

AUSTRALIAN SPELEOLOGICAL FEDERATION  
Inc.

ANNUAL REPORT  
2005

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**AUSTRALIAN SPELEOLOGICAL FEDERATION Inc.****ANNUAL REPORT 2005****PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2005**

**Presented by Jay Anderson**

Recently a friend was talking to me about two key concepts – identity and destiny. I consider that these two concepts are important at an individual level, but also at a corporate level. For the ASF, “where we came from” and “where we are going” are two issues that I would like to address. Firstly, where are we from? The importance of our history and the development of the ASF as an organisation will be commemorated this coming year as we celebrate and remember the development and progression of the ASF. Where this organization is today, is a result of a lot of hard work by a large number of individuals, working as volunteers and as a team – right across Australia!!

The majority of ASF members belong to a corporate group. For many of you the ASF is a big “body” out there - perhaps with faceless people, unfamiliar names and distance. The ASF is a volunteer organization and many of the members involved are active members in their own State. I cannot highlight the importance of being involved at some level in either the organization of your speleological group – whether that is at a State or a National level. It's through the activities that we participate in that we are able to network, share skills and information and get to know people better. Perhaps in your State, there are several club members who are keen to progress a particular issue or project and you could assist in some way. Maybe you are interested in being a part of a small group or committee to work together on developing a plan or project? Everyone has something to contribute and we look forward to your input.

So, do you know why 2006 is to be a significant event? The beginning of this organization started 50 years ago. Do you know how this happened? Have you got any historic documents, stories or photographs that you'd like to share? Many of the ASF Corporate members have recently been celebrating their own significant anniversaries and achievements. Are you interested in organising an event in your state to celebrate the ASF 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, or to raise the profile of the organization? Do you have some ideas and suggestions? If so, then contact the executive – your assistance would be much appreciated.

Last year, the ASF President, John Dunkley, said that “I continue to be astonished that in so many instances, unpaid volunteers among ASF's ranks throughout Australia manage to achieve more for cave conservation than salaried staff in many national parks and similar administrations..... Where would be without volunteers, then?”

The ASF is able to achieve so much, and we should all be proud of the organization that we are. However we need to remember that to move forward, some changes are often required. I have a vision for the ASF and this involves our organisation becoming stronger financially, whilst maintaining our independence. It would be excellent if the ASF was more able to support our valuable volunteers and better able to fund projects and progress important publications, such as the Living with Karst publication (proposed at the 2005 Council Meeting). However in many cases, obtaining funding either means significant fundraising, seeking grants by compiling funding submissions or donations – all of which take considerable volunteer time. I'd like to see the ASF plan to become a financially independent

organization – not an organization reliant on whatever we can scrape together from membership and occasional grants. What’s your vision for the ASF? Give me a call and tell me about it!!

I feel that the ASF should be looking to having a professional presence in the environmental conservation arena and a paid administration to handle the day-to-day operations of the organization. The executive will be meeting this year to plan for the ASF’s future. It is important that the ASF undertakes some forward planning, some strategic goal setting and examines its aims and objectives. This is an exciting time – memories of the past and visions into the future!

## **Key issues of 2005**

### **Environmental Fund**

The Environmental Fund (or “Gift Fund”) is registered by the Australian Taxation Office and the Commonwealth Department of the Environment and Heritage as a Registered Deductible Gift Recipient, meaning that donations are tax-deductible. The work on administrative procedures for operating the Fund is ongoing and there will be further discussions on this important part of the ASF during the next Council Meeting. It would be excellent if all members could assist by either contributing Donations to the Fund or by sharing information about this part of the ASF to other individuals and community groups.

### **Conservation Issues**

There are many significant karst conservation issues that need progression. It would be excellent if each club could commit to dealing with a key issue or project.

### **Publications**

Thanks to the committed work of ASF members, the publications “Helictite” and “Caves Australia” continue to be developed and produced. I encourage more members to send in articles and photographs.

The steering committee has continued to progress the ASF Conservation Campaigns book. Keep an ear out for news on this exciting publication that is in the pipeline!

### **Membership**

As foreshadowed last year, the ASF has been able to keep membership fees stable and unchanged for a number of years. However the Council will need to discuss future fees in conjunction with a consideration of the ASF Annual Budget. The Council will also be discussing two options regarding the proposed development of the ASF membership database.

### **Insurance**

The premium for 2005-2006 was within the ASF contingency buffer & accordingly the premium was paid. It is of concern however that the “Insurance Commissioner position is still currently vacant.

### **Risk Management Issues**

As you can see by the proposed motions for the Council meeting, the issue of risk management is again on the agenda. It is of concern however that the “Commissioner” position is still currently vacant.

### **The Next ASF Conference**

The next ASF Conference will be the 26<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference of the ASF and its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. This Conference will be held in South Australia. I am advised that plans for the Conference are progressing well and I look forward to seeing many of you there!

It's been an exciting, rewarding and somewhat challenging year. I'd like to thank the executive for their support and for their ability to work together on a range of issues. In particular, I'd like to thank all of the ASF members who volunteer of their time to participate, co-ordinate or get involved with some aspect of the running of this organization. Thanks and I look forward to this time next year, when we will all be celebrating the ASF 50<sup>th</sup>!!

### **ASF TREASURER – Annual Report 2005**

To be presented at Annual General Meeting.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL FUND REPORT 2005**

**By John Dunkley & Peter Berrill**

An auction held in conjunction with SpeleoMania in Dover raised over \$1,600, thanks to Joe Sydney's skills, and this together with other donations during the year brought the Fund to approximately \$8,500. The Directors believe that at least \$30,000 is required within a few years to provide a firm foundation for the Fund's ability to make grants.

During 2005 the Fund received its first application for a Grant, and the Directors agreed to a grant which was to supplement a project being funded primarily by a government organisation and carried out by an ASF member society. This is just the kind of project that we are anxious to promote, but receipt of the application highlighted the fact that the Directors and ASF needed to finalise agreed operational procedures for considering applications, and for operating the Fund generally.

Since ASF was accepted as an Environmental Organisation in 2001, advice about how to run the Gift Fund has been sought from organisations similar to ASF, from within ASF, and from outside experts. As wide consultation was required, a draft has been in circulation for several years, has been discussed by the Directors, the ASF Executive and Council, and several revisions made. However ill-health and absence overseas of key Directors have delayed finalising the Guidelines. It is essential that the ASF Council and Executive complete this task at the January 2006 meeting. A final Draft forms part of this report and a number of motions are proposed for the Council Meeting.

Discussions with officers of the Department of Environment and Heritage in Canberra revealed that briefer names for funds such as ours are preferred by the Department, would perhaps be better for our own publicity purposes, and would be readily approved. Any such change should be discussed widely within ASF and would require a change to the name shown in the ASF Constitution, so could not be made for at least twelve months.

At a meeting in December 2005, the Directors agreed to establish a Management Committee, to appoint Peter Berrill and John Dunkley to that Committee, and agreed to make the following recommendations for the ASF Council:

1. That the Directors recommend that ASF endorse the Draft Guidelines (attached)
2. That ASF be requested to consider whether a shorter name for the Fund would be preferred
3. That ASF be invited to nominate at least one member (to the Management Committee).

4. That in consultation with ASF, the Management Committee be requested to seek the best possible advice in drawing up a Business Plan dealing with fund-raising targets, publicity, seeking appropriate projects to support etc.

Attached: Operational Procedures (Guidelines) for the Gift Fund, including relevant extracts from ASF Constitution [See Attachment 1 of Annual Report]

## **CONSERVATION COMMISSION REPORTS 2005**

### **NATIONAL CONVENOR**

**Nicholas White**

The major issue which continued during the year was the NSW Government's appointment of an Administrator to the Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust, refusal to reinstate the Trust and the proposal to manage the Reserves from within the Parks and Wildlife Service. The campaign opposing these moves was conducted through the NSW Speleological Council and Keir Vaughn Taylor. The ASF had legal advice that the Minister had acted illegally in disbanding the Trust which ASF wanted to test. The application for legal aid was ultimately rejected on the grounds that ASF had too many assets. The ASF Executive decided they should not put these assets at risk to fund action alone. The main reason being that the assets were not available as they were tagged and budgeted for other ASF liabilities such as insurance, Caves Australia, Helictite and the Karst Index. The campaign succeeded in having the legislation delayed in the Upper House and a number of amendments were made to the legislation that was ultimately passed. At the present time we await a request to comment on the draft Management Plan before it is released for public comment. The team that conducted this campaign are to be commended even if the objective of re-instating the Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust was not successful.

