



# **Australian Speleological Federation Inc**

**ABN: 15 169 918 964**

## **Annual Report 2008 November 2008**

**(Adopted with adjustment 4<sup>th</sup> January 2009)**

# Table of Contents

Presidents Report.....	3
Executive Members .....	4
Treasurers Report.....	4
The Australian Speleological Federation Gift Fund.....	4
Fund Management Commission .....	4
Conservation Commission Reports .....	5
National Convener.....	5
Queensland Convener .....	7
New South Wales Convener .....	7
Western Australia Commission .....	7
Karst Conservancies.....	11
Karstcare .....	11
Speleological Council Reports.....	12
NSW Speleological Council.....	12
SA Speleological Council .....	14
Commission Reports .....	14
Administration.....	14
Awards.....	14
Bibliography.....	15
Cave Diving .....	15
Cave & Karst Numbering.....	15
Codes and Guidelines .....	17
Helictite .....	17
Insurance.....	18
International Relations.....	20
Library.....	20
Membership.....	21
National Cave Rescue.....	22
Publications .....	24
Safety, Leadership and Risk Management .....	25
Survey and Mapping Standards .....	25
Special Interest Groups .....	26
ASF Cave Diving Group .....	26
ASF Gregory Karst Research Group .....	27
Committee Reports.....	27
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Cultural Committee .....	27
Conference Committee (Karstaway 2009) .....	28
Documentation & KID Committee .....	28
Membership Database Committee.....	29
Organisational Identity Committee .....	29
Contact List.....	30

# Presidents Report

**President:** Stan Flavel

I have felt somewhat over-awed being elected as President of ASF after only a short period within the ranks of ASF executive. Having been a caver for over 30 years and seeing how clubs and the Federation interact has been interesting. Being part of the Executive team is very rewarding and yet humbling.

Knowing that to be a vibrant energetic organization in this fast paced age requires constant input and attention to our identity and direction and in particular meeting the needs of all Members.

I have enjoyed the challenges and the rewards that the Federation has met head-on this year.

ASF Executive has made plans and put processes in place after lengthy informed discussion at our 2 main meetings in April and September. It must be noted though that they are your ideas given to us from the Council Meetings and entrusted to us to make things happen. The executive have moved business forward and set in motion a number of strategies that need to be communicated to you. Reading the reports contained within will give some indication of the works that are in progress from the Individuals, Commissions, Special Interest Groups and Committees within the ASF.

We should congratulate and encourage the dedication and hard work encompassed by these reports. We a diverse group of volunteers working with common interests and common passions and together a huge amount is achieved.

I thank all of the Executive for their dedication and commitment. Each of us “enjoy” juggling health, family and paid work issues to find time for ASF purposes and tasks.

We have seen things go wrong in caving this last year.

- people being in the wrong place at the wrong time
- People doing the wrong things and being insensitive to the rules or ethics of cave visitation.
- We see caves being damaged by mining and development and contamination by pollution
- We see caves being vandalized
- We see caves degrading because of lack of resources to stabilize or lack of care from managers

And we see things being put right and things rewarded

- We see the Mt Etna campaign finishing and new management and plans being put in place
- We see Government and Non-government organizations recognizing the resources and expertise that cavers have and are negotiating to make available
- We see memberships rise in areas as people continue to join clubs and go caving confidently.
- We see revisions of Policies and Guidelines
- We see new commissions being formed to meet new and overlooked areas
- We see cave divers working more closely with dry and semi wet cavers
- We see cavers rewarded for their dedication and skills they contribute to caving

I believe all cavers share a common passion to visit caves and to protect them. This passion may be hard to fathom or control at times but it is the essence and lifeblood of ASF.

We have seen controversial events in the media we have seen clubs in upheaval and clubs diminishing. We have seen and heard complaints and communicated back as well as practical and so when the dust settles we still go caving having learnt from mistakes and are generally better cavers.

ASF needs to be better equipped to respond in a timely fashion to requests from the many stakeholders we deal with. We need to be articulate with our identity and purpose to see what we have to offer .... and then make it available.

We see the need to be proactive in the conservation and preservation of caves and privilege to visit them by cavers and speleologists.

We see the need to maximize dialogue with cave custodians and site managers and assist with the management of Karst features.

