a particular interest in Ghost Bat fossil sites and is locating and investigating all of these sites in Queensland. Coincidentally this is overlapping with work being done by Lana Little, Senior Ranger, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, Chillagoe and Dr Les Hall who are currently gathering all information for the current status

of the Ghost Bat in Queensland. Much of this material belongs to John Toop, Zoologist deceased, who was the only person to study the Ghost Bat in its natural habitat. Lana, Les and John, prior to John's death were working on this paper. Much of John's work is unpublished and Lana and Les intend to publish some of his work in his name. Much of the information relates to cave habitation.

CONSERVATION

New South Wales Co-convenor – Keir Vaughan-Taylor

To be presented at Annual General Meeting

CONSERVATION

Western Australia Co-convenor – Jay Anderson, Peter Armstrong and Eve Taylor

During 2004, there has been a lack of progression regarding karst management and conservation of karst issues in WA. As discussed in the 2003 report, three of the key karst areas have expired management plans (expired from between 5-7 years!!). Over the past 12 month period, despite several consultation meetings with CALM regarding these areas, there is still no draft management plans released for any of those areas.

Additionally, the most unfortunate situation occurred when the WA Government made decisions regarding one of WA's most significant karst areas, without consulting speleologists who had the most up-to-date information on the area. There was an opportunity for the Government to negotiate on pastoral leases, particularly areas of land on the Nullarbor. This missed opportunity has meant that recent decisions (made by the WA Government) regarding the Nullarbor have been made on information that is about 20 years old! It is really important that the Government acknowledges that management of karst areas required specialist knowledge. As such, the Government should be "seeking" consultation from speleologists (such as members of the ASF and ACKMA) whenever there are major decisions being made regarding karst areas. This should be seen as a priority and as part of the important public consultation process. However, in some situations this speleological consultation may need to occur outside of the formal consultation processes (for example occurring before a draft document is released for public comment). The challenge is still for both speleologists and land managers to work together in partnership – to ensure that our karst areas in this state are managed appropriately.

One positive outcome that has occurred this year is that the WA Speleological Groups have made contact with the Natural Resource Management (NRM) group for the Nullarbor. It is hoped that this will raise the profile of the importance of the Nullarbor karst and the lack of information that exists on the natural resources in this area. It is also aimed that the development of the NRM plan for the Nullarbor/Rangelands region will assist in obtaining funding that is allocated to the important research required in this karst area.

One of the reasons for the lack of action on the land management plans, by the WA Government, has been the Government's commitment to the process of nominating Cape Range for World Heritage Listing. This priority has meant that other areas needing management attention have been put "on hold". At the time of writing the draft of this report, the Minister for the Environment had passed the recommendation to Cabinet for their approval. The WA Government was working towards a timeline of submitting the final reports in February 2005. The ASF hoped that this nomination would be successful as the Cape Range is a truly outstanding karst area that deserves World Heritage status. However, in early December, a press release indicated that due to political issues around the Ningaloo Reef Marine Park, the Government needed more community consultation. Thus the nomination was

not put through. The ASF, and local speleological groups expect to be formally contacted and included in this additional consultation process.

The WA speleological groups have continued participation in community education displays. In particular, the year of 2004 has seen a major achievement. As presented to the January 2004 Council meeting, there was an important initiative in WA. The joint karst workshop with Greening Australia (WA) and the A.S.F. occurred in September 2004. This initiative was an excellent partnership and shows the opportunity for future partnerships between organizations with similar environmental objectives. The partners for this workshop are already planning a second workshop to occur in 2005.

Finally, the conservation issues reported on previously regarding the vulnerability of the karst area (due to human development) to the north of Perth still exist. Additionally, the Government is STILL to make a decision regarding the ASF's legal action and the proposed mining leases at Cape Range. There have also been several ongoing projects involving ASF volunteers in Yanchep and Leeuwin karst areas (see each section for this report). For the future, there are plans to continue involvement in public education, through community displays, participation in community events and presentations.

We support the motion, proposed by Yvonne Ingeme (VSA), that "the ASF support an application for a grant to cover production and publication of a booklet on "Living on Karst in Australia". This is a project that we've been discussing for some time, so it's excellent to see another state seeing a similar need. More specifically, we'd like to have a brochure for local landowners. As such, we propose "That the ASF support an application for a grant to cover production and publication of a A4brochure on "Living on Karst in WA" and a series of applications for funding assistance to support "a series of seminars and presentations to the general public regarding karst and living on karst issues". It would be excellent if the ASF could support both of these initiatives.

1. South of Perth

1A Cave Management in the Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park (L.N.N.P.)

There has been no further progress of the Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park Management plan, dated 1989-1999. CALM advise that this is "progressing", but no date is given for the release of a draft. As discussed in the 2003 report, CALM had planned several prescribed burns for the karst area, within the National Park. Several of these occurred and may further assist water into the epikarst.

The Cave Management Advisory Committee (C.M.A.C.) continues to meet bi-monthly to advise The Department on cave management issues. This process is working really well and various projects have been carried out with speleological members during the past year. These include: Work at Bride Cave (2/2004) to remove old wooden stairways and ongoing work on trackmarking and rehabilitation in several caves. There have been several CMAC field trips to assess caves – either for impacts, to upgrade trackmarking or to assess the potential for a cave classification change. The speleological use of locked and restricted access caves in 2004 has remained at a low level.

1B Wallcliffe Cave – Shire of Augusta/Margaret River

The Shire of Augusta Margaret River has still not implemented the draft cave management plan for Wallcliffe cave. It is understood that the Shire is progressing the alteration in land tenure and the plans to vest the land in C.A.L.M is proceeding, but it will take some time. The cave itself requires a lot of rehabilitation and would be a challenge for a future project. The cave still receives visitation and it now has a new gate.

1C Karst in the Mandurah Region

There is no management of the karst system adjacent to the Dawesville Estuary. The caves in this area are either on private property or in areas of bushland. A number of speleological members visited the area during the year and undertook a “clean-up” day – removing rubbish from a cave. Further work needs to be undertaken in this area, including public education and liaison with managing agencies.

The WASG was recently contacted by a construction company and requested speleological expertise to search for karst features in an area where a major road diversion is planned. A team of four speleologists walked the 4km road reserve and found one blocked solution pipe and one doline (significant with several cave entrances). It is understood that neither of these features is impacted by the proposed road works. Due to contacts made during this project it is hoped that there will be further liaison from construction companies when undertaking works in karst areas.

2. To the East

The Nullarbor is an area that desperately needs appropriate management. It is a large, significant karst area, where visitation impacts on the karst system are difficult to assess. As there is no “on-ground” management of the caves and karst, there is no monitoring of impacts or conditions. During 2004, the WASG corresponded with CALM and met with several key CALM representatives. It was proposed that there needed to be a consultative karst workshop involving Government and speleologists, to determine some management prescriptions for the area. This is yet to occur.

The Government has negotiated with pastoralists regarding proposed exclusions of land for heritage, environmental, recreational or tourist purposes. The outcome was that there are now several “reserves” around cave entrances. It is unfortunate however, that the WA Government made decisions regarding this significant karst area, without the most up-to-date information on the area. The lack of consultation with speleologists has meant that recent decisions regarding the Nullarbor have been made on information that is certainly not recent. The caves that CALM thought were significant, are not as significant as other caves that have been discovered since the 1980’s. The other issue of concern is the situation where a small amount of land around a cave entrance is “Reserved”. Firstly this puts the entrance of a cave clearly marked on maps, or in the surface – the visitor need only look for the “fence”. Additionally, this technique does not consider the significant karst system as a whole, nor its catchment. The WA Government needs to support the IUCN Guidelines for karst management, which highlight the importance of what is referred to as a “total catchment regime”. The Nullarbor requires an integrated management approach, such as integrated catchment management.

The WA Speleological Groups have made contact with the Natural Resource Management (NRM) group for the Nullarbor and it is hoped that this will raise the profile of the importance of the Nullarbor karst and the lack of information that exists on the natural resources in this area. This situation could be remedied if there was funding allocated to the important research in this karst area. The WA Speleological Groups were notified in mid November, of a 2-day workshop being held in Kalgoorlie in late November. This workshop was supported by CALM and involved the NRM group. This group is involved in the development and compilation of the NRM strategy plan for the WA Rangelands (including the south Nullarbor Region). It is understood that the Federal Government expects this to be completed in the next 6-as months. A WA member attended the workshop to represent the ASF. We await the representative’s report and an update on how the ASF and local WA based speleological groups can be involved in this process.

2A South Coast Management Plan

This Regional management plan is dated 1992-2002. There has been no further progress on this.