Management Plans are now the government tool behind which Ministers and managers hide behind to duck, dodge or otherwise obfuscate when put on the spot with questions to do with cave and karst management. ASF and its member societies need to ensure that our voice is heard during the drafting of Management Plans for karst areas and that we build into such plans accountability provisions. Where the plans are too prescriptive to judge management performance then we should conduct our own audits of performance. When existing plans are stale then we should insist they be reviewed.

At the last ASF Conference Jan 2005 in Dover many things were put in motion through the energetic discussions. Some of these are not purely Conservation Commission business and will be effected through the Publications Commission whilst others need a much closer focus within the Conservation Commission.

The first is a book that is in preparation being a historical treatise on the major cave and karst conservation campaigns that ASF and its member societies have been involved in. These changed the nature of conservation politics in Australia in that innovative campaign strategies were used such as court challenges and shareholder action at company Annual meetings.

The second was a proposal for a booklet titled "Living with Karst". A very detailed outline of this booklet was prepared and submitted to the National Heritage Trust for funding. We were not successful which leaves us with the need to prepare more local materials for karst areas or find the resources or sponsorship to proceed ourselves. The booklet is to change the perceptions in Australia about karst. Coastal plains from Cape Range to Eastern Victoria are karst or underlain by karst. For too long Australians have abused these karst resources by excessive water use, pollution and other

processes. This booklet is for outreach work in communities that live and depend on karst areas for their living.

Last year the Council approved a document allowing Karst Conservancies to be recognised. This will allow volunteer groups such as “Karst Watch, Mole Creek” and “Friends of Buchan Caves”, to become associated with ASF. Action is needed to recognise these groups and provide them with publicity and other assistance. Many of them do vital restoration, education and conservation work in cave and karst Reserves and Parks.

The Bungonia State Recreation Area is one of the outstanding karst reserves in New South Wales. For some years management has had to respond to pressures of increased use. The adjacent lands are also under increased development pressures such as new quarries and more intensive farming operations requiring water pumping from local karst aquifers which could be detrimental to the Reserve. A very much more direct threat occurred through the year which was a proposal to conduct a competitive adventure race in the Bungonia Caves. Fortunately the Bungonia Recreation Activities Group and the Parks Service had policies in place which were used to deny access for these purposes. In New Zealand more recently with very much more encompassing legislation a similar application for a cave to form part of an Adventure Race was allowed despite very spirited objections by NZSS and others. The Land Manager had to give Environmental Consent to allow the race organisers to use the cave and imposed many conditions on the allowed access, mainly that the cave portion of the race not be part of the timed race. To avoid such conflicts we need to ensure that legislation under which caves are protected across Australia is adequate for preventing “adventure races” through them.

Member societies have been successful in obtaining grants for cave and karst conservation purposes (WASG and NHVSS). These are detailed elsewhere in this Annual Report.

Keir Vaughn Taylor has been instrumental in persuading the Wellington Shire Council to protect Anticline Cave by fencing and landscaping the entrance as well as cleaning it of rubbish. This cave had been covered over by a carpark but then it collapsed in again! This kind of cave rescuing can only occur if we are vigilant and stay ahead of “engineering solutions”.

Elsewhere in this Annual Report recommendations have been put forward concerning the Environment Fund. It is vital that the Fund have this operating machinery, as in time the Fund will provide the capacity to support our endeavours across the whole spread of cave and karst protection, management and conservation.

### **Recommendations**

1. That a review of legislation in all States and Territories of Australia under which caves are reserved be conducted to assess the adequacy of mechanisms to address new developments such as changes in usage (adventure races). *(Such a review could be much more expansive than this but we need a starting perspective on legislative adequacy for cave protection).*
2. Prepare and maintain a list of Government Advisory and Management Committees which provide advice on cave and karst areas in Australia. Maintain a list of members on these Committees. As a policy position ASF and its member societies should endeavour to be represented on each and every relevant committee.

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**QUEENSLAND CONSERVATION COMMISSION REPORT**  
**Queensland Convenor – Peter Berrill**

For the second consecutive year I have had very little time or energy to give to conservation. However I have managed to keep pace with the ever- evolving issues at Mt. Etna. Post-mining land tenure is the current issue and Cement Australia is moving ahead on the issue with considerable pace. I was able to attend all of the meetings except for one. As previously reported, Government Departments have stated that they will not be involved with future management of the quarried areas of Mt. Etna, even though they adjoin the National Park and are being rehabilitated.

Cement Australia is now looking for interested community organizations that are capable of taking control of, and managing this land for the future. Vice President John Dunkley travelled to Rockhampton in early April 2005 and met with Cement Australia to discuss the future land tenure matter

I have stated at all of the meetings that because this land was previously karst and adjoins the National Park that it must be managed in a manner that complements the cave systems and for that reason ASF must be involved. A motion reflecting the above has been moved.

The most exciting event of the year was to watch the crushing plant at Mt. Etna being demolished. Of course I have photographs of this historic event. It was built and located on-site during the mid 1960's. I have asked the manger for the total amount of, "crushed Mt. Etna", that went through the plant. He has promised me the figures. Accordingly all other infrastructure such as workshops and offices has been removed and the area has been landscaped. During the past two years they have spent approximately \$3,000,000 on landscaping. Rehabilitation is continuing, however, I believe that it will shortly be winding back.

**New South Wales Co-convenor – Keir Vaughan-Taylor**

Nil report at time of collation. See NSW Speleo Council report.

**VICTORIAN CONSERVATION COMMISSION REPORT**  
**Victorian Co-convenor – Nicholas White**

A number of members of ASF are on the Cave and Karst Advisory Committee to Parks Victoria. This Committee is becoming better known across Victorian karst areas and there is now a more proactive role be taken by Parks Victoria in referring questions to the Committee. Recently we provided advice on Bunyip State Park which has one of the most visited caves of the State (Labertouche Cave). the Committee was consulted about the forthcoming ACKMA conference (Buchan May 2007) and a number of members are now on the organising committee for this conference.

Graffiti at Loch Ard Gorge and elsewhere in Port Campbell National Park still remains a problem. Several tentative stages of cleaning it off have been tried but as yet there is not a concerted plan to remove all graffiti and an objective for responsive ongoing management of the problem!

## **WA CONSERVATION COMMISSION REPORT**

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

Once again there has been a lack of progression regarding karst management and conservation of karst issues in WA. As discussed in the previous years report, three of the key karst areas in the State have long expired management plans. Over the past 2 year period, despite several consultation meetings with CALM regarding these areas, there is still no draft management plans released for any of those areas.

We would like to reiterate the importance of management of karst areas and the necessary required specialist knowledge. As such, it is felt that the Government should be “seeking” consultation from speleologists 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. 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.

The contact with the Natural Resource Management (NRM) Rangelands group (made in 2004) regarding the Nullarbor has continued. It is hoped that this liaison will continue to raise the profile of the importance of the Nullarbor karst and the lack of information that exists on the natural resources in this area. An ASF representative has been able to attend 3 community consultative meetings regarding the issue of the Rangelands Nullarbor region. It is hoped that there will be funding set aside for a small project on the Nullarbor, this is yet to be confirmed.

The WA speleological groups have had several information requests regarding karst areas in the north of Perth. Further liaison with an environmental consultant acting for a land developer has raised the issue of private management of a cave in the Peel region, as it is reported that no other Government (local or State) agency is interested in the management of this particular cave. This issue shows the opportunity for future partnerships between organizations with similar environmental objectives. There is an opportunity for ASF members to work with a landowner regarding planning for environmental protection at the local level. We look forward to reporting on progress towards this issue in the future.