We must provide a safe and accessible repository of Karst related information. Documents, reports maps, scientific data, photographs must be preserved and made more available for fellow cavers and researchers. This is the information age and we must move into it, embrace the necessary technologies and secure an immensely valuable resource whilst protecting sensitive information.

I hope that in reading the individual reports and coming to the ASF conference you will see the actions of a living Federation that you are part of and can contribute to in your own way.

I welcome new ideas that can help us all achieve the goals and aspirations of ASF

See you all in Sale

In Caving  
Stan Flavel

## Executive Members

President	Stan Flavel
Senior Vice President	Nicholas White
Vice President	Chris Bradley
Vice President	Jay Anderson
Vice President	Winfried Weiss
Treasurer	Grace Matts
Executive Secretary	Joe Sydney
General Secretary	Evelyn Taylor
Membership Secretary	Jodie Rutledge

Non-executive Vice Presidents	John Dunkley Clive Kavanagh
-------------------------------	--------------------------------

## Treasurers Report

**Treasurer:** Grace Matts  
No report provided.

## The Australian Speleological Federation Gift Fund

### Fund Management Commission

*Previously known as the "Environment Fund Management Committee"*

**Report by:** Nicholas White

During 2008, the Management Committee of the Fund, the ASF and CQSS continued negotiating with Cement Australia about being donated the Eastern Quarry at Mt Etna. Circumstances changed due to government policy change in Queensland. This change was to double the Park estate by the year 2020. Queensland Parks and Wildlife intervened and Cement Australia decided to transfer both the Eastern and the Western Quarries to the Parks and Wildlife Service. The titles to the Quarries were transferred to the State Government on September 27th 2008. This marked the close of the 40 year conservation battle for Mt Etna. ASF can be proud that although we negotiated to receive the Eastern Quarry via the Gift Fund for ASF to manage when no one else wanted it, we can now be satisfied that the quarry is with the Parks Service instead of temporarily with ASF. ASF will need to ensure it is well managed to protect the karst and caves.

In recognition of the part ASF played in assisting Cement Australia to finalize its operations at MT Etna, Cement Australia made a generous donation to the Gift Fund. It was suggested that this be used to assist the

publishing of a book on the history of cave and karst conservation battles in Australia which ASF has in preparation.

The Newcastle and Hunter Valley Speleological Society was involved in a project to document the Timor Caves. The project was funded by the NSW Environment Trust and supported by the ASF Inc Environmental Gift Fund. The findings were published in a book on the Timor Caves. This was the first project formally provided funds from the Environmental Gift Fund.

The Directors of the Fund have committed to support the Canberra Speleological Society and the NSW Speleological Council to undertake to build a gate in the sand trap in Dogleg Cave, Wee Jasper, NSW. Funds of the order of \$1,500 are tagged to this project. Expenditure is now conditional on negotiations with the landowner for access and approval and the submitting of a properly costed and budgeted proposal.

The Management Committee has been notified of several small projects which they consider favourably and only await applications before they can be recommended to the Directors. One of these involves funds for karst advice and the preparation of a Karst Management Plan for caves and karst on a private property in NSW which is currently having a Conservation Covenant placed on the title to the land. The other project which is in the early planning stages is also on private land is to provide fencing protection of some tufa terraces in Victoria.

Currently the ASF Executive has recommended that the Gift Fund be renamed the "Karst Conservation Fund" and that the Management Committee of the Fund become a full Commission, the "Fund Commission". The name change of the Fund requires a change to the Constitution. A change is currently being drafted, being discussed with the Fund Directors and will be put forward at the January 2009 Council Meeting together with revised Operational Procedures for the Fund reflecting the changes.

It is also anticipated that before end of 2008 that the Environment Fund will have a Webpage attached to the ASF Website which explains Fund Operations, how to donate to the Fund, how to apply for funds together with the aims and objectives of the Fund.

The Gift Fund now has considerable funds available for projects. These amount to about \$41,000. The Management Committee is determined to foster projects. Only by funding karst conservation projects can we fulfil the charter to administer such a fund.

Management Committee Peter Berrill, John Dunkley, Nicholas White, Grace Matts

#### **Notice of Constitutional change:**

**Motion:** That in s. 2.1 the words "The Australian Speleological Federation Gift Fund" be replaced by the words "The Karst Conservation Fund".