2B Nullarbor World Heritage Listing

As reported in previous reports, this task is ongoing. There has been no progress on this issue. There will need to be some effort made in recommending the World Heritage Listing for the Nullarbor and contact between both the W.A. state government and the S.A. state government regarding this issue. As discussed at the 2004 ASF Council Meeting, the ASF is concerned with the management of this area. This will need considerable work to research what occurred in the previous nomination and to collate information regarding recent karst documentation by numerous speleological groups. This may be an important opportunity for ACKMA and ASF to partner together in raising the awareness of the Nullarbor and in discussing karst values with the Government.

3. North of Perth

3A Yanchep National Park:

The Yanchep National Park Management plan is dated 1989-1999. As previously reported, the Park Management Plan is expired and needs considerable revising. There has been no further progress on this and CALM state that it is “on hold”. The Yanchep National Park Caves Advisory Committee meets bi-monthly to discuss local karst issues. It is still recommended that this area needs a specific “cave manager” as a matter of priority. There have been several more caves gated in the National Park. These gates continue to be made out of inappropriate materials and inappropriate design. Additionally, the gates are not being developed according to accepted cave gate guidelines which need to allow fauna passage. The recommendations by a biologist who specialised in bats were ignored. This is of concern to the local speleological groups. Although, the Permit system is working well and there is little observable damage in the caves, there is a need for an integrated approach to management in the area. Finally, speleological group members continue to work very closely with C.A.L.M. staff: providing education about karst issues and assisting with local projects.

We are concerned regarding the situation for the cave fauna in the stream caves. Further to what was reported previously, the CALM, Water Corporation and Waters and Rivers Commission have been artificially maintaining water to certain areas in attempts to maintain the subterranean stygofauna habitats. The cave streams and root matt communities have been affected by the lowered water table in the area – a result of several factors (climate, pine trees on the eastern catchment and water abstraction) in the area. Three adaptive projects have occurred to date. The Government project to direct artificial supplementation to the cave stream in the Crystal Cave was considered successful. The Government allocated several million dollars to establishing a new bore in the area and to permanently artificially supplement the Crystal Cave Stream. It is our understanding that there is no longer any living stygofauna in this cave. It is still our opinion that the Government needs to hasten their plans to reduce the Pine Tree Plantations in the east. This should be a priority as the catchment to the east is significant to the karst hydrology.

Several other caves have significant fauna and root matt communities. At this stage, the water levels in these caves are being artificially supplemented and monitored. Several caves have plastic lined pools, artificial pumps and soak wells to facilitate an even water table level. Of particular concern is the situation where the National Park does not have a dedicated scientific officer to oversee or monitor the adaptive research that is occurring in the National Park. There is also a need for specific monitoring and implementation of plans. These issues need to be addressed by the WA Government as a matter of priority.

The main “works” that occurred this year was the sealing of the Crystal Cave carpark. The National Park did not understand speleologists concern about bitumising the area so close to the cave (a cave

which is having significant hydrological issues). This large area of runoff is channelled away from the cave and reduces natural infiltration methods. Finally, and unfortunately, CALM did not obtain any further capital works funding in their budget. The plans to alter the lighting in Crystal Cave, to remove the lampenflora or to upgrade the infrastructure will not happen in the near future. All of this is of great concern and indicates a lack of awareness of broad karst management, and specifically regarding the management of this important karst area.

3B Carabooda Area:

It remains of great concern that there is a road planned to go straight over a number of significant caves. There has been no further progress on this issue and the task to address this issue is ongoing. Other tasks include the ongoing work of karst assessment – surveying the caves and an inventory of karst features. These issues need to continue to be highlighted with the State Agencies involved as the karst system remains under threat from human development. The threat to this karst area is significant and further action is required to protect this system. The significant site (containing fossil remains) may mean that the site could be listed on the National Heritage List as having “outstanding heritage value” or on the Commonwealth Heritage List as having “significant heritage value”. If this occurred the site would be protected under the EPBC Act. This needs more time to progress than is currently available to those volunteers who are interested in progressing this issue. Additionally, it would be excellent to meet with local landowners to discuss karst management issues and to consider issues involved in “living on karst”. Several landowners in the area have made contact with speleologists and indicated that some seminars, brochures and public education on karst would be useful. There is an opportunity to progress this important issue, however a source of funding would need to be sought (see the motion to be put to the ASF Council 2005).

3C Two Rocks & Wanneroo Area:

As discussed previously, the City of Wanneroo contains significant karst areas. The City has an Interim Rural Strategy that is soon due for review. This document has a small section on karst. Additionally, there needs to be a co-ordinated approach-involving liaison between the City of Wanneroo and Speleological Groups regarding areas under development in karst regions. Speleological groups need greater liaison with the Environmental Protection Authority, to ensure further caves and karst areas are not impacted. It would be excellent if ground-penetrating radar was more extensively utilised in karst areas. There is a huge task of acting to protect the karst areas as the current development and impact of Perth’s expanding population pressures on the karst.

Development subdivisions continue to occur. The plan is to have speleological individuals who are able to visit a property and make an assessment of the karst features present. The report can then be given both to the landowner and the local Government to assist in the best response required in the situation. It is our goal to have several landowner education sessions and workshops – discussing the area’s geological development, and what it means to “Live on karst”. Ultimately it is planned to publish a landowners brochure/booklet outlining these issues in a manner that is educational and non confrontational (see the motion in the summary section). To assist in this education, and to provide a visual aspect to learning it is envisaged that a 3D karst model be developed – showing the physical interaction between the surface and the subsurface in karst – specifically in this area. This can then be used in education and displays.

There is now a speleological representative on the City of Wanneroo Environmental Advisory Committee. This is an important role and can assist in raising the profile of karst in the area. More specifically, the Local Environmental Strategy (Annual Review 2004) has just had its second review by the Council. The fifth Action item (out of 60 items) is to “develop a caves and karstic features policy”. This item has had no action and is currently listed to occur in the 2005-2006 year. An excellent opportunity exists in regard to this issue. Both in raising the awareness of the Council, to the significant karst issues and to involve speleologists in developing this document.

3D Involvement with Government in Local Community Consultation:

Several members of Speleological Groups continue to regularly attend local community consultation groups to ensure that karst issues are considered and raised in ongoing decision-making regarding the northern groundwater mound that is a karst catchment area. The Gnangara/East Gnangara (Water Resources) Community Consultative Committee meets several times a year. This group discusses the artificial supplementation of wetlands in the karst area and the emergency response strategy regarding the cave streams and stygofauna in the Yanchep caves. The water situation in the area is still critical despite an average winter rainfall during 2004. The addition of a speleological representative on the City of Wanneroo Environmental Advisory Committee is an excellent opportunity, which can assist in raising the profile of karst in the area.

3E East of Jurien - Drovers Cave National Park:

Drover's Cave –Further discussions with CALM are needed regarding actions that will need to occur to implement the proposals. There are ongoing discussions with CALM regarding this issue and the need for both the land manager and the speleological groups to meet. This will need to be progressed in 2005.

3F South of Jurien - Coastal Area –Jurien/Cervantes:

The northward growth of Perth has the potential to impact on the coast and associated karst features. Concerns remain that management plans for this area do not appear to have considered the existence of caves or karst features. At this stage, a large amount of bushland has not been assessed for karst features. Further work needs to be done in this area.

Lancelin Defence Training Area – (L.D.T.A.)

There has been no further need for speleological involvement in this area. There is a speleological representative on the management committee for the L.D.T.A. However, due to the location and timing of meetings, volunteer speleologists have not been able to attend all meetings (every 2-3 months). Speleological groups remain involved and provide a consultative role where required. We have recently been notified that a stygofauna survey will occur within the area and have been asked to be involved in consultation in this process.

3G North of Jurien - Coastal Area:

Speleological Groups are undertaking a project in this area to reassess, and renew information on known karst features. This project requires visiting the karst features and obtaining accurate GPS information. Areas of bushland are also being searched for new karst features. This project involves close liaison with local landowners.

3H Cape Range:

The Cape Range National Park Management plan is dated 1987-1997 and has been in the process of review. In July, representatives of the A.S.F. had a special consultative meeting to discuss issues related to the future management of the National Park. The draft management plan for Cape Range should be very close to release given the priority of the Government to the World Heritage nomination. CALM now advise that a draft may be out by March 2005.

Of ongoing concern however, is that the Advisory Committee for the North West Cape-Ningaloo does not have any individuals or representatives with karst background. This group is set up to advise CALM on the management of the Cape Range National Park and the Ningaloo Marine Park. It would be excellent if the Government acknowledged that it is important to have knowledge and experience in karst to be able to make appropriate decisions regarding such an area.