Conservation issues reported on previously regarding the vulnerability of the karst area to the north of Perth (due to human development) 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). The WASG received confirmation of two grant applications – one for the Yanchep area and another for the Cape Range area (these are reported in more detail at the relevant section). Once again, there are plans to continue involvement in public education, through community displays, participation in community events and presentations.

One issue has just been brought to our attention as this report was being written. There is currently a proposal regarding mining on Christmas Island. It is reported that Christmas Island Phosphates have released a draft EIS for 8 new lease areas in mainly undisturbed rainforest Christmas Island crown land. There is a potential impact on the area’s hydrology and karst systems. There is only a short, 6 week public comment period (closing 31/12/2005) and there will be strong liaison with the WA Conservation Council and the WA Wilderness Society regarding this issue. For more information see <http://www.christmasislandeis.com/>

**More specific Details regarding each WA karst area is outlined below:**

## **1. South of Perth:**

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

The Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park Management plan, dated 1989-1999 has not been finalised or renewed. CALM advise that this is “progressing”, however several sections are still to be completed. A tentative date of February 2006 is given for the release of a draft.

There are four “Aquatic Root Mat Community in Caves of the Leeuwin Naturaliste Ridge”. These are a “Threatened Ecological Community” that are listed under the EPBC Act as endangered. A recovery plan is in place and CALM has a specialist recovery team that meets to address issues.

The Cave Management Advisory Committee (C.M.A.C.) continues to meet bi-monthly to advise The Department on cave management issues. This process continues to work really well and various projects have been carried out with speleological members during the past year. These include: Work at Bride Cave and Nannup Cave and ongoing 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 2005 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 CALM 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 has a new gate and still receives visitation. It is understood that access to this cave is permitted via application to the Shire.

### **1C Karst in the Mandurah Region**

As reported previously, there is no management of the karst system adjacent to the Dawesville Estuary. The caves in this area are of a variety of tenure, either on private property or in areas of bushland. Further work needs to be undertaken in this area, including public education.

There has been recent contact with an environmental consultant acting for a land developer in the Peel Region. This has raised the issue of private management of a cave, as it is reported that no other Government (local or State) agency is interested in the management of this particular cave. This issue shows the opportunity for future partnerships between organizations with similar environmental objectives. There is an opportunity for ASF members to work with a landowner regarding planning for environmental protection at the local level. This issue needs to be progressed and discussions with the companies involved need to occur.

Due to contacts made during the project reported on in this segment in the last report, there has been further liaison from construction companies when undertaking works in karst areas. In particular the area to the north of Perth has had several requests for information from speleologists. This is a positive action, which is excellent to report that consultation and liaison on karst issues is occurring.

## **2. To the East:**

### **2A The Nullarbor**

The Nullarbor is a large, significant karst area, where visitation impacts on the karst system are difficult to assess. It is clear to many speleologists that the Nullarbor is an area that desperately needs appropriate management. There is still no “on-ground” management of the caves and karst, and as

such, there is no monitoring of impacts or conditions. The Nullarbor has been the major action area in regards to any karst area in WA during 2005. Although, there have been several interagency NRM consultative meetings regarding this, the consultative karst workshop referred to in the 2004 report (involving Government and speleologists, to determine some management prescriptions for the area) is yet to occur. The Government agencies responsible have undertaken little formal steps towards implementing any karst management actions or management plans.

This area of karst in WA continues to receive extensive trips and expeditions – both from organised speleological groups and other groups. Several cave diving trips have also undertaken further study in this area. There are a range of purposes to the trips – from recreation to research – including documenting and describing karst features to documenting subterranean fauna and habitats. The troglotic fauna are listed here as an example of fauna that are known to be threatened in this karst area. There are 4 arachnids on the Schedule 1 list, all listed as vulnerable. These are: *Tartarus mullamullangensis*, *Tartarus murdochensis*, *Tartarus nurinensis*, *Tartarus thampannensis* and *Troglodiplura lowryi*. In particular, there is a recent find to report that a new species of troglomorphic centipede from the Roe Plains has been described (published in the Records of the Western Australian Museum, Volume 22, Part 4, 2005 by Gregory D Edgecombe). The *Cryptops (Trigonocryptops) roeplainsensis* sp. nov. has been collected in 3 Roe Plain caves.

As reported in 2004, the WA Speleological Groups have made contact with the Natural Resource Management (NRM) group for the Nullarbor. It is hoped that involvement by speleologists 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. In the latter part of 2005, there has been extensive involvement of the ASF in the planning process. This has involved considerable liaison between various ASF members with knowledge, skills and experience of the Nullarbor and of karst management. The WA Speleological Groups provided a representative for the ASF to the following workshops/meetings:

27 September 2005	Teleconference	Rangelands	NRM	Biodiversity	Project
	Development – Nullarbor project				
10 October 2005. 4-6:00	Special Group Discussion - Sub Project 3 – Under the Nullarbor: Management and Biological Inventory of Nullarbor Karst.				
10 November 2005. 9-12:00	South Coast Threatened Invertebrate Recovery Team				
10 November 2005. 9-4:00	Biodiversity Steering Group Project Development Workshop				
14 December 2005. 9-4:00	Biodiversity Steering Group Project Workshop				

We await an outcome and an update on how the ASF and local WA based speleological groups can continue to be involved in this process. There is a small project planned, however due to strong competition for funding it is not yet sure whether this project will be allocated any funding.

## **2B South Coast Management Plan**

There has been no progress on the Regional management plan, dated 1992-2002.

## **2C 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. The ASF has formally stated its concern with the management of this area, however further official actions need to be taken. This area 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 little further progress on this and CALM state that it is possible a draft may be circulated in April 2006. 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 is a need for an integrated approach to management in the area. In this area, speleological group members continue to work very closely with CALM staff: providing education about karst issues, training of CALM staff and assisting with local projects.

The “Aquatic Root Mat Community in Caves of the Swan Coastal Plain” are a listed species under the EPBC Act. This is listed as a “Threatened Ecological Community” that is endangered. A recovery plan is in place and CALM has a specialist recovery team that meets to address issues.

The main concern is 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 Government project to direct artificial supplementation to the cave stream in the Crystal Cave was considered successful and significant funding was provided. 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 understood that this project lasted only several weeks and that the water has been switched off due to concerns regarding oxidised irons in the karst system. 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. We reiterate that 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. 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. It is concerning that the National Park still does not have a dedicated scientific officer to oversee or monitor the adaptive research that is occurring in the National Park. There is a need for specific monitoring and implementation of plans. The WA Government needs to address these issues as a matter of priority.

Unfortunately, CALM has still not obtained 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 the management of this important karst area.

#### **Sharing Australia’s Stories – A local partnership project**

During July 2005, WASG was announced as one of the successful applicants for a “Sharing Australia’s Stories” Grant from the Commonwealth Government (Department of Environment and Heritage). The Sharing Australia’s Stories Programme supports Activities/projects that help tell the story of the nation. This project will increase public awareness of a rare and uncommon karst and cave system. This project is part of the speleological groups’ broader goal to raise the profile of this special karst system and to educate the community about karst systems. The Project is to be

completed within a year of the signing of the Agreement and the funding received was for \$5,200. The WASG would like to acknowledge the financial and other support it has received from the Australian Government to allow this exciting project to proceed.

This project involves the installation of thematic and informative interpretative signs/displays along Boomerang Gorge walk trail at Yanchep that tell a story of natural processes that form karst systems and caves, and this particular karst systems national significance. The project will communicate on a local and national scale the importance of this karst and cave system and the unique natural processes that have made this area of national significance possible. This project will involve a partnership between the following community volunteer groups – Western Australian Speleological Group (WASG), Speleological Research Group Western Australia (SRGWA), Yanchep Caves Advisory Committee (CALM Advisory Group) and the Yanchep National Park Volunteer Group. The CALM, Yanchep National Park, will provide advice on a needs basis and provide assistance (in-kind) with installation of works. There have been two workshops to prepare the interpretive displays and the project is progressing well.