Moved by the ASF Executive.

## **Conservation Commission Reports**

### **National Convener**

**Convener:** Nicholas White

Over the years my attention as Convener of the Commission has been taken up with a focus on the political machinations of changes to management at Jenolan and with negotiations to do with Mt Etna. These have prevented me spreading my time across other important issues but this is now happening.

Cave conservation has moved from the classic conserve versus quarry, black and white conflict. The conservation movement and speleologists have been very successful over the past years in getting most karst areas included in Parks or Reserves. This has changed our role and the way we advocate for caves. Caves need increasingly more sophisticated management to contend with visitor numbers and to protect cave

contents including cave invertebrates. It is our vigilance and attention to Government agendas which insures that our karst heritage in these Parks and Reserves is well managed. It is why Management Plans are important and why it is important that we are represented on Advisory Committees.

Advice was provided on a Karst Policy for Western Australia which is still very much at the policy development stage. I look forward to this as the initial direction sets a very high standard which other states will need to follow.

There has been some disquiet recently about the demand for speleothem sampling mostly for climate change research. A seminar held in Jan 2008 at the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation discussed rainfall records and the part cave studies have contributed to our understanding of climate change. Participants at the meeting understood that speleothems were a scarce resource deserving of a minimal impact approach to the samples taken. I am currently preparing a Minimal Impact Science Code to complement the other ASF Codes.

Apart from the White Nose Syndrome in bats the ASF Website has not been used to publicise cave conservation issues and problems.

### **Mt Etna**

This year marked a resolution of the negotiations with Cement Australia over the Eastern Quarry on Mt Etna. This quarry instead of being gifted to ASF to manage has now been donated to the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service. This is where the ASF would have vested the quarry at a time when the rehabilitation had progressed to a stage of completion. See elsewhere for more detail.

### **Southern Bent-wing Bat**

The Southern Bent-wing Bat (*Miniopterus schreibersii bassanii*) has been federally gazetted as critically endangered by the Minister of Environment under the EPBC Act 1999. This occurred in February 2008. This has had several important consequences. It is hoped that there is funding for a variety of projects related to the population decline and its genetic status. The maternity sites for the bat are Bat Cave, Naracoorte and Starlight Cave, Warnambool. At Starlight Cave the new owner of the property was challenged for using heavy earthmoving equipment close to the cave. A letter from the Minister suggested that if the work did not stop then there were very serious penalties.

This species is also listed under the Fauna and Flora Guarantee Act 1988 in Victoria. It has been listed since 1994 but the Department of Sustainability and Environment has not prepared an Action Statement for the species. The Federal listing and the problems at Starlight Cave prompted the Department to prepare a Draft Action Statement. Both VSA and ASF commented on this draft and it is evident that there needs to be considerable research and quite a lot of signage to protect the bats.

### **White Nose Syndrome of Bats**

White Nose Syndrome was first noticed in cave dwelling bats in the north eastern US states. The symptoms are a fungal infection around the face of the bats at the end of winter with a very high mortality. It was feared that it could be infectious and thus could be carried from one area to another by cavers or the biologists studying it. It was feared that the syndrome might have been like the chytrid fungal disease which has devastated frog populations in many parts of the world. For this reason I wrote an article on it for the E-Speleo Bulletin as well as putting an information page on the ASF Website. These referred to the syndrome and the sort of hygiene and disinfection procedures which should be used for clothing and equipment between caves and caving areas.

### **Timor Caves, NSW**

During 2006 and 2007 the Newcastle and Hunter Valley Speleological Society was involved in a project to document the Timor Caves. The project was funded by the NSW Environment Trust and supported by the ASF Inc Environmental Gift Fund. The findings were published in a book on the Timor Caves. I highlight this important research and the publishing about the area as it provides the information on the karst and its values which can now be used to judge the effects of quarrying limestone from the same belt of limestone (see below).

## **Karst Conservancies**

There are a number of groups which operate as karst conservancies in their own areas some populated with cavers and others less so. They form a very important addition to the karst fraternity and a vehicle for much effective local conservation and preservation activity particularly in Cave Reserves and Parks. Below are a few examples.