As noted in previous reports, the A.S.F. took legal action regarding proposed mining leases on the Cape Range. Although this was concluded in the Wardens Court in Perth (11/2000), the process has yet to be concluded. The Government (Minister for Mines) has STILL to make the final decision regarding the granting of the mining leases. The A.S.F. needs to continue to request the removal of the strategic limestone mining purpose from the proposed 5(h) reserve.

The Cape Range National Park should also be extended. The A.S.F. has continued to advocate that the Cape Range is a significant karst area that needs such protection and recognition. The formal process regarding the plans to nominate the Cape Range for World Heritage Status was almost completed. We are extremely concerned about the Government's recent decision to delay the nomination. The delay is primarily in regard to the Ningaloo Reef management. It is understood that the Government wants a further 12 months of community consultation. This delay may seriously affect the timing of future nomination and the priority of acceptance of the Cape Range as a World Heritage Area.

31 The Kimberley – FAR north:

There are a number of discrete karst systems in the Kimberley Region (generally termed the West Kimberley or the East Kimberley) that no formal karst management. In the east, the primary land tenure is pastoral leases and station land. In the West, there are some areas of National parks, and other areas of pastoral lease and private land. All of these areas need appropriate karst management, in particular a "total catchment management" focus. There have been a number of expeditions to this area over the last 45 years, however further work is required to document the fauna and the karst.

It has recently come to our attention that there was a review of nature conservation reserves in the Kimberley in 1991. Humphrey's (1995) outlines some of the recommendations that were made for the karst areas of the Kimberley, and referred to a submission made by the ASF in 1980. It is still considered that the caves and karst of the West Kimberley are of considerable international significance. It was considered that the area's current land management regime does not adequately provide for the reservation and protection of important karst features, nor does it recognise outstanding opportunities to incorporate into existing reserves, features that would considerably enhance the value of those reserves. Point 1.8 of the ASF submission (Davey 1980) recommended that "there be a thorough integrated survey of all the cave and karst features of the Limestone Ranges of the West Kimberley and that such a survey should examine geomorphological and biological attributes as well as aboriginal relicts". It is understood that at that time, it was recommended that the WA Museum be requested to make a survey of the caves and springs for the limestone ranges. Humphrey's (1995) outlined that this survey has never been conducted. It is our recommendation that the current status of the karst areas in the Kimberley needs progressing and that the National Heritage List may be an appropriate mechanism for recognising the "outstanding" values of the area.

4. Public Education:

As discussed earlier, it was our aim to continue important community events and to facilitate the partnership between the ASF and other environmental organisations. During the year of 2004, there were two Joint Speleological Groups "Community Education" Displays: Yanchep National Park's "Spring Fest" on 14/11/04 and the "Children's Groundwater Festival" on the 23/11/04. The "interactive" cave, and activities were quite popular with the children. Speleological Group members have again provided ongoing training to CALM staff (including cave guides) at Yanchep (special thanks again to the Wilderness Society and the Environmental Defender's Office for the use of display boards). The final workshop was a special seminar on the EPBC Act (8/11/2004), presented by the World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF). As discussed at the ASF council meeting, the Joint Workshop titled "Subterranean safari – exploring the karst systems on the Swan Coastal Plain" was held on the 11/09/2004 (The Caves Australia 163 (September 2004) contains a full report on this

workshop). This was an excellent partnership between the ASF and Greening Australia (WA). Due to the success of this workshop, a 2nd workshop is already being planned for 2005.

5. Karst Policy and Protective Mechanisms:

There are a broad range of policy, legislation and guidelines that are required for karst areas. A review of WA policy instruments is currently being finalised (Anderson). A preliminary paper is being presented at the 25th Biennial Conference of the ASF – held in January 2005 that will outline some of the challenges and opportunities in this area. One particular State Government policy document has been under review. In November 2003, the Speleological Groups were contacted in regard to key stakeholder consultation prior to its release for broader public consultation. The CALM Policy Statement 18 is regarding Recreation, Tourism and Visitor Services. Specific Sections of the policy that are of interest to ASF members include: rockclimbing and abseiling, caving and cave diving. After consultation with other ASF members, the two ASF corporate members (WASG and SRGWA) made individual submissions on issues contained in the document (January /February 2004). The official draft document was released on the 1 December 2004 for a two-month public comment period closing on 31 January 2005. The draft Policy can be accessed at www.calm.wa.gov.au in the "Have Your Say" category. We encourage ASF members, particularly WA members, to be familiar with this document and to make an individual submission. You may also wish to send us a copy of your comments for inclusion in an official ASF submission.

6. Future Cave Management in W.A.:

We would like to continue to hold a series of public education seminars and community displays. We'd also like to focus on applications for funding and grants: such as the motion regarding the "living on karst" brochure, and a project by WASG in partnership with the Yanchep National Park, and other speleological groups in WA – to install karst interpretation in Boomerang Gorge. Another project is an initiative involving National Science Week funding. If successful, it is planned that WASG would hold a workshop, similar to that of the GAWA/ASF partnership, however it would be focussed on secondary students. The workshop aims include education about karst and numerous site visits, but also explores career opportunities within the science of speleology. It would be excellent if there were more projects, funding applications and some successful outcomes!

As mentioned in previous reports, W.A. has many karst areas and a huge variety of landowners and cave managers. The W.A. Government needs to accept that its responsibility for managing the environment involves protecting karst areas, and to show a commitment to appropriately resourcing areas that manage karst. The aim of the W.A. Conservation Commission is to raise the profile of speleologists and their involvement in karst management, and for promoting the need for a State Karst Officer.

NSW SPELEOLOGICAL COUNCIL – ANNUAL REPORT 2004

President: Megan Pryke

As many of the items discussed in this report are active action items, please note that this report was drafted in early November and that there maybe some update on progress.

The speleological council met in May at Wee Jasper and then later during September in Bankstown, Sydney. The executive has met for discussion on the Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust issue and correspondence has been made by email and phone.

During 2004, the executive prepared a written response to the Kosciuskzo National Park draft plan of Management that encompasses many karst areas, the largest being the Yarrangobilly Karst. In addition, it has been decided that the council respond to aspects of the Garden of Stone National Park draft plan of management, comments are due in December 2004. Garden of Stone NP is located on the western fringe of the Sydney basin and contains some small karst areas. Response is also to be made regarding the banning of wood fires within Bungonia Conservation Reserve, in the southern highlands; the wood fire ban extends beyond the campground and to all seasons within the reserve.

It was informally reported to the council that during the year an incident occurred where permission to visit Tuglow cave was given by Kanangra-Boyd National Park Service in which the need for a permit (not just the consent fee) was waived. The council executive is to write to clarify permit conditions following this report. This is a contentious issue as the NSW SC have been working towards having the consent fee abolished for ASF clubs for two years.

The State's National Parks & Wildlife Service has been moved into a newly created state department called the Department of Conservation (DEC) late last year. This means many of the states Karst areas are now managed by DEC via the NPWS. In 2004, budget cuts were made to many NSW departments and this has impacted the NPWS at Bungonia who have a budget cut and no funds allocated for cave works. Low staff morale has also been noted. The advisory committee still operates and the NSW SC have representation on this, so we will be watching the situation with interest.

The DEC does not hold control of Jenolan, Wombeyan, Borenore or Abercrombie despite Government intentions. These areas, previously of the Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust, are currently under the control of an administrator. A bill that would have allowed the Director General of the DEC to manage the reserves as an alternate to the Trust was passed in the lower house but did not make it beyond the second reading in the upper house of Parliament. Being an issue of national importance, I assume further reports on this issue will be reported to the council elsewhere during the meeting.

The Department of Conservation (DEC) held a meeting with NSW ASF members in August / September 2004. They were interested in hearing our concerns about NPWS (DEC) managed karst areas. At this meeting a proposed structure of the Karst Policy Unit and its associated advisory committee was outlined. The structure is such that there maybe little or no input to front-line management of karst areas by the committee or the policy unit. Many Karst Management decisions would still be at the Regional level, with input via the regional advisory committees. While there is merit in the proposal, the commitment by the DEC to such a structure is contingent on the having the future management of the Jenolan caves Reserve Trust under its care and control. At the DEC meeting a draft document on the proposed Karst Management Policy was circulated. The council responded to this draft. Further work towards the policy is contingent on the outcomes of the JCRT issue.

On the discussion of Regional advisory committees, Kempsey Speleological Society have two members who were both successful in the nominations for the Mid North Coast Region NPWS Advisory Committee and the Northern Tablelands NPWS Advisory Committees, being Dr Philip Holberton and John Taylor respectively.