### **3B Carabooda Area:**

There has been no further progress on the issue of the planned road in the Alkimos Area and the task to address this issue is ongoing. It remains of great concern that there is a road planned to go straight over a number of significant caves. The tasks required 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 and this issue needs to be progressed further as a priority.

The WA speleological groups have had several information requests regarding karst areas in the north of Perth. On both occasions there were no known karst features recorded in the areas discussed, however it is unclear whether the areas had been completely assessed for karst features. It was recommended to the inquirer that speleologists be involved further in a karst inventory of one particular area. There is an opportunity for ASF members to work with a landowner and a company regarding planning and development issues at the local level. We look forward to reporting on progress towards this issue in the future.

### **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.

The City of Wanneroo Environmental Advisory Committee continued to meet bimonthly during part of 2005. The committee’s meeting times have since been revised and altered and no meeting has occurred since August. The committee plays an important role and can assist in raising the profile of karst in the area. The speleological representative provided a presentation on karst systems at the July meeting and this was well received. Documents that need review by the City of Wanneroo include the Local Environmental Strategy and the plan 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. It is important that the Council’s awareness is raised and that speleologists are involved 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.

### **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.

### **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.

There has been no further need for speleological involvement in the Lancelin Defence Training Area – (L.D.T.A.). 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). The status of speleological membership has been revised to “information only” due to the lack of significant karst issues in this area. Speleological groups remain involved and provide a consultative role where required. We have recently been notified that a stygofauna survey will occur and have been asked to be involved in consultation in this process.

### **3G North of Jurien - Coastal Area:**

The WA Speleological Groups continue to undertake 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 for some time. The CALM advise that the draft management plan for Cape Range is currently at the “printers” and will be soon released for public comment. This is excellent news, and given the priority of the Government to the World Heritage nomination, the document will need serious consideration. CALM now advise that a draft may be out by the end of 2005.

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. The Government advisory committee for the area needs speleological representation. Additionally, 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 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 delayed in 2004. There has been no update regarding progress.

There are two listed Threatened Ecological Communities in this karst area. The “Cape Range Remipede Community” and the “Cameron’s Cave Troglotic Community”. The troglotic fauna are listed here as an example of fauna that are known to be threatened in this karst area. There are 4 millipedes and 4 arachnids on the Schedule 1 list. These are the arachnids – Bamazomus sp. And Draculoides bramstokeri (both listed as endangered) and the Draculoides sp. And Hyella sp. The millipedes are Speleostrophus nesiotis, Stygiochiropus isolatus, Stygiochiropus peculiaris and Stygiochiropus sympatricus. The Speleostrophus nesiotis and the Draculoides bramstokeri are both found on Barrow Island.

The WA Speleological Group has been successful in its application for \$22,260. This grant was approved under the Threatened Species Network Community Grants Program. The application was entitled "The protection of threatened fish of the Cape Range Karst System, North West Cape WA". This project will be undertaken by local ASF members in conjunction with relevant experts and CALM personnel.

### **3I 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 have no formal karst management. In the east, the primary land tenure is pastoral leases and station land. In the West, there are 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.

The review of nature conservation reserves in the Kimberley in 1991 needs further follow-up. 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:**

We aim to continue important community events and to facilitate the partnership between the ASF and other environmental organisations. During the year of 2005 there has been some further opportunity for Joint Speleological Groups "Community Education" Displays: There was a display at the "Children's Groundwater Festival" on the 22/11/05. The "interactive" cave, and activities were quite popular with the children. Speleological Group members continue to provide ongoing training to CALM staff (including cave guides) at Yanchep (special thanks again to the Wilderness Society, Conservation Council and the Environmental Defender's Office for the use of display boards). The final workshop was a special seminar on the EPBC – Heritage Lists (10/11/2005), 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 to be held in 2005, however there was a change in staffing and a lack of funding that impacted on these plans. Recent discussions with Greening Australia indicate that funding may be possible for a workshop in 2006.

#### **5. Karst Policy and Protective Mechanisms:**

There is 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 25<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference of the ASF – held in January 2005 that will outline some of the challenges and opportunities in this area. We encourage ASF members to be familiar with their state's policy, legislation and guidelines.

#### **6. Future Cave Management in W.A.:**

It would be excellent if the WA Government could 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 2005

**President: Megan Pryke**

### **General**

As many of the items discussed in this report are active action items, please there maybe some update on progress since November.

The current NSWSC Executive, as elected in April 2005 is Denis Marsh ,Kevin Moore, Jodie Rutledge and Evelyn Taylor with Megan Pryke as President.

The speleological council met twice during the year and the NSWSC executive been involved with correspondence by email.

### **Reports containing ASF Council Motions**

**ASF Risk Management Guidelines**

The following report was made by the prior NSW Leadership Commissioner at the April 2005 meeting regarding the ASF Risk Management Guidelines adopted in January 2005:

*“Given that these guidelines are now in force, clubs would be well advised to put in place a structure for ensuring that trip leaders complete risk assessments, and whereby completed assessment forms are stored by clubs in a safe location if needed. Even though the guidelines are not mandatory from ASF’s perspective, I consider that their introduction has the potential to lead to creation of a duty upon leaders and clubs to ensure that they are complied with, or risk incurring possible legal liability if someone suffers damage that is attributable, in part, to a failure to carry out written risk assessments. Since a majority of clubs voted for these guidelines to be introduced I can only assume that clubs are happy to assume this potential extra liability and these additional administrative tasks.”*

This meeting prompted a resolution to review of the application of the guidelines within the NSWSC jurisdiction. In June 2005 a survey was sent to all NSW and ACT ASF corporate clubs, four formal responses were received. It was found that the Risk Management Guidelines assessment forms were only being applied by one club and not for every trip. Another club had been using a modified form B checklist (they found the form A risk assessment subjective). All other clubs supported the principles of the guidelines but not the documentation process. Two clubs suggested that a simple risk management process be incorporated into the ASF Safety Guidelines. Some clubs had not seen the draft or final document previously.

A survey evaluation report was distributed to NSW and ACT clubs with a suggested motion for the October 2005 meeting. At this meeting, one club referred their trip leader scheme and the occasional difficulty incurred in getting documentation completed and that its members were not welcoming of further bureaucracy. They believed that the documented assessment process for its trip leaders and other procedures around trip approvals were adequate risk management practices.

It was generally agreed that rather than a specific Risk Management Guidelines a general policy on risk management would be preferable if the ASF required one. The ASF Safety Guidelines and Leadership scheme could be referred to as risk management policies.

There is some concern that there may be blur between insurance requirements and ASF internal policy. Risk management issues are independent of ASF's own insurance issues, although they are related. But this does not take away from the fact that the Risk Management Guidelines, as they are now, will impact upon potential liability issues.

It was also reported that the risk assessment process would not necessarily fit in with the style of the ASF Safety Guidelines and it therefore would be preferable to have the risk assessment process as part of the ASF Leadership Scheme which could be used for assessment of a potential trip leaders understanding of the principles of risk management. The 2004 draft of the Risk Management Guidelines refers to process as being particularly important for beginner trip leaders.

Due to a lack of a quorum, a resolution could not be passed at the NSWSC meeting so the matter was referred to SUSS.

Further discussion at a SUSS meeting included more expressions of concern about the potential liability that could arise from the documentation process advocated in the adopted guidelines.

- 1) *That this Council endorses the concept that risk assessments may be carried out in a non-written form.*
- 2) *That the current Risk Management Guidelines be replaced by a general policy that will retain the risk assessment principles in a simplified format which does not mandate written risk assessments prior to each activity, this may happen by review of the ASF Leadership scheme*

There are many other reports that ASF councillors may wish to view leading up to this motion. They may be viewed on the yahoo ASF members website under:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/asf-members/files/State%20Matters/NSW/NSWSC/Risk%20Management/>

Or from by manual navigation from the ASF members home page:

Files >> State Matters >> NSW >> Risk Management

The NSWSC minutes for the two meetings held in 2005 are also available which contain further comment.