The Friends of Buchan Caves major project for the last few years has been the solar lighting of the Federal Cave. This has now been virtually completed. The cave is used extensively for education groups and the like and the lighting has been very well received. With this project out of the way activity is switching to the Potholes Reserve where old fencing is being removed and a new revegetation area will be fenced out and planted. The information signs for the Potholes and Wilsons Cave Reserves are now complete. Funding for most work is from special Parks Victoria funds and the collection tubes which are placed at the exits to the show caves.

The Friends of Naracoorte Caves is a very active group which involves itself closely with the Naracoorte Caves management as well as extending into clean up and historical projects.

Karstcare in Northern Tasmania is very active and a full report is given below.

## **Queensland Convener**

**Convener:** Peter Berrill

*An update of Queensland Karst Conservation Issues was gathered and provided in the National Convener report above.*

## **New South Wales Convener**

**Convener:** Keir Vaughan-Taylor

### **Timor Caves, NSW Proposed Mine**

Report by Jodie Rutledge.

In August this year, NHVSS received confirmation that the mining company "Stoneco Pty Ltd" was intending to submit a development application (DA) to mine limestone on the south western corner of the Timor Limestone deposit in the Hunter Valley, NSW. At the time of submitting this report that Development Application and the accompanying Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) had just been submitted to the local council (the consent authority). The area proposed to be mined is approximately 3km to the west of the Timor Caves Reserve, although caves and karst features exist on private properties closer to the proposed mine site such as the Isis River caves just to the north. NHVSS have traditionally not been given access to the property housing the proposed mine site, but were able to negotiate access recently to inspect the site. No cave entrances were found during the NHVSS inspection, but some karst features like dolines, grikes and a karst spring were identified prompting NHVSS to recommend that a qualified karst consultant be commissioned to carry out a karst survey for inclusion in the EIS. NHVSS also found an item of possible high heritage value, a drystone wall, which NHVSS are pushing to be investigated. Stoneco's Environmental Consultant did not commission a karst consultant to assist with the EIS as per NHVSS's recommendations. The Development Application and EIS have been released and open for public comment, until the 19<sup>th</sup> December, 2008.

## **Western Australia Commission**

**Conveners:** Jay Anderson, Rob Susac and Jeff Murray

### **Summary of WA Karst Conservation and Management Issues**

The "summary" from 2007 is still accurate and continues to relate to 2008 – with little progress on outstanding conservation/cave and karst management issues. However we could also add that there has been some further positive and forward progress in other areas. Both the Federal and State Government are being more active in seeking to document karst values. The Federal Government is preparing a submission to nominate the Cape Range karst/Ningaloo Reef for World Heritage Listing. Additionally, the Federal Government is

progressing its National Heritage listings and review of karst sites – as such, it is likely that speleologists will be involved further in the protection of caves and karst systems in WA.

Of note is that the State Government has made some positive gains in several ways. The Department for Environment and Conservation (DEC) has circulated (currently it is an internal document and yet to be made public) a draft policy on karst in the state, and this is great to see. The Government also continued to fund a project officer for the Hidden Treasures project for most of 2008. Several of us, have been involved in key issues, at a personal level, depending on our roles at the time. Rob has been employed as the Hidden Treasures research/project officer, assisting speleo's and DEC to work in partnership in relation to karst management. Jay gave a presentation to the EPA early in the year, which was well received. During August, Jay organised a multi-agency karst forum – where there was a presentation of the NSW model (Karst and Geodiversity Unit of the Department of Environment and Climate Change) and extensive discussion and support for a State karst officer. The special meeting involved discussion on karst management in WA, and included several karst management experts and local Officers (DEC, DPI) and speleologists. It was a positive meeting, with several outcomes discussed.

Due to a lack of volunteer time this year, and other personal commitments, we have been unable to conduct any public presentations or displays under the ASF Conservation Commission. However, there has been similar relevant activity organised at a local level, with members of the speleological groups being involved in the annual Children's Groundwater festival and National Science Week. During August 2008, members of Cavers Leeuwin co-ordinated a "caves day" which involved displays at the National Park caves and community education. The Conservation Commission, through key involvement of local speleologists, will continue involvement in public education, through community displays, participation in community events and presentations.