At the last meeting concerns were raised about the growing number of ASF memberships being granted outside club frameworks. That meeting felt that it was not ideal because among many issues, these members by-pass the club approval processes regarding trips and trip leaders. It was

noted that many management authorities simply have an access criteria of being an ASF member. It was suggested that the ASF keep in mind that it is up to clubs to assess competencies, including those relating to diving. It was suggested that the ASF Diving Special Interest Group should operate as a club.

In 2004, Evelyn Taylor (RSS) and Michael Bates (SUSS) joined Jodie Rutledge, Kevin Moore and Megan Pryke on the NSWSC Executive.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN SPELEOLOGICAL COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT **2004**

President: Peter Krahenbuehl

The SA Speleological Council is currently in recess. One of the main areas of common local purpose for the SASC was cross club training, which has been suspended due to ASF insurance issues. As other issues arise, the SA Council will be reconvened.

REPORTS OF COMMISSIONS 2004

ADMINISTRATION

Chris Dunne

In my recent reports I outlined the scheme to in future publish material which formerly comprised the 'ASF Administrative Handbook' to ASF's website <caves.org.au> instead of in book form. The web makes this material more accessible to both members and any other interested parties.

As previously reported, work is in hand to:

- consolidate a formal listing of ASF's codes, by-laws, etc.
- update, for historical purposes, information on past and present Commissions and Committees;
- finalise publication of the 'Roles and Responsibilities' for the Executive and Commissions/Committees;
- incrementally publish those items from the last edition of the Handbook which are absent or have been updated or added in recent years.

Despite my good intentions, I've made little progress on these fronts.

As regards archive material which I am holding for ASF, this comprises a mixture of fragmentary documents from the 1960s, 70s and 80s passed to me by others in ASF; Minutes and Reports from Meetings from the period when I was Minutes Secretary of the NSW Speleological Council in the early 1980s; Minutes and Reports from Meetings and Correspondence from the period I was ASF General Secretary between 1986 and 1993; papers in connection the period I was President of the NSW Speleological Council in the late 1990s.

There are other papers from my connection with the Cliefden tree planting project in 1999 and various papers of my own which in time I may pass on. It is intended to pass these to the ASF Library. There are probably about six boxes of material.

AWARDS

Lloyd Robinson

As the awards function is destined for scrutiny at the Dover Council Meeting, I have a few comments to make. As a voluntary organisation we have a fairly complicated awards system.

With the exception of frequency, ours is not unlike the process surrounding the Order of Australia. For many years our President also served as awards convenor. The executive resolved to relieve the President of part of the second role. In 2000 a separate awards convenor was appointed. To this day, confusion exists in the belief the awards convenor handles all award functions. There are two arms to the awards process:-

- a) A convenor who handles nominations etc.
- b) b) A selection committee, chaired by the President of the day, to determine the 'gongs', and writing nice letters to the awardees.

The response to calls for award nominations has never been good. While there is a fuzzy feeling at Conference Dinners when awards are announced, most of our cavers are not award conscious. Over the past 10 years, only 3 clubs have consistently provided nominations. Most have not nominated at all. Herein lies an obvious problem. The awards selection committee also has this problem when it considers bestowing an award originating from within the committee. Such candidates are more likely to be high profile types. Committee members are not knowledgeable of the activities of all our cavers, far from it. Costs also need to be taken into account when changes to the awards system are contemplated. The recipient selected gift associated with the prestigious Edie Smith award creates problems, so much so, our immediate past President intended to push for change to a common gift. Such a move would overcome some problems. Four Edie Smith award recipients are yet to nominate a gift. Our budget could get a jolt if they appear together, as occurred around 1988.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Greg Middleton

See Library Report

CAVE DIVING

Tim and Pam Payne

There is no need to report on specific cave diving activities, these have been reported widely in club and ASF journals; although it should be recognised that this of course represents only the tip of the iceberg of the total activities. The previous council passed a number of motions associated with cave diving. Namely the creation of a special interest group and a modification of the Cave diving code to require compliance with the ASF Cave diving competencies. Considerable effort has been expended, particularly by Paul Hosie, in preparing the documentation associated with the Cave Diving Special Interest Group (SIG) however this has yet to be completed and circulated. Reconciliation of the SIG intentions along with the intentions of the previously approved Cave Diving Group (CDG) and the recognition strategy for membership and competency assessment is non-trivial and it now looks unlikely that the document will be completed prior to the council meeting, we are however continuing to work on these documents.

CAVE SAFETY

\Vacant

CAVING LEADERSHIP STANDARDS

Chris Norton – NSW Leadership Standards Convenor

Introduction

I understand the ASF executive is interested in receiving a “report” from me in relation to this commission.

Given the operation of the Commission, there’s not really much that I can report to the Executive. However, I understand that the present Executive contains a number of members who are uncertain as to the history of the Commission. The position of National Convenor has been vacant for some time. In the absence of a National Convenor, I intend to use this opportunity to outline my recollection of the history of the Commission, and my understanding of how it operates. I’ll also offer some basic discussion points regarding its future.

Because this is all from memory, I can’t vouch for it being 100% accurate. Apologies for errors or inaccuracies.

The Push for Leadership Standards

The birth of this Commission, in the mid-1990s, was brought about principally by two independent events.

As I understand it, a reshuffle of Government responsibilities in South Australia saw a number of significant karst areas move to the control of a new Government department (from memory, this was the SA National Parks Service). Cavers were shocked when this department, struggling with how it was going to control access, told cavers that any people wanting access to certain caves would need to be able to demonstrate their competency as a caver. SA clubs were asked for assistance with the process of establishing standards to measure a caver’s competence for the purpose of this access requirement. In the meantime, access to many caves was suspended pending the scheme being drawn up.

SA cavers (and, I think, also WA cavers, who were facing the possibility of a similar requirement being imposed in the not too distant future), appealed to ASF for help in designing a scheme that would satisfy SA National Parks. ASF considered at the time that if any scheme was to be drawn up, it should not be hastily drawn to meet solely the SA concerns – rather, any scheme should be capable of application around Australia. There were two principal reasons for this:

- The scheme should permit interstate cavers who wanted to go caving in SA to be able to do so with a minimum of additional effort. If a nationwide series of standards was in place, and all cavers sought to meet those standards, then qualification under those standards would be transportable.
- It was possible that other landholders may seek to impose similar requirements for access in the future. If so, it would expedite matters for ASF to have an off-the-shelf scheme to offer to them.

Coincidentally, at around the same time there was a wave of pressure in the outdoor recreation industry in general to set down a scheme by which people with skills in leadership in outdoor recreation could have those skills recognised.

A substantial part of the push came from the commercial sector, who wanted to be able to easily identify skills of potential employees, possibly by way of a standard recognised qualification. They also sought to provide training of value to employees and improve definition of career paths within the industry. It also appeared that some commercial operators believed that if they could claim that their leaders were trained to a prescribed standard, it might make it easier to gain access to areas for their activities, particularly areas under control of government departments.

It was not only the commercial sector of the industry, however, which was involved in this process. Land managers, school groups, church groups and volunteer organisations all had some degree of involvement. The national industry process was known as NORLD – National Outdoor Recreational Leadership Development.

In the early 1990s, Mike Lake, in his capacity as ASF's national safety convenor, attended a meeting in Tasmania where there was extensive discussion of how to initiate the development of such a scheme. Mike recommended that ASF remain involved in this process, and noted the relationship between this process and ASF's internal decision to develop standards in relation to caving. ASF decided to remain involved, and what was happening in this national process strongly influenced ASF's development of what was to become the National Caving Leadership Scheme.

Development of National Competency Standards

At a national level, it was decided that the outdoor recreation industry could take advantage of the Federal Government's National Training Package. Under this initiative, industry was encouraged to describe the skills of participants in the industry in terms of competencies – skills that could be acquired, and tested. To gain a specific qualification, one would need to demonstrate that one had acquired all the necessary competencies for that qualification. How one acquired those competencies did not matter – what one had to demonstrate to an assessor was that one possessed them. Therefore, there was no need for people to go to expensive accreditation courses if they had already acquired skills by other means. This was considered highly appropriate for the outdoor recreation industry where many participants are taught through peer systems.

Once sets of competencies were approved, a person meeting those competencies was able, if they chose, to obtain a government-endorsed certification of competence. Organisations were able to submit courses to the Government for endorsement.