### **Application of the Snowy Mountains Underground Team to be a Provisional ASF member**

Just prior to the October 2005 meeting, application for a proposed ASF provisional member club, who may also be referred to as SMUT, was received. Proposed membership of the team includes ASF members who have moved to the region. ISS have reported that they are please that two of their prior are interested in rejoining the ASF. Angus Macoun who has been involved with the ASF and a member / prior member on RSS is also amongst the proposed membership.

The NSWSC executive in principle approves of the application. Jodie Rutledge, who is on the NSWSC executive and the ASF membership Secretary, has identified two issues that are required to make the constitution compliant with the ASF constitution and has also liaised with SMUT regarding administrative provisions around membership year and payment of dues. The NSWSC has corresponded with SMUT regarding their initial Constitution draft. At this stage we do not know what the final Constitution draft looks like.

Some of NSWSC executive were concerned about the acronym created by the name, though the executive were not unanimous on this point. "Smut" is a derogatory term, meaning "indecent talk or pictures or stories"(smutty a.). While this may not seem to be something of great concern from an ASF perspective, there could be a public relations issue. Such issues were discussed throughout the ASF council meeting at Bunbury in January 2003, and are related to issues including land access and the Environmental Fund. The Federation needs to improve the perception that both members and outside organisations have of the ASF. From the same meeting, resolution # 24 was made "That the Executive develop a plan for improving the public image of ASF, both in its role as an Environmental Organisation, and to promote a positive image of speleology generally". We leave this matter up for ASF council consideration.

More information will be known prior to the ASF council meeting.

### **NSW Leadership Commission**

Following the abolition of the prior ASF leadership commission and establishment of the Leadership, Safety and Risk Management, the NSWSC in April 2005 resolved to establish a NSW/ACT specific commission. Nominations are being sought for the role and any suggestions may be referred to the NSWSC executive. To clarify expectations of the role, the NSWSC executive developed a set of objectives which have been distributed to clubs; these broadly include

advice to the council on matters of leadership and also safety and risk management to the extent that they pertain to leadership.

Previously the ASF National Leadership commission had a specific NSW convener, this role was endorsed by the NSWSC. At the moment, there is no National convener for the ASF commission created in January 2005, therefore any matters that would be associated with leadership will need to be referred to the respective executives.

### **NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service**

Due to other issues there has been not much progress on the Kanangra-Boyd National Park Service management practices.

There has been some additional funding for the NPWS which should help to overcome the problem of increased management areas without additional budget.

The NSWSC wrote in support of an application for Keir Vaughan-Taylor for a Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area Advisory Committee. Keir has not heard of the results on this application.

The establishment of the Karst Unit within the DEC and also the Karst Advisory Committee should reinitiate work on a potential Karst Management Policy for NSW, which the NSWSC responded to last year.

There will be need for the ASF to put forward a nomination for the State Karst Advisory Committee recently set up by legislation in the near future.

The Jenolan Caves Reserve Plan of management is to put on public exhibition in the near future. The ASF have applied to view the report prior to public exhibition via the "JEPC" commission.

### **NSW and ACT club Projects**

NSW clubs have been active on a number of projects around the state. NHVSS have been working on the Timor surveying project, details have been reported in Cave Australia. Keir Vaughan-Taylor has been running a cave re-excavation project at Wellington Caves. SUSS is continuing its survey work at Mammoth Cave. Work on the Colong Survey by SUSS has slowed down, though with 7kms of survey done it is well underway to completion.

## **REPORTS OF COMMISSIONS 2005**

### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

**Greg Middleton**

Compiling abstracts of Australian speleological publications and contributing them to IUS's annual *Speleological Abstracts* has continued to be the main activity of the Bibliography Commission.

The 2003 and 2004 abstracts were compiled by the small group of Ken Grimes, Jill Rowling and the Convener; with Dave Smith contributing from NZ. The number of Australian & NZ abstracts contributed each year has been as follows:

1998: 689 1999: 677 2000: 650 2001: 640 2002: 735 2003: 591 2004: 482

These figures do not generally include abstracts of items about Australian caves and karst published overseas. Theoretically these are contributed from the country of origin. In fact we have found it more satisfactory to abstract such items ourselves where we are aware of them as coverage of international, especially US-based publications, can be very patchy.

A set of the Australian abstracts is provided each year for the ASF Library.

Despite the addition of information on the Bibliography Commission to the ASF Website in late March 2002, including an appeal for more abstractors (particularly in SA, WA and Queensland), no offers have been forthcoming so these regions probably continue to be under-represented in the abstracts. It would also be desirable to have an abstractor covering cave diving as this is a field which is growing and is certainly under-represented.

As mentioned, our abstracts are contributed to the IUS Bibliography Commission for publication. *Speleological Abstracts* #41, for 2002, was published in October 2004. #42, a combined 2003-04 edition, was published in time for the Aug. 2005 Athens IUS Congress but the Convenor hasn't yet received a copy.

The following remarks were made, *inter alia*, by the IUS Commission in its August 2005 report to the IUS Bureau:

**The problem of federations which collaborate on the BBS but are not co-publishers.**

Several federations are regular contributors to the BBS, without however participating in the journal's publication. These federations add to the bill of the other copublishing federations. Of course, they contribute to the wealth of abstracts in the BBS, and it would be stupid to refuse abstracts from people who are not BBS subscribers. But it would be possible to reduce the number of abstracts, for example those with less world impact, or to reduce the size of abstracts.

Should we abandon paper for this? One suggestion would be that federations who provide more than 150 abstracts should financially support publication of the BBS, for example by a single subscription fee of 500 Euros.

These remarks definitely relate to Australia. We are certainly the largest contributors who don't pay anything towards the cost of printing. The US doesn't, but then, NSS doesn't cooperate at all with the production of the abstracts. I gather that no decision was made to try to force us to pay €500 or to cut our abstracts to 150. However it appears the Commission wanted to ask IUS for €2,000 (/yr?) but for some reason did not. My impression is that the Chair of the Commission is upset about the funding situation. He has written to me saying "Any help from the Australian Federation will be very good."

It is true we've had a free ride so far – and I suspect few clubs or individuals in Australia subscribe, so they feel we are not pulling our weight.

I am reluctant to ask the Federation to contribute but if the Council felt it could spare \$500, it would probably be appreciated by the Commission. Even \$200 would help; anything less would be seen as an insult.

Once again I express my appreciation for the continuing efforts of our small and dedicated band of abstractors.

The Commission continues to operate without a budget and without any members claiming any costs.

I am prepared to continue to act as Convenor of the Commission in 2005-06.

## **INSURANCE**

**Joe Sydney**

To be presented at Annual General Meeting

## **INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

**Nick White**

This year the IUS held its 14<sup>th</sup> Conference in August in Athens, Greece. ASF was represented at the Council meeting by Grace Matts and Dr Julia James. At the Council meeting Andrew Eavis was elected President. The 2009 IUS Conference is being hosted by NSS and will be held in Texas, USA. IUS became a registered scientific organization in Slovenia. This has very real implications for governance of IUS and transparency. Grace Matts conducted the IUS audit and made a number of recommendations concerning the handling of funds by IUS.

There is a proposal for ASF to host a Vulcanospeleology Symposium in 2008 under the auspices of the IUS Commission on Volcanic Caves.

The International Association of Geomorphologists are holding their next Conference in Melbourne during 2009. ASF has been asked to assist with organising a karst program focussed on “How Old are the Caves?” and associated field excursions.

## **PUBLICATIONS**

**Susan White**

The Publications Commission oversees the publication of Caves Australia and other publications. Caves Australia has had some production issues this year but with the hard work by Joe Sydney and the team it will overcome these. As well as close relationships with the Helictite Commission, there are two other projects being undertaken.

### ***Conservation Campaigns Book***

At Dover a group of about 15 people met to consider Kevin Kiernan’s idea that ASF should consider producing a book to record and celebrate karst, caver and speleologist involvement in conservation campaigns. There has been concern that cavers have not been given the credit they deserve in the records of these battles. The meetings at Dover resulted in a working group being set up (Susan White, John Dunkley, Kevin Kiernan, Nicholas White and Greg Middleton) to investigate and plan such a publication. This group is based within the Publication Commission and has links with the Conservation Commission. At a meeting of the WG in August John Dunkley and Greg Middleton have agreed to take on the specific role of General Editors.