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

### **1A Cave Management & karst issues, Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park (L.N.N.P.)**

We are still waiting for the Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park Management plan (1989-1999) to be updated and released for public comments. The Cave Management Advisory Committee (CMAC.) continues to meet to advise the DEC on cave management issues. This process continues to work really well and various projects are undertaken regularly - involving local speleological members. Speleologists continue to support DEC in cave protection and in an advisory capacity.

There is still a significant need for thorough interagency consultation and communication, including liaison with speleological groups. It is hoped that improved future communication on karst management issues will lead to further research on the areas karst system.

The local speleological group, Cavers Leeuwin, organised a community event for National Science week in August – in partnership with DEC and CCG (Cape to Cape catchment group). Local speleologists continue to be involved in on-ground conservation works (such as cave restoration, removal of debris from caves and trackmarking) and cave management. In addition, several local speleologists in a personal capacity are on the organising committee for the next ACKMA conference, to be held in Margaret River in May 2009.

### **1B Karst in the Mandurah/Peel Region**

There is no specific management of the karst system that lies south of Perth and adjacent to the Dawesville Estuary. Further work needs to be undertaken in this area, including determining land tenure for sites and the "plan" for caves and reserves in the area. There is also a need for public education. The status of many caves in relation to land development in the area is unclear. This needs to be determined as a matter of priority.

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

### **2A The Nullarbor**

As reported on in previous reports, the ASF and local WA speleological groups have continued to be involved in the project - aimed at protecting the biodiversity of the Nullarbor Karst. This has involved the progression of plans and projects through the Natural Resource Management (NRM) group for the Nullarbor and in consultation with DEC. There has been extensive involvement of the ASF in the planning process, over a number of years. This has involved considerable liaison between various ASF members with knowledge skills

and experience of the Nullarbor and of karst management. The project has progressed well with the compilation of a final report on the values and management issues for the Nullarbor. The Interim Management Guidelines are yet to be finalised and publically released (for an official consultation period) – at which time, other ASF members will be consulted in the development of the document.

Cocklebiddy cave is still closed by management. The land manager responsible is in the process of developing some interpretation signage at this site, including liaison with a WA Co-Convenor.

The ASF continues to advocate for the need for World Heritage Listing for the Nullarbor. This is 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. It is anticipated that ASF members will continue to have involvement in consultation regarding the management of the Nullarbor.

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

There has been no progress on the Regional management plan (1992-2002).

## **3. North of Perth:**

### **3A Yanchep National Park:**

We are still awaiting the release of the draft Yanchep National Park Management plan (1989-1999). There has been further speleological input in management plan drafts, with liaison between the Department of Environment and Conservation and local speleologists, primarily through YCAC. The draft plan has been scheduled for public comment by the end of 2008. The Yanchep National Park Caves Advisory Committee (YCAC) continues to meet bi-monthly to discuss local karst issues. We still recommend 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. Speleologists continue to work closely with Park staff: providing advice on cave and karst management issues and assisting with local projects. It is understood that there are plans to alter the lighting in Crystal Cave, to remove the lampenflora and to upgrade the in-cave infrastructure.

The status and condition of the Threatened Ecological Community (TEC) remains unknown. To date, the State Government project to artificially supplement the caves has not been operational or successful. This issue was the topic of discussion during the recent ISSB (International Symposium of Subterranean Biology), and the future of the sites is unclear.

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

There has been no further progress on the issue of the planned road in the Alkimos Area (as reported in the 2005 report). It remains of great concern that there is a road planned to go straight over a number of significant caves. This issue needs more time to progress (to a resolution) than is currently available to those volunteers involved. This whole area needs significant community education about karst.

### **3C Two Rocks & Wanneroo Area:**

Although, the City of Wanneroo Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) continue to meet, there has been little further focus on karst issues. The EAC committee plays an important role and can assist in raising the profile of karst in the area. The City of Wanneroo has recently revised their policy, and although karst is mentioned in the geological sections, the actions/plan/implementation, no longer highlights karst as a key issue. It is very disappointing to see that the proposal to “Develop a Caves and Karstic Features Policy” is no longer explicitly stated. This concept was initiated during 2005 and 2006, but never completed, and had utilised a significant amount of effort and preparation by local speleologists and the EAC members. At the time it was excellent that the Council was committed to the policy. The City of Wanneroo have released for public comment (due 22/12/2008) the "Draft Local Environmental Plan (2009-2014)" and the "Local Biodiversity Strategy (2008-2013)- A Draft for Discussion". In addition, there are continual requests for advice on local karst issues, from local residents and also other Government agencies - yet nothing is in concrete within the local government agency, for the processing of karst information and the restriction to development in this karst area.