Of course, before this process could be put in place, the competencies had to be written for the relevant activities (the first of which included bushwalking, cross-country skiing, rock climbing, canoeing, white water rafting, and caving). This was a long process. Interested people from the industry were asked to put forward proposals and there were many meetings around the country developing various sets of competencies. ASF had significant input into the development of caving competencies. ASF nominated people in each state to attend and participate in meetings relating to this process. At one stage, a number of ASF representatives were flown to Adelaide for an intensive four-day session developing competencies. Attendees included Alan Jevons and Peter Krahenbuehl (SA), Nicholas White (Vic), Rauleigh Webb (WA), Stuart Nicholas (Tas) and myself (NSW). Fortunately for ASF, most other people in the industry were prepared to leave the bulk of the competency development for caving to the ASF representatives.

Following the direct industry input, a professional competency writer was engaged to write the competencies in the appropriate format for approval by the Federal Government. The competencies, including competencies for caving, were ultimately approved in about 1998.

The ASF National Cave Leadership Scheme

It is no accident that the ASF's National Cave Leadership Scheme was also finalised in 1998. In line with the national industry-wide process going on, ASF decided that accrediting leaders, rather than accrediting individual cavers, was the most appropriate form of accreditation system. ASF decided that its own leader accreditation scheme should be based on the national competencies being developed. If the various levels of the ASF scheme effectively mirrored the levels of certification under the national competencies, this meant that:

- ASF leaders trained to the nominated levels of competence under the scheme were trained to an equivalent standard as one which had received peer and government approval as being an appropriate level of competence for leaders of that kind.
- If ASF wished, or was required for access purposes, to formally certify leaders to the Government approved standard, it may be able to become a registered training organisation and perform that certification itself, hopefully saving potential costs to members.
- ASF had less risk of being 'left behind' by other sectors of the industry, particularly the commercial sector whom we perceived may increase pressure for access to caving areas by relying upon their leaders being qualified under the national competencies.
- Members may have an easier career path into the industry.

All this, including ASF's involvement with the development of the national competencies, was not without some opposition from within ASF. Many of the opponents did not fully understand the process, but some of the concerns were well-founded. ASF decided that any scheme of leadership accreditation introduced should meet the following criteria:

- It should be non-compulsory as far as ASF was concerned (that is, ASF would not require leaders to be accredited under the scheme). It would therefore be a matter for land managers whether they chose to require leaders of trips to areas which they managed to be accredited.
- The scheme should allow for training to continue to be performed by clubs in-house. An individual should not be required to travel significant distances and attend various courses in order to be accredited.
- The skills of existing leaders should be recognised.

The ASF Scheme was therefore developed to take all those factors into account. It was sent out to all clubs in 1998.

There was some discussion within ASF as to whether ASF should become a registered training organisation so that leaders qualified under the scheme could receive formal Government-endorsed qualifications, but it was ultimately decided not to do so (not least due to the potential expense involved).

The ASF Caving Leadership Standards Commission

Because of the need to consult widely amongst clubs, particularly in states where multiple clubs existed; and because the NORLD process involved significant work at individual state level, it was clear that one person could not possibly handle all the work on behalf of ASF. In addition, it was expected that the participation of people from different states would allow the ASF Scheme – and the national competencies – to accommodate the differences in practices dictated by the different cave environments encountered around the country. It was also considered that the development of the ASF Scheme should be regarded as a discrete task separate from – but related to – the Cave Safety Commission.

As a result, a new ASF Commission was formed. Its name has been reported in various forms but my understanding is that it was initially called the Cave Standards Commission, although that title may be considered misleading. More recently the commission has been referred to as the National Caving Leadership Standards Commission. Unlike some Commissions, although there was a national convenor, individual state convenors were also appointed.

My understanding of the relationship of the state convenors to the national convenor is that the state convenors were considered to sit underneath the national convenor in the hierarchy. That is, the state convenors reported to the national convenor, and the national convenor reported to the ASF Executive and Council. This is different to (say) the Conservation Commission where there are various state convenors who each report directly to the Executive and Council. The role of the state convenors in this commission was to assist in the dissemination of information from the national commission, to assist the national convenor in providing feedback on issues, and to participate at a state level in the NORLD process. I was endorsed as state convenor by the NSW Speleo Council, although I consider that it is not a “state commission” (as opposed to a national ASF commission). Rather, I have always understood the role to be a representative role in relation to the national commission. Other state convenors have included (from memory) Tony Watson (Vic), Stuart Nicholas (Tas), Rauleigh Webb (WA) and Mick MacRobb (Qld).

What happened to the National Competencies?

At the time the preparation of the National Outdoor Recreation Competencies was mooted, the process of developing these schemes was known as National Outdoor Recreation Leadership Development (NORLD). As time went on, however, NORLD – originally conceived as a process – spawned an organisation known as the Outdoor Recreation Council of Australia (ORCA). ORCA was an industry body consisting, at national level, of persons representing specific industries, and specific states. It was ORCA which was ultimately funded to write the actual competencies.

Because ORCA was to involve state representation, the members of the industry in each state were asked to decide upon a structure for the local arm of ORCA in their state. Models varied significantly and each state adopted a different model. At least for some time, the various ASF state convenors in the Cave Leadership Standards Commission represented ASF at the state level in ORCA.

In NSW, there existed a body known as the Outdoor Recreation Industry Council of NSW (ORIC). ORIC was at that time primarily a voice for the commercial sector of the industry. However, because of ORIC’s strength, and because most of those involved with NORLD from NSW were ORIC members, it was decided that ORIC would form the NSW arm of ORCA. The ORIC constitution was amended to allow non-profit and volunteer groups to join ORIC.

This posed difficulties for the NSW Speleo Council. For NSWSC to participate in ORIC, it would have had to have paid an annual fee of around \$250. NSWSC did not have the resources to fund

such expenditure. At the ORCA annual general meeting I protested about the fact that it was so expensive to be involved in ORCA in NSW when in other states the fees involved were nominal, or involvement was free. I expressed concern that an organisation that was supposed to be inclusive and to promote the provision of feedback from throughout the industry was effectively charging people a substantial sum of money for the 'privilege' of being consulted. However, these complaints fell on deaf ears, although NSWSC was given a trial free membership of ORIC for six months.

I ultimately recommended to NSWSC that they not join ORIC as I did not believe the expense was justified. I considered that although it was extremely disappointing not to have a voice in ORCA at a NSW level, ASF was represented on ORCA in other states, and Alan Jevons sat on the national board of ORCA as a representative of the volunteer sector overall.

This did not mean, however, that NSWSC's involvement in relation to the national competencies ceased. The competencies were administered at State level through the State Industry Training Advisory Boards. In NSW, the Recreation Industry Training Advisory Board (RITAB) (which covered, amongst other things, the outdoor recreation industry) was in charge of accrediting proposed courses and providing industry feedback on training issues. The RITAB set up an Outdoor Recreation Advisory Committee and I was invited to sit on that committee. A reasonable part of the work of that committee was reviewing courses sent in for evaluation by organisations which sought to have their programs accredited under the national competencies.

After a couple of years, meetings became infrequent and stopped altogether. I was informed that the ITAB structure had been overhauled by the Federal Government and the state ITABs had been abolished. Since that time I have had no involvement in the administration of the national competencies outside ASF.

I am not aware of how much involvement other State Convenors continue to have in relation to the national competencies – or, indeed, whether other State Convenors have resigned and not been replaced. I am also not aware whether ASF is still involved with ORCA or a similar organisation..

Activity in the ASF Commission

With the commencement of the ASF National Cave Leadership Scheme, the prime initial reason for creating the ASF Commission came to an end. However, continued activity in ORCA, at least, justified maintenance of the Commission. In addition, the Commission has the potential to review the operation of the Scheme if it sees fit. Also, a number of issues have arisen recently which, in my view at least, could potentially have been dealt with by the Commission.

The position of national convenor has been vacant for some time.

Prior to the resignation of the previous national convenor, I became concerned at the degree of communication between the national convenor and state convenors regarding issues which arose for consideration by the Commission. I became aware of several significant issues on which the national convenor had been asked for feedback and which he had provided without reference to the states, despite their being involved with the issues. I considered that the feedback provided was not entirely in accordance with what I understood to be the views of NSW clubs and I was concerned that one of the original purposes of appointing the state convenors – to facilitate fast consultation on issues of potential relevance to all ASF members – was not being fulfilled. I was concerned that the views being communicated to ORCA and others involved in national training on behalf of ASF were not representative of those the organisation would probably wish to be put.

There are two issues of which I am aware which have arisen in recent years where I consider the Commission could, perhaps have been put to better use.