The useful discussions with many people at Dover have resulted in the working group moving steadily on this project. The book’s structure has been drafted as being 3 sections:

- Section 1: Introduction and historical context
- Section 2: Campaigns Mt Etna; Texas; Colong; Bungonia/Marulan; Sellicks Hill; Ida Bay; Precipitous Bluff; Scotts peak to Franklin R.; Buchan and Limestone Ck; Yessabah; Cape Range;
- Section 3: Synthesis; Social Political and legal evolution  
Future prospects and needs

As many people may be involved in some of these sections people have been approached to do the task of coordination of each section. Most of these coordination roles are now filled and people have started to collect material. The working group is close to producing detailed job descriptions

for coordinators to clarify their role and a general style guide/ authors brief. The central part of the book will be organised and written first and the introduction and synthesis constructed around the actual campaign information. Details on publication style and costs have been deferred until we can see the size of the project.

MOTION: That the Council supports the publication of a book celebrating cave and karst conservation campaigns through the Publication Commission. That \$500 is provided for in the Budget for contingency costs.

#### Wee Jasper Publication

During the year the need for a new edition of the Wee Jasper book has become obvious. We were able to organise the more copies of the second edition with high quality photocopies but a new edition is needed. Some of the material is somewhat dated and better photos would enhance the publication. John Dunkley has agreed to co-ordinate the job and has already solicited assistance from various people.

MOTION: That the Council supports the production of a 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of Wee Jasper Caves. That the executive be empowered to oversee the costs in consultation with the Publication Commission.

ASF applied to the National Heritage Trust for a grant to publish a booklet and promotional poster titled "Living with Karst" to assist local communities to manage living in karstic environments. We were not successful but it is a project to consider in the next 12 months, although the priorities of time and energy need to be considered.

## **LIBRARY**

### **Cathy Brown**

A few years ago the ASF Council resolved that the Library's first priority should be a complete, unified collection of Australian serial publications relating to caves and karst. With donations from members and several clubs, most gaps have been filled. An almost complete, easily accessible collection now exists dating back to 1946, and we are able to attend to requests virtually on the spot in many cases. An approach to ACKMA led to resumption of library copies of their journal. We are now on the mailing list of several community organisations with close interests to caves.

In 2004 Greg Middleton catalogued the very extensive collection of mainly unpublished reports held in the ASF Library and we will endeavour to publicise this more in 2006, possibly by publishing the accessions list. These are mostly management reports and the like which often contain valuable material not available anywhere else. Copies of unpublished university theses are also stored. There is a growing collection of CD-based material, but wherever possible we prefer to have hard copies as well.

Early in 2005 the ASF secretarial archives were brought from Brisbane to Canberra. They are in good order but have not yet been investigated by the Librarian. Old copies of Australian Cavers were also transported from Newcastle. Twenty copies of each available issue have been shelved for sale, and the remainder will be stored in boxes as long as possible but may need to be disposed of at the Librarian's discretion.

The ASF Library maintains an accessions list but the first port of call for bibliographic information on Australian caves in the last 16 years or so is the IUS Bibliography Commission's excellent series. ASF has copies of these (some on CD, some in hard copy), and the Librarian can search these and

earlier international bibliographies dating back to 1968. Greg Middleton is Australia's representative on this Commission and can advise how to obtain copies for members' own use.

### **Recommendations**

That the Librarian be empowered at her discretion to sell or otherwise dispose of surplus copies of Australian Cavers, and duplicate copies of serial publications.

That approaches be made to non-member community organisations publishing serials relating to caves, to lodge copies with the ASF Library.

That approaches be made to authors of relevant unpublished university theses and term reports for copies to be lodged with ASF Library.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

### **Jodie Rutledge**

#### **Club representation at meetings.**

HSC and BMSC have not been represented at the last 2 meetings. If they are not represented at the next meeting they will lose their rights and privileges as Corporate members (ASF Constitution Division 7).

Additionally, MUCG, TESS, CWCG and MSS were not represented at the last ASF Council meeting. It is recommended that they arrange representation for this next meeting so that they are not in the same situation as BMSC and HSC next year!

### ***BCA***

Contact was made earlier in the year to enquire if the records of the now defunct Baptist Caving Association could be forwarded to the ASF library for safe keeping. Ian Wilkin of the former BCA had replied to say that he would make contact with John Dunkley (who houses the ASF Library) once all the records are in order.

### ***MUCG***

The Macquarie University Caving Group have been un-financial members since 1<sup>st</sup> July 2004. According to the constitution they will cease being members if they remain un-financial for a period of 2 years (ASF Constitution Division 7). Investigations into this matter by the Membership Secretary has found that the club still exist but the focus has shifted to other activities such as climbing. The MUCG is a sub group of the larger Macquarie University Adventure Sports Club. MUCG have not officially folded, but are just dormant at present as many of the older experienced members have moved on. The President offered to pass on details of other active clubs in Sydney to any beginner members that have an interest in caving. My view is this may be the best course of action if the club now lacks experienced trip leaders to run caving activities. If it pleases the council I can write to them pointing out that they will cease being members if they remain un-financial to the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2006 but also encourage them to forward other ASF club details onto their members if they have an interest in caving.

## *Associates*

ASF current has 4 Associates. ACKMA, Victorian Scout Caving Team, NSW Cave Rescue Squad and Scouts Australia (ACT). As per the resolution made at the last council meeting, a letter was sent reminding the renewing Associates that they are not considered “Members” of ASF.

## *New Application*

An application for corporate membership has been received recently from the “Snowy Mountains Underground Team”. The group has recently formed comprising of some ex-ASF members (Adam & Sarah Peters formerly of ISS) and current ASF member via RSS Angus Macoun.

The group have drafted a constitution which lists the following aims and objectives,

### 2. *AIM AND OBJECTIVES*

#### 2.1 *Aim*

*The principle aim of SMUT is to promote safe and ethical speleology, particularly within the Snowy Mountains region.*

#### 2.2 *Objectives*

*2.2.1 To foster safe caving practices.*

*2.2.2 To foster ethical and minimal impact caving practices.*

*2.2.3 To promote caving as a sport.*

*2.2.4 To promote speleology as a science.*

*2.2.5 To conserve caves and karst areas.*

*2.2.6 To explore caves and karst areas.*

*2.2.7 To study caves and karst areas.*

*2.2.8 To record the Team's exploration and study of caves and karst areas.*

*2.2.9 To share the Team's findings with other speleological bodies.*

I have reviewed the application and have identified some problems. Two changes at least are to be made to qualify for ASF Corporate Membership.

Firstly, a statement needs to be made that **the Society** (SMUT) subscribes to the ASF's aims, Codes of Conservation & Ethics and the ASF's Minimal Impact Caving Code. Their constitution does however require that **all members** subscribe to the ASF's aims, Codes of Conservation & Ethics and the ASF's Minimal Impact Caving Code. So this could be seen as nit picking on my part.

Secondly, under item 5 Committee. It is required under Division 2, No 11 of the ASF Constitution that it be stated that the ASF Councillor must not hold office for periods not exceeding two years.

Both of these requirements have been communicated to Angus and SMUT are having a meeting to discuss these issue in late November. By the time of the meeting these issues may be resolved.

I have also recommended to SMUT that they consider a name change because the acronym isn't very nice. I also was not in favour of having an objective that promotes caving as a sport (my view only- the ASF exec has not discussed yet). The SMUT constitution also allows for visitors to participate in their activities. I have recommended against this because the ASF Insurance policies held for members do not allow for non-members participating. I suggested a clause be added that

requires Trip Leaders or Trip Organisers to disclose to Cave Property Managers when a group includes non-members.

With all this said, I have caved and known Angus for many years and can vouch for his high standards of care whilst caving, experience and motivation of participating with the greater speleo community. It is likely that I will recommend acceptance of this group at the council meeting if the first two qualifying issues have been resolved.