Speleologists were involved in highlighting the importance of karst in the maintenance of a sustainable healthy environment at the yearly Children’s Groundwater Festival 2007 held at Whiteman Park.

Development subdivisions continue to occur, however it seems that although speleologists can be involved in karst assessments, this is not given the required policy framework for implementation. Development continues to occur and there has been an increase in the number of requests for karst assessment. Speleologists receive regular requests that involve a significant amount of volunteer time to resolve. This shows a need in the community and an opportunity for the State Government to support our future 'vision' for karst management in WA.

### **3D Coastal Karst – Lancelin to Geraldton - including Jurien/Cervantes:**

The "Hidden Treasures" Project (from the 2006 report) concluded in 2008. As a result of this project, greater liaison has occurred with DEC, speleologists and private landowners. A final report was compiled which will be a significant key reference for the area. Some key issues arising from investigation in this area include;

- The bat slot in the gate at 6E-24 has been increased in size as recommended by the report. This cave was found to contain the highest overall natural values of caves throughout the Northern Agricultural Region and should receive prioritization in regards to conservation efforts. 6E-22 came in second highest in natural values and is located on private land.
- Interpretive signage should be implemented at various highly visited cave sites such as 6E-3, 6E-24, 6SH-17 & 6J-2 as priority locations. This information should focus on the risks of visitation, the sensitivities of the site and the potential impact on features and fauna such as bats, particularly between mid September to January for maternity sites. Other information could be site specific or provide contact information for ASF affiliated clubs.
- A high degree of interest was indicated by International biologists interested in pursuing research into stygofauna found at 6SH-17 (amphipods) and 6M-1 (syncarids/copepods). Terrestrial fauna that also sparked continued interest included meenoplids from Nambung NP and a cixiid from East Moore River.
- As the declining water levels in coastal cave systems reflect the broader water shortage crisis, it is imperative to monitor stream caves as early warning systems that demonstrate the stress or ecological that will be reflected in the wider environment. Dr Pauline Treble is investigating climatic patterns through mass spectrometry of oxygen isotopes and trace element concentrations in stalagmite sections. This has been done in the southwest but there is a strong case for this investigation to be expanded into the NAR. Research into climate history sourced from speleothems should be supported where there is an appropriate specimen available. Although this is not directly associated with cave conservation, the work highlights the importance of caves as time capsules of information and demonstrates how caves can act as a litmus test for broader ecological health.
- Public liaison and talks about the caves and there sensitivities was undertaken in the form of public talks that were held at Jurien Bay (to over 50 people from both local and afar (which was more than had been expected!) and the Geraldton Museum (58 people), which was again the highest turnout for any of the information sessions to date. A presentation was also delivered at the International Symposium of Subterranean Biology 2008. All these were well received. Articles were written for the local paper known as the Advocate and in the NACC Targeted Investment Program newsletter; NACC Tip Bits.
- Further work that has been recommended includes an expansion of wetland monitoring to include stygofauna and subterranean terrestrials where applicable. Also the cooperation between speleologists and government departments for projects that incorporate data basing for planning, ecological monitoring and bio-inventory.
- The discussions with National Park/State Government regarding the management of Drover's Cave has been on hold due to a number of issues, and will continue to be progressed. The rehabilitation work at the entrance of Drovers Cave (6J-2) is yet to be undertaken as appropriate gate replacement was not an option and complete rehabilitation of the entrance area was widely considered as the best way forward. A recent donation means that plans for the gate change are now possible and management of this site will be discussed in collaboration between speleologists and DEC.

### **3E Cape Range:**

The Cape Range National Park Management plan (1987-1997) has been in the process of review for some time. The Management plan was finalised in early 2007. Additionally, as noted in previous reports, the A.S.F. case regarding proposed mining leases on the Cape Range has not yet been concluded (although finalised in

the Wardens Court in Perth (11/2000). The Government (Minister for Mines) has STILL to make the final decision regarding the granting of the mining leases. The A.S.F. will continue to request the removal of the strategic limestone mining purpose from the proposed 5(h) reserve. In addition, the Government advisory committee for this area, still needs speleological representation/expertise.