One relates to the introduction of a requirement that persons caving on lands administered by the Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust be covered by insurance. At the time the Trust passed a resolution to this effect, it also resolved to consult with ASF regarding risk management practices relating to speleological activities. I was surprised that ASF's initial response to this invitation was to arrange a meeting that involved the National Convenor of the Caving Leadership Standards Commission, but not the State Convenor. Whilst there were possible national implications to any response made, I considered that the issue was first and foremost a NSW one and was surprised that the National Convenor had apparently not intended to involve me in that process in formulating ASF's response.

The second is related. Following receipt of that request, ASF apparently decided to consult nationally in relation to the issue of risk management. This led to the appointment of Bob Kershaw to head a group of people considering the issue of ASF's approach to risk management.

I was surprised that it was considered necessary to deal with this matter otherwise than through the Caving Leadership Standards Commission. Whilst I agree that the issue extends beyond that of leadership standards, the Commission has exactly the sort of structure that would have readily facilitated the necessary consultative process for this task, and I also consider that a considerable amount (although not all) of the material relevant to the risk management issue is clearly within the auspices of the Commission.

The matters which were the initial prime focus for the Commission have been completed. Since the resignation of the national convenor there has been little if any work done in the Commission of which I am aware. The ASF's website lists only the National Convenor and lists the position as vacant.

As I see it, ASF is faced with two choices – abolish the Commission, or re-invent it to a degree.

Abolishing the Commission may at first seem like an appropriate option. The position of National Convenor has been vacant for some time. I am unaware whether the other State Convenors continue to hold their positions; although if they continue to participate in ORCA at a state level there is clearly a continuing role for such Convenors.

However, I consider the basic structure of the Commission is well set up to tackle ongoing issues like that of risk management. Personally I consider a feedback structure of this kind is an excellent method of gathering information on such an important issue.

I also consider that the National Leadership Scheme is being underused, and could potentially benefit from review and overhaul. This could be a substantial task and would involve soliciting of comments from clubs. This may not, however, be a high priority for ASF at the moment. If the Commission is to be wound up, thought should be given to where responsibility would lie within ASF for the administration of this Scheme.

Also, with a possible update of terms of reference to take into account existing priorities, I consider the Commission could potentially provide services to ASF in line with ASF's current priorities.

It may be the case, though, that the Commission has fallen into such disuse that it would be easier to establish a new commission for any tasks the ASF sees fit to give it, even if those tasks are ones that the present Commission was theoretically equipped to handle.

CODES AND GUIDELINES REVIEW

Evalt Crabb

Once again, due largely to a long settling-in process in a new home, there has been little activity until late in the year. A call for submissions to review the Code of Ethics and the Minimal Impact Caving Code has been posted to the ASF-members email list. This includes a call for preliminary submissions to a scientific Code of Ethics proposed at the January 2004 ASF Council. I have included brief comment on the process of discussion, and dissemination. It is intended that there be regular summaries to develop consensus before final amendments (if any) are submitted to the Council.

HELICTITE

Susan White

Helictite has not had a particularly good year.

The major problem is that the editors have been unable to produce an issue in 2004, primarily due to lack of suitable material. The editors are unwilling to publish material which does not reach reviewed standards. Although the lack of suitable articles is not new for Helictite, while it was outside ASF, the problems of production were not ASF's problem. This could now become a serious public relations issue for ASF unless we can work through. I would not like to see Helictite cease publication under ASF's leadership.

Although *Caves Australia* serves a different market and the two publications should complement each other, there is a lack of communication between the two journals at the editorial and solicitation of material level. I believe we need to address this issue.

On the positive side, Helictite has a healthy financial position. Current Helictite subscriptions are a 124 total distribution comprising:

- Vol. 38 paid up subscribers = 97 (including 16 via subscription agents)
- Complimentary copies = 11
- Journal exchanges = 16

As well there are 80 paid up subscribers for Vol 39 (ie. some Vol 38 subscribers are still to renew). There are also 40 paid up subscribers in advance for Vol 40 and 3 for Vol 41. The subscription rate has been increased for Volume 39 onwards to \$27 (Australia) and \$30 (International) per volume. Please note that subscriptions are paid per volume not per year. The Commission will continue to monitor the subscription rate and we may need to increase it especially for international subscribers. The Commission remains financially viable but we need to continue to increase our subscriptions.

We hope to produce Volume 39(1) in 2005. We have one reviewed and revised article and some others at earlier stages of review. We have organised to publish papers and abstracts from the recent IGCP 448 Conference held at Naracoorte.

I would like to thank the Editors Ken Grimes, Stefan Eberhard and the Business Manager, Glenn Baddeley as well as the other commission members Grace Matts and John Dunkley.

INSURANCE**Joe Sydney**

To be presented at Annual General Meeting

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**Nick White**

I have assisted several people with contacts mainly for travelling purposes. Armstrong Osborne is a member of the IUS Commission and in particular maintains very active communications with European cavers and cave scientists.

ASF is supported the Limestone Coast 2004: International Conference at Naracoorte from Oct 10-16 2004. This is the final meeting of ICGP448 and a workshop on RAMSAR Subterranean Wetlands. A number of ASF members were directly involved in the organising committee. Armstrong Osborne conducted an associated trip to the impounded karst areas of NSW studying palaeokarst in particular. The conference suffered a bit from timing but was reasonably well attended from overseas. The organising group involved ASF members, ACKMA members and in particular it was convened by Elery Hamilton-Smith and would not have been possible without the support of Steve Bourne, Manager, Naracoorte Caves NP and his local support team. This Conference demonstrated the capacity of Australian speleology to cooperate in showcasing karst in Australia.

The 14th IUS Conference is to be held in Athens, Greece from 21-28 August 2005.

At the IUS meeting in Switzerland in 1997, ASF bid for the 2001 Conference. This bid for the Conference was very genuine and the instigator was Dr Julia James. ASF had very real support amongst ASF and in particular sufficient people with the drive and energy to organise such a Conference. Brazil won the vote for the 2001 Conference. There is some pressure for ASF to bid again to host an IUS Conference. My position is that such an undertaking should not be taken lightly.

The alternative to bidding for a full IUS Conference is to convene a Regional IUS meeting or a meeting of an IUS Commission. Australia has two regions with very fine volcanic caves and it has been suggested that Undara would provide suitable facilities and caves for a meeting of the IUS Commission on Volcanic Caves.

Recommendation:

The Council should appoint (or request the Executive to appoint) a Councillor to the IUS Council Meeting in Athens, Greece 2005.

The ASF Council should consider whether to/or not to nominate ASF to host the IUS meeting for 2009.

JOURNAL AND PUBLICATIONS**Joe Sydney**

To be presented at Annual General Meeting

LIBRARY**Cathy Brown**

A couple of sessions of accessioning & shelving were held. All Australian journals and most overseas journals are catalogued. Copies of the catalogue are available as Excel spreadsheets by email or post.

Thank you to all those clubs who regularly supply their newsletters, and also for the special reports received on karst research and karst management, notably from SRGWA and Tasmania.

As well as a copy of virtually every speleological newsletter and journal ever published in Australia since 1946 (for most of which abstracts are available), the ASF Library has a large collection of mostly unpublished cave conservation, management, historical and exploration reports, some of which are rare & valuable. During the year Greg Middleton spent several days abstracting this collection; details are available on request.

The Library also contains original or photocopied archival records from several clubs and individuals, and clubs should consider placing a restricted-access copy of their most valuable trip reports etc. in the ASF Library. However, we do not have the ASF's own archives. Some early material is held by the National Library of Australia but much of the rest is in the possession of a former Secretary.

Recommendations

That individuals and clubs consider placing a copy of valuable records in the ASF Library, subject to restricted-access conditions if required.

That negotiations proceed for the return of ASF archival records to the ASF Library

That the Council allows \$200 for library storage materials next year. We need some plastic folders and sleeves to help preserve some of the older material, and one off items, and need some more pamphlet boxes for the newer journals.

MEMBERSHIP

Jodie Rutledge

Membership

The Federation is currently made up of 26 Corporate Members and 2 Provisional Members. A total of 841 people made up our membership at the time of writing this report in November. This figure has fluctuated through the year due mostly due to large groups of 3-month Introductory members coming and going. 841 is the lowest figure recorded for the year, the highest figure recorded was 901 in July.

Cavers Leeuwin inc of Western Australia were accepted as Provisional Members of ASF through 2004. A motion will be raised at the next council meeting to accept Cline as Corporate members with full voting rights.

Association with ASF

ASF currently only has 5 associates. The executive through the year reviewed the fee charged to associates, which has traditionally been set the same as the base membership fee (currently \$82). The ASF executive have reset the Associate annual fee to a more reasonable \$40.