### **Cave Surveying and Mapping Ken Grimes**

As usual, little activity this year. No queries this year. No recommendations for the council meeting (unless someone else wants the job!). No significant costs for 2005. No expected major costs for 2006

## **REPORTS OF COMMITTEES 2005**

### **ASF MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE**

#### **Jodie Rutledge**

Three additional people have been welcomed to the ad hoc committee. Denis Marsh, Rauleigh Webb and Megan Pryke. Two face to face meetings were held in 2005. Early in 2005, the committee asked advice from the clubs on membership categories being simplified. 10 Clubs responded to this January letter and a feedback letter posted out to the clubs. The committee felt the feedback was insufficient to attempt changes outside a council meeting but would like to make the following recommendations.

#### ***Recommendations***

1. Honorary Life Member Active: That this be known as the category "Single" from the ASF perspective.
2. Single Parent Family: That this category type be abolished.

#### ***Explanation***

The committee felt that it was the clubs business only who their HLM-Active members were and the cost of the membership was exactly the same as "Single" membership anyway. Single Parent Family- the committee felt that it should just be "Family" and Jodie did not know of any cases of people using this category.

#### ***The database creation***

A specification document has been drafted and discussed within the committee. The clubs have been consulted on functions they may require. A programmer in WA (an ASF Member) had been consulted and is awaiting final instructions on the features required but in the meantime another ASF Member in Sydney has offered to write the program. The committee is having difficulty in deciding which program will be best for members and will be asking the ASF Council for a decision on this. A presentation on the two choices will be made at the council meeting. It is important that councillors consider this carefully. I can provide a brief overview for you to take to your club meeting before the council meeting.

David's database option is a JSP system running under Tomcat5 connecting to a MySQL database using hibernate. It also has a PDF generation servlet. He has drafted one already for SUSS but is not

operating yet, after he wrote the SUSS database he heard about the ASF wanting one written and has offered to expand it for all of ASF. No set up cost has been asked for although I believe some payment should be offered for the work. From the discussion so far, David's database can be run on the ASF server like the KID database with no ongoing monthly costs. Before it can be loaded Mike Lake will need to load up some further software onto the server. ASF will actually own the source code that David writes for us. David is also happy to continue volunteering his time for occasional updates etc.

Cameron's proposed database is to be a ASP.NET program that will be hosted on the Star3 server, 'Star3' is the company Cameron works for. The set-up cost is \$1500 with little updates being supplied voluntarily. Rather than the usual ongoing cost for hosting, Star3 has agreed to host the database on their server with daily backups in return for a regular ½ page advertising spot in Caves Australia for the life of the hosting and also 6 people will need to attend a business luncheon presentation. ASF will not own the source code but may have a copy of the source code with conditions not to pass onto a third party (unless for maintenance work) nor is the code to be used for any commercial purpose.

Cameron's '.NET' it seems would deliver the function of on-line direct payments easier than David's. David has said that it is possible to write this function into the 'JSP' system- but says it is difficult. You will remember that we did not want this function at this stage but it was generally thought that we may include this in the future.

Some enquiries undertaken by myself have lead to me to believe that David's JSP system would be easier to find people to take over the database maintenance if David could not continue, as compared to the .NET system. Although .NET is being taught at university now as part of computer science degrees, so I may be wrong. The opinion of the ASF council will be appreciated on this aspect.

It was hoped that a trial period with some clubs would have been completed for this council meeting but it will not occur now til early 2006. A handful of clubs have agreed to participate in this trial.

## **TIMOR CAVES PROJECT**

**Jodie Rutledge**

### ***Timor Caves Project***

Jodie Rutledge

The ASF Environment Gift Fund directors mid 2005 approved a \$371 grant to the Newcastle & Hunter Valley Speleological Society Inc to assist in the purchase of surveying equipment. The Project mainly funded by the NSW Environmental Trust is on track to release a new book documenting the Timor Caves by the 31st January 2007. NHVSS would like to thank the ASF for the grant and thank members who have contributed and assisted in the project so far.

### EXECUTIVE MEMBERS 2004

President	Jay Anderson BPsych, Grad. Dip. App. Sc. (Kars Management)	Perth
Senior Vice-President	John R Dunkley MEd, BEc, DipEd	Canberra
Vice-President	Nicholas White MA, BSc	Melbourne
Vice-President	Chris Bradley BSc	Canberra
Vice-President	Joe Sydney	Sydney
Secretary	Winfried Weiss LLB, BCom	Maryborough, Qld
Treasurer	Grace Matts Grad. Dip. Admin, SSoSJJ	Sydney
Membership Secretary	Jodie Rutledge RN, DipHealthSci	Newcastle
Executive Secretary	Evelyn Taylor	Sydney

### 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 (WA) Rob Susac (WA) Peter Armstrong (WA) Eve Taylor (WA) Peter Berrill (Qld)

## LIST OF CURRENT CORPORATE MEMBER CLUBS

<b>STATE</b>	<b>CORPORATE MEMBER</b>	<b>ABBREVIATION</b>
<b>ACT</b>	Canberra Speleological Society Inc	CSS
	National University Caving Club	NUCC
<b>NSW</b>	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	
<b>NT</b>	Top End Speleological Society	TESS
<b>Qld</b>	Central Queensland Speleological Society	CQSS
	Chillagoe Caving Club	CCC
<b>Vic</b>	Caving Club of Victoria	CCV
	Victorian Speleological Association	VSA
<b>SA</b>	Cave Exploration Group South Australia	CEGSA
	Flinders University Speleological Society	FUSS
<b>Tas</b>	Northern Caverneers	NC
	Southern Tasmania Caverneers	STC
<b>WA</b>	Speleological Research Group of Western Australia	SRGWA
	Western Australia Speleological Group Inc.	WASG
	Cavers Leeuwin Inc	Cline

## Appendix One

### The Australian Speleological Federation (Environmental) Gift Fund

#### OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

##### What is the Fund and what are its Objectives?

The Fund is established specifically to encourage, support and facilitate projects undertaken in pursuit of the environmental objectives of ASF as set out in s.2 of the Constitution, and is an integral part of ASF's status as a Registered Environmental Organisation. It is a Public Gift Fund authorised by the Department of the Environment and Heritage and by the Australian Taxation Office to receive tax-deductible gifts and other donations.

##### Governance

The Fund is overseen by Directors appointed by the ASF Executive in accordance with s.127g of the ASF Constitution. Rules established by the Department of Environment and Heritage and the Australian Taxation Office require that a majority of the Directors must be 'responsible persons' as defined by the Guidelines to the Register of Environmental Organisations. The current Directors are:

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

The Fund is managed in accordance with the Constitution of the Australian Speleological Federation Inc., in particular ss. 2, 2.1 and 121 – 127. These Operational Procedures supplement the provisions of the Constitution and in the event of conflict the Constitution shall prevail.

##### Relationship between ASF and the Fund

Understanding the respective roles of ASF and the Fund Directors is essential to ensuring the success of the Fund. ASF is responsible for managing the Fund - for appointing the Directors and most members of the Management Committee, publicising the Fund among member clubs and individuals, raising money, seeking out and recommending appropriate projects to support etc. The Directors' role is primarily fiduciary - they are responsible for ensuring that Fund activities are conducted within the rules and guidelines set down by the relevant government departments.

##### Management Committee

A Management Committee provides administrative and accountability support along with considered advice to the Directors. At least one member of the ASF Inc Executive and/or where appropriate the Conservation Commission, and at least one Director are normally ex-officio members of the Management Committee. Additional members may be sought from the ASF membership at large.

The Directors and Management Committee seek expert advice to assist in Fund management particularly on financial management, fund raising, publicity and assessment of grant applications.

(Note: The term "management committee" in these Procedures is not the same as that used in the Constitution, where the term is synonymous with "Directors")

**Meetings**

The Directors and the Management Committee each meet by mutually agreeable means and maintain a record of key decisions.