Teething problems with the ASF Insurance scheme

3 clubs do not contribute to the ASF Public Liability policy and their members are specifically excluded from it. These clubs are NUCC, FUSSI and SUSS.

This has caused some problems through the year for a hand-full of members who are primarily members with one of these 3 clubs but then want to participate on club trips hosted by the other ASF clubs who do contribute.

To avoid this problem I would like to ask that NUCC, FUSSI and SUSS offer their members the opportunity to contribute to the ASF Public Liability scheme if they fall into this category. Currently this would be an extra \$32.50 for a Student or Single or an extra \$58.50 for a Family. Or members could make a 'contributing' club their primary club so to be sure they are contributing to the scheme.

Magazine Subscription

The annual subscription to Caves Australia was increased through the year from \$15 to \$25.

Introductory Membership review

The last council resolved that a review of the Introductory membership category occur through 2004. Members Amy Ware and Susan White are co-ordinating this review with assistance by myself and a few others. A report is planned for the next council meeting on the review outcome.

Additionally, the related issue of the complex membership category system has been raised. Presently 22 different membership categories exist which is becoming difficult to manage. It is hoped that some solutions will be suggested as part of this review.

WEBSITE

Carol Layton

The ASF website has had a recent facelift designed to improve the navigation of the site and the text on the first page of the ASF website has been changed to recognise the role of the ASF as an Environmental Organisation, registered by the Department of the Environment and Heritage in Canberra with an invitation for tax-deductible donations. The recent change to the name of the ASF magazine, Cave Australia (formerly known as Australian Caver) has also been added.

The site now contains over 75 pages plus over 17 pages such as the accident form for downloading and printing. The new drop down menus are designed to make it much easier for people to find the information they need. There is a huge amount of information available and this is set to increase with page content currently in the planning by Paul Hosie and others on cave diving. The website's success is very dependent on people's contributions. I would like to take this opportunity to encourage members to contribute to the ASF website to make it as up to date, relevant and informative as possible.

This is particularly important as the website is frequently visited. Results from the *The Webalizer*, a web server log file analysis program shows that the ASF website receives about 800 'hits' and 80 'visits' a day. Hits represent the total number of requests from other computers to the ASF host computer (server) and visits occur when a someone requests any ASF *page* for the first time within a 30 minute period. As long as the same computer keeps making requests within 30 minutes, they will all be considered part of the same visit. This doesn't include requests for graphics and other

non page elements. Simply, the website is being used and the pages that are attracting a lot of the traffic are the Mapping Standards pages and the KID simple search page.

Cave Surveying and Mapping Ken Grimes

As usual, little activity. Only one query this year. A version of my "Cave Mapping - Sketching the Detail" Poster appeared in *Australian Caver* No. 160.

No recommendations for the council meeting (unless someone else wants the job!). No significant costs for 2004. No expected major costs for 2005.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES 2002

RISK MANAGEMENT

Bob Kershaw

The Risk Management Guidelines were placed on the ASF Website as per Resolution 27 pt1 from January 2004 Council meeting and they were sent to all clubs via email contact early in 2004, for their perusal and consideration. How many individuals or clubs actually read the guidelines is impossible to say.

I would like to thank those few individuals and CSS for their responses and feedback to the quick questionnaire sent widely in the caving community in October. But it is impossible at this time to evaluate the guidelines properly with this small return. Comments from these responses will be delivered to the ASF Council meeting.

The small number of replies could reflect that clubs and individuals are OK with the guidelines, or that more important matters have taken precedence and clubs have not had time to reply or that clubs etc do not care for extra ASF intrusion, control or paper work associated with risk management.

The evaluation may have to be conducted at the council meeting and as per Resolution 27 pt 3 of the 2004 council meeting: *"That a decision at the ASF Council Meeting in 2005 be made regarding the future of Risk Management and the ASF Guidelines".*

SOFTWARE SELECTION & DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP

Mike Lake

The implementation of updating ability for the KID is progressing smoothly, although behind schedule. I have been following the code development very closely. As I am writing the code that generates the PDF summary forms, and that sits on top of the programmers code, I have a good handle on what the programmer writes. The code quality and documentation is excellent and it will be ready for the January Conference.

There have been changes to the KID that users may have noticed. The KID received a new look which provides more space for results and six new searches were added; Cave Maps, Other Maps (e.g. topo, geological etc), Areas, Articles, Organisations & People. Under the hood the code now provides greater separation between the code for the database access and the HTML interface. This will make it easier to develop new searches or to modify existing ones.

A few researchers have expressed interest in the KID data and two countries have expressed interest possibly using ASF's code. Hopefully that interest will develop further. Look forward to the updatable KID in January.

EXECUTIVE MEMBERS 2004

President	John R Dunkley MEd, BEc, DipEd	Canberra
Senior Vice-President	Jay Anderson BPsych	Perth
Vice-President	Nicholas White MA, BSc	Melbourne
Vice-President	Chris Bradley BSc	Canberra
Vice-President	Joe Sydney	Sydney
Secretary	Winfried Weiss LBB, BCom	Maryborough, Qld
Treasurer	Grace Matts GradDipAdmin, SSoSJJ	Sydney
Membership Secretary	Jodie Rutledge RN, DipHealthSci	Newcastle
Executive Secretary	(vacant)	

PUBLIC ENVIRONMENTAL FUND DIRECTORS and MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Peter Berrill	Self-employed Businessman	Rockhampton
Maria Comino, LLB	Solicitor	Sydney
Anthony Culberg, BCom, DipEd, TTC Accountant		Hobart
John Dunkley, MEd, B.Ec., Dip.Ed.	Consultant & Company Director	Canberra
Kevin Kiernan, PhD	University lecturer	Hobart

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

National Convenor	Nicholas White, MA, BSc
Members:	Arthur Clarke BSc (Tas) Keir Vaughan-Taylor PhD (NSW) Jay Anderson BPsych, Peter Armstrong (WA) Eve Taylor (WA) Peter Berrill (Qld)

LIST OF CURRENT CORPORATE MEMBER CLUBS

STATE	CORPORATE MEMBER	ABBREVIATION
ACT	Canberra Speleological Society Inc	CSS
	National University Caving Club	NUCC
NSW	Baptist Caving Association	BCA
	Blue Mountains Speleological Club	BMSC
	Central West Caving Group	CWCG
	Highland Caving Group	HCG
	Hills Speleology Club Ltd.	HSC
	Illawarra Speleological Society Inc.	ISS
	Kempsey Speleological Society	KSS
	Macquarie University Caving Group	MUCG
	Newcastle and Hunter Valley Speleological Society	NHVSS
	Orange Speleological Society	OSS
	Rover Speleological Society	RSS
	Sydney University Speleological Society	SUSS
	University of Technology Sydney Speleological Society	UTS3
NT	Top End Speleological Society	TESS
Qld	Central Queensland Speleological Society	CQSS
	Chillagoe Caving Club	CCC
Vic	Caving Club of Victoria	CCV
	Victorian Speleological Association	VSA
SA	Cave Exploration Group South Australia	CEGSA
	Flinders University Speleological Society	FUSS
Tas	Northern Caverneers	NC
	Southern Tasmania Caverneers	STC
WA	Speleological Research Group of Western Australia	SRGWA
	Western Australia Speleological Group Inc.	WASG

Appendix One

ADDENDUM: Special Interest Groups

This report is a DRAFT procedure for Special Interest Groups within ASF, for discussion at the ASF Executive and Council Meetings, January 2005

Special Interest Groups: Rules and Policy, January 2005 *DRAFT*

I - The Role of Special Interest Groups within the ASF

1. Special Interest Groups (SIGs) allow members of ASF, who have a certain interest in common, to associate and communicate in a more detailed way than would be practicable amongst the total membership. The SIGs are simply groups of ASF members - they are not affiliated clubs, nor are they ASF "committees" of any sort.
2. In order to further pursue the ASF's Objectives (as set out in the constitution) it supports the formation, along the lines set out in this document, of Special Interest Groups of its members. ASF regards the SIGs as a full and integral part of the ASF.
3. Because of the specialist nature of the Groups' activities the ASF will allow them to have the maximum independence of operation.
4. The ASF recognises that individual SIGs may operate at differing levels of activity. ASF offers its full support to all Groups irrespective of the size of their membership.