**Publicity**

The Directors and Management Committee will endeavour to provide the Executive, ASF publications and the ASF web-site with regular information on Fund activities. Conversely, the ASF Executive and particularly the ASF Conservation Commission will actively publicise the Fund and encourage member clubs and individuals to consider accessing the Fund's facilities in pursuit of their conservation projects.

**Letterhead**

Any letterhead in the Fund's name will indicate the Fund's relationship with ASF Inc. An agreed letterhead wording indicating that ASF is a Registered Environmental Organisation will be included on all official Fund letterhead.

**Web Page**

The ASF Web Site will emphasise that ASF is a Registered Environmental Organisation, that it maintains a Public Fund, and that donations over \$2 to that Fund are tax-deductible. Pages setting out Fund activities in more detail will be developed if possible.

**Raising Money****Donations to the Fund**

Donations or gifts are actively sought through several methods:

**1. Supporters**

Foundation supporters: those making donations totalling \$1,000 before (a date to be determined), \$2,000 (a later date to be determined) or other significant donations as determined by the Directors.

**(Continuing) supporters:** those pledging a minimum amount of \$20 annually on a continuing basis. Where feasible, continuing supporters are encouraged to make such donations using electronic funds transfer facilities.

**Institutional Supporters:** will be sought when appropriate, particularly from institutions with interests similar to a particular program or project being undertaken.

**2. Donors**

Those donating any amount on an irregular basis.

**3. Bequests**

Attention will be drawn to tax advantages including exemptions from capital gains tax that are available for bequests to environmental organisations.

**4. Special Appeals and Funds**

From time to time special appeals or sub-funds may be established for specific purposes such as campaigns or cooperative management projects

**Receipts for Donations**

Receipts are issued for all gifts and must contain all information required by the Australian Taxation Office, including the date the donation was received, the name of the organisation, the name of the fund, the ASF's ABN number (15-169-919-964), the signature of a person authorised to act on behalf of the fund, the name of the donor, and the words:

*“Registered Deductible Gift Recipient – All donations over \$2 tax deductible”*

or

*“The Australian Speleological Federation Inc. Gift Fund is a gift fund listed on the Register of Environmental Organisations under item 6.1.1. of subsection 30-55(1) of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997. Donations of \$2.00 or more are tax deductible”.*

### **Supporters List**

A list of supporters will be maintained subject to any provisions of privacy legislation. Supporters or donors retain anonymity unless they expressly wish to indicate publicly their support for the general objectives of, &/or for a particular project supported by the Fund.

### **Programs and Projects**

The Fund encourages, supports and facilitates projects undertaken in pursuit of the environmental objectives of ASF.

Within the official guidelines established by the Department of the Environment and Heritage and the Australian Taxation Office, projects may be undertaken by the Fund itself, by corporate and individual members of ASF Inc., or by others. Special encouragement is given to projects undertaken jointly or cooperatively with other environmental organisations, landowners, public land management authorities, and other government agencies.

Without limiting the discretion of the Directors and Management Committee, three main kinds of activities are supported:

1. Small-scale, local projects aimed at cleaning and restoring caves, reducing the impact of cave users, rehabilitating cave and karst environments etc.
2. Research projects directed towards improved karst environmental management and environmental education
3. Cave and karst conservation campaigns focused on specific issues

Supporters and donors may indicate any preference they may have for the disposition towards a particular project of moneys or property donated, and while they cannot be bound by such preferences, the Directors will consider such requests, subject to the provisions of the Conduit Policy (ASF Constitution s.125).

### **Applications for Grants**

A Grant Application form will be developed and applications will normally close at the end of March and September each year. Applications are acknowledged upon receipt and a decision made within 2 months. Any applications falling outside these times or considered more urgent are considered on their individual merits. An Advisory Panel may be appointed to assess and provide advice on applications.

### **Accountability for Grants**

Successful applicants for small grants may be required to provide documentary evidence of satisfactory acquittal of the grant. Payments of larger grants may at the discretion of the Directors be made on a progressive basis, and recipients may in any event be required to provide periodical reports on the progress of funded projects. Where a grant is made in the form of a repayable loan, provision

may be made for periodic repayments. Larger grants require either a separate audited statement of accounts or (preferably) provision of documentary evidence of expenditure in a form acceptable to the Fund's auditors. Grants which in whole or part cover the purchase of assets valued at more than a nominal \$100 may be subject to satisfactory evidence that the asset is housed and/or maintained in a satisfactory manner.

In all cases successful applicants must upon acquittal of a grant provide a brief report to the Fund on the outcome, together with suitable materials such as photographs which the Fund or ASF may use for publicity or for similar purposes.

### **Project Management Committees**

In whatever form they are undertaken, each project supported by the Fund is normally overseen by a Project Management Committee appointed by the Directors.

### **Accounting, Auditing and Reporting**

One or more bank accounts in the name of the Fund are maintained separate from those of ASF Inc. At all times the Directors must be able to control the accounts independently of any other authorised signatories. However subject to any Ministerial Rules, persons who are not Directors of the Fund may be authorised signatories to these accounts but must not be in a position to control the writing of cheques. The Fund's accounts are normally audited in conjunction with the accounts of the Australian Speleological Federation Inc. An annual Report on the Fund's activities, along with an audited statement of accounts is presented to each Council Meeting of the ASF Inc., and as required by Ministerial Rules to the Department of the Environment and Heritage.

### **APPENDIX: Relevant sections of ASF Constitution**

2. The aims of the Federation are:
  - a) to safeguard and protect the natural environment, specifically the cave and karst environment of Australia;
  - b) *to gather and disseminate information, develop and promote policies, foster and publish research, and provide education and advice to the Australian community on conserving Australia's karst resources***
  - c) *to bring together and represent persons interested in caves and karst in Australia and the attainment of the Federation's aims; and***
  - d) to foster speleology in all of its aspects.

2.1 To establish and maintain a public fund to be called "The Australian Speleological Federation Gift Fund" for the specific purpose of supporting the environmental objects/purposes of the Federation. The Fund is established to receive all gifts of money or property for this purpose and any money received because of such gifts must be credited to its bank account. The Fund must not receive any other money or property into its account and it must comply with subdivision 30-E of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997.

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### **DIVISION 9: PUBLIC FUND**

#### Ministerial Rules

121. The Federation agrees to comply with any rules that the Treasurer and the Minister with responsibility for the environment may make to ensure that gifts made to the Fund are only used for its principal purpose

#### Reporting requirements

122. The Federation must inform the Department responsible for the environment as soon as possible if:

- it changes its name or the name of its public fund; or
- there is any change to the membership of the management committee of the Public Fund; or there has been any departure from the model rules of the public fund.

#### Statistical information

123. Statistical information requested by the Department on donations to the Public Fund will be provided within four months of the end of the financial year.

124. An audited financial statement for the Federation and its public fund will be supplied with the annual statistical return. The statement will provide information on the expenditure of public fund monies and the management of public fund assets

#### Conduit Policy

125. Any allocation of funds or property to other persons or organisations will be made in accordance with the established purposes of the organisation and not be influenced by the preference of the donor.

#### Winding-up of the Fund

126. In case of the winding-up of the Fund, any surplus assets are to be transferred to another fund with similar objectives that is on the Register of Environmental Organisations.

#### Rules for Administration of the Australian Speleological Federation Gift Fund (“The Fund”)

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- (a) The objective of the fund is to support the Federation's environmental purposes
  - (b) Members of the public are to be invited to make gifts of money or property to the fund for the environmental purposes of the Federation.
  - (c) Money from interest on donations, income derived from donated property, and money from the realisation of such property is to be deposited into the fund.
  - (d) A separate bank account is to be opened to deposit money donated to the fund, including interest accruing thereon, and gifts to it are to be kept separate from other funds of the organisation.
  - (e) Receipts are to be issued in the name of the fund and proper accounting records and procedures are to be kept and used for the fund.
  - (f) The fund will be operated on a non-profit basis.
  - (g) A committee of management of no fewer than three persons will administer the fund. The committee will be appointed by the organisation. A majority of the members of the committee

are required to be 'responsible persons' as defined by the Guidelines to the Register of Environmental Organisations.