II - Special Interest Group Rules

1. The name of the ASF may only be used once approval for a Group has been given by ASF and can be rescinded at any time by ASF. Groups must incorporate the name of the ASF in their title.
2. All members of a Group must be a Member of the ASF.
3. The day-to-day running and funding is each Group's own responsibility.
4. Groups shall be entitled to send a representative to ASF meetings, but that representative will not have voting rights unless co-opted or otherwise appointed in accordance with the ASF's constitution.
5. Regular contact must be maintained between each Group and ASF.
6. A report shall be presented to ASF annually
7. Each Group shall ensure that one copy of all the material it publishes is deposited with the ASF's librarian, and will similarly encourage copies of unpublished maps and reports to be lodged.
8. In the event of the dissolution of a Group, its realised assets after discharge of all liabilities shall be handed to the ASF. If the purpose of the dissolution is for the Group to re-form as a Corporate Member of the ASF and, if the ASF accepts such an application for membership, then the Group's realised assets shall be returned to it. In other situations ASF shall give due consideration to a request for a Group to retain its assets.
9. Groups must draft a simple constitution or set of rules for approval by ASF. (ASF will provide a model constitution on request - see sample). The constitution shall include a statement of the Group's aims, shall encompass the rules set out here, and shall include provision for
 - the administration of the Group by a committee of members of the group.
 - the holding of an Annual General Meeting.
 - a dissolution clause incorporating the requirements of clause 8 above
10. Nothing in a Group's constitution or rules shall be so construed, or be so amended, that it would contravene ASF's Constitution, or would have the effect of making the ASF cease to be an environmental organisation.

III - The Role of the SIG Liaison Officer (OPTIONAL CLAUSE)

To help with communications between the SIGs and ASF, ASF aims to appoint a liaison officer whose function shall be:

1. to actively represent the SIGs at ASF meetings where appropriate.
2. to maintain regular contact with the Groups
3. to submit an annual report,
4. to give the Groups day-to-day assistance with queries and problems
5. to answer enquiries about the formation of new Groups and to help new Groups in starting up.
6. to promote the SIGs and to perform other functions as shall be requested by ASF from time to time.

IV - Additional Information

This section elaborates on the basic SIG rules and ASF policy given in the preceding sections.

1. **The ASF's Library.** It is up to each Group to agree on their own arrangements with the ASF librarian, to ensure the deposit of all their published material with her, immediately after publication. Where possible, each group should also arrange to lodge copies of unpublished reports, maps etc. "Published" means "issued or distributed to the public". "Material" includes books, periodicals, journals and newsletters
2. **Reports.** Groups are encouraged to send regular brief reports (or a newsletter, etc.) to the Editor of Caves Australia, where appropriate.
3. **Contributions from non-members.** The ASF accepts Individual Membership, and it allows non-members to partake in some of its activities. ASF recognises that non-cavers may contribute significantly to its Objectives, and that this may be especially true in the SIGs which are, by their nature, specialist. It will not, therefore, treat a SIG adversely if its membership contains 'non-cavers', nor if its activities attract non-members, nor if it sells publications to non-members. But conversely, the specialist nature of a Group's activities may fall, to some extent, outside caving and so the ASF may occasionally require to direct a Group's policy in this regard.
4. However, ASF has a responsibility to manage risk responsibly, especially as this may affect insurance requirements. Members of SIGs need to be aware that insurance may operate only for activities conducted in the name of ASF, an ASF SIG, or a member club of ASF. ASF therefore expects that where caving activities are undertaken by a SIG, all participants will be properly qualified members of ASF. .

Corporate Members. Since the SIGs are groups of individual ASF members, it is not possible for Corporate ASF members (i.e. Clubs, Commercial and Affiliated organisations) to join a SIG.

Based on the BCRA policy by: **David Gibson. Subject: BCRA/SIG Rules & Policy, File: POLICY02.DOC, Date: 04/04/97**

ASF Special Interest Groups: Sample Constitution

This **sample** constitution is **based** on a version similar to our British counterpart BCRA, amended for the proposed ASF Cave Diving SIG.

Some parts of this sample may not be particularly practical; and if you are thinking of starting a SIG, please discuss it with the ASF SIG liaison officer, who can advise you. Don't forget to read the SIG policy document.

0. Name of the Group

1. The group is a Special Interest Group (SIG) of the ASF and shall be called the ASF xxx Special Interest Group; referred to here as "the Group".

1. Objectives of the Group

1. The Group aims are:
2. In pursuance of its Objectives, the Group shall at all time be guided by the regulations determined by the ASF.
3. Members of the Group shall keep in mind the Objectives of the Group, and of the ASF. Their practical work shall be carried out in a responsible, scientific and environmentally sustainable manner in keeping with the environmental objectives of ASF and the relevant ASF codes of practice.

2. Management of the Group

1. The Group shall be managed by a committee consisting of not less than three elected members and any other members as shall be determined by a simple majority vote of members at a General Meeting of the Group.
2. All officers and members of the committee shall take office following their election and shall retire annually but shall be eligible for re-election.
3. The Group shall hold an Annual General Meeting during each year. Motions for discussion must be submitted to the secretary in writing prior to commencement of the AGM. Notice of AGMs shall be made to all members giving at least 28 days' notice of date, venue and time. Non-receipt of notification shall not invalidate the meeting.
4. Extraordinary General Meetings shall be convened as required, upon unanimous vote of the committee or upon the presentation to the committee of a written motion signed by not less than 5 members or 50% of the membership whichever is the least. EGMs may only discuss the motion proposed in the notice. Notice of EGMs shall give at least 28 days' notice of date, venue and time. Non-receipt of notification shall not invalidate the meeting.
5. All persons entitled to vote at meetings, and those voting by post/email where applicable, excepting the chairman, shall have one vote.
6. All members of the Group shall have a right to participate and vote at General Meetings either in person or by sending a letter/email to the secretary, to arrive not less than three days before the meeting, expressing their participation and/or vote. Members may accompany their vote with a letter of no more than 500 words to be read out at the meeting. Non-receipt of postal votes shall not invalidate the meeting. Voting by proxy will not be permitted.
7. Alterations to the constitution of the Group shall be made only at an Annual General Meeting. Alterations shall only be made in accordance with clause 1.3. A dated constitution shall be submitted to the ASF Executive for approval and shall not be brought into force until such approval has been given.
8. The committee shall be free to organise the conduct of its business. The powers of the committee shall be limited to the objects of the Group and guided by the regulations determined by the ASF.
9. At all meetings where there is any doubt or question as to the procedure etc., the Chairman's ruling shall be final.
10. A quorum of five members shall be required for any General Meeting.
11. Any matter of doubtful interpretation, or not provided for in the Constitution, shall be dealt with by the Committee of the Group pending endorsement at a General Meeting, subject to the requirements of the Constitution.

3. Management of Funds

1. The funds of the Group, if any, shall be placed in an account that shall have the title ASF "XXXXX" Group. The account shall have no less than two signatories, being the ASF Treasurer and one other ASF Executive Member. One or more members of the Group may also be signatories to the account.
2. Proper books of accounts and an inventory of apparatus or other material held by the Group shall be kept, and a report of the Group's activities including a simple sheet of accounts and inventory shall be submitted to the Treasurer of the ASF at least once a year.

4. Membership and Cave Diving Trips

1. Election to membership and termination of membership shall be as determined by the Group.
2. All members of a Group must be members of the ASF (Individual or Corporate).
3. Any diving trip organised by the SIG in the name of the Group and/or of ASF and/or an ASF member club shall be authorised in advance by the Committee
4. When caving activities are undertaken in the name of the Group or of ASF, all members will be properly qualified for the activities undertaken.

6. The Group and the ASF

1. The Group shall ensure that one copy of all the material it publishes is deposited with the ASF Librarian, and will endeavour to also lodge copies of unpublished maps and reports etc.
2. Regular contact must be maintained between the Group and the ASF, including a brief Annual Report.
3. In the event of the dissolution of the Group, its realised assets after discharge of all liabilities shall be handed to the ASF. If the purpose of the dissolution is for the Group to re-form as a Corporate or Provisional Member of the ASF, and if the ASF accepts such an application for membership, then the Group's realised assets shall be retained by the Group. In other situations ASF shall give due consideration to a request for the Group to retain its assets.
4. Nothing in the Group's constitution shall be so construed, or be so amended, that it would contravene the ASF's constitution, or would have the effect of making the ASF cease to be an environmental organisation.

5. Dissolution of Group

1. The dissolution of the Group may take place after a postal ballot/email of all members of the Group if there is a simple majority of those voting in favour of such a dissolution. Members shall be given a minimum of 28 days in which to register their vote in any such ballot.

Based on material by: *David Gibson. Subject: Revised CREG constitution, File: CONS96-1.DOC, Date: 09/04/96*