Speleologists continue to raise the importance of the World Heritage nomination to the Government. The A.S.F. has continued to advocate that the Cape Range is a significant karst area that needs such protection and recognition. It has taken the Government several years to progress the plans to nominate the Cape Range for World Heritage Status. A special Government committee made recommendations on the proposed boundary's, however it is understood that this has not been resolved.

### **3F The Kimberley – FAR north:**

The caves and karst of the Kimberley are of considerable international significance, yet there is still no progress on karst management for this region. It is our belief that the area's current land management regime does not adequately provide for the reservation and protection of important karst features. This area needs appropriate karst management, in particular an "integrated management" focus (see the 2005 report for more information). The National Heritage List may be an appropriate mechanism for recognising the area's "outstanding" values.

### **4. Public Education:**

Members of the local speleological groups were again involved in the display at the "Children's Groundwater Festival" in November. Positive feedback was received about this event that targeted teachers and primary school aged children in the Perth region. During August 2008, members of Cavers Leeuwin co-ordinated a "caves day" which involved displays at the National Park caves, a take-home item (sticker of the karst system) and community education.

### **5. Karst Policy:**

It is understood that the DEC have compiled an excellent document that is about to be finalised. It is however not clear whether this is an internal document or a publicly accessible document.

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

There are great opportunities for partnership projects in WA. We aim to continue to develop relationships with Government and other Environmental Agencies and to progress the vision for future karst management in WA.

## **Karst Conservancies**

### **Karstcare**

**Co-ordinator:** David Wools-Cobb

Over the 12 months to October 2008 a total of 327 hours have been contributed to Karst Environmental projects.

These projects have included:

Wet cave Block (Mole creek Karst National Park) - sycamore eradication

Baldocks cave MCKNP - setting up a fauna sanctuary

Tailender Cave MCKNP - track cleaning and string-lining, P-Hangers

Harrys Creek/Jaw Bone Cave - rubbish removal

Croesus Cave MCKNP - stringline to protect calcareous sand deposits

Kubla Khan Cave MCKNP - route marking and extensive cleaning

Gunns Plains Tourist Cave - cleaning up after re-wiring & re-lighting contractors - cleaning route & matting.

It's been our busiest year yet! Plus I have recently secured funding from 3 different sources (it doesn't rain, then it pours!), so I'm pleased to say that Karstcare finances are pretty good currently.

I am also pleased to report that relationships between Karstcare & Parks are better than ever. Our local Parks office has appointed a ranger to be specifically involved in cave management/volunteers programs. We are

now extremely proactive in actioning a number of projects and have become the major thrust in local cave management.

## **Speleological Council Reports**

### **NSW Speleological Council**

**President:** Denis Marsh

The NSWSC has met twice during the past year, in May and again in October, with both meetings well attended. The NSW State Council has been active on a number of matters which I can update this Federal Council meeting about.

#### **Jenolan**

Latest advice is that the Jenolan Plan of Management should be signed off on by the end of 2008 with the final handover to Parks and Wildlife Group, DECC, July 2009. Current indications are that the Parks and Wildlife Group may operate Jenolan as a separate business unit, possibly out of the Bathurst office.

The positions of Manager and Deputy Manager are currently vacant at the time of writing this report. The Manager's position is being advertised.

The JCRT Speleological Advisory Committee (SAC) met on 15 September 08 and is scheduled to meet again on 9 March 09. This SAC committee will cease to exist once the final handover occurs next July.

A Conservation Management Plan relating to the cultural heritage of Jenolan (European and Aboriginal) is currently being developed with \$150K funding from Treasury.

Also a Jenolan Environmental Monitoring program for air and water quality is being undertaken with \$160K of Treasury funds.

The Karst and Geodiversity Unit (KGU) of DECC, formerly the Karst Conservation Unit, is providing input into an Environmental Regulatory Framework in the event a private operator is involved in running some part of the Jenolan operation.

#### **Wee Jasper**

The NSWSC and CSS are committed to the proposed gating project in Dogleg Cave at Wee Jasper. CSS will manage the project with in-kind support from other NSWSC member clubs. A grant application to the ASF Environment Fund has secured funding of \$1,500. Further funds may need to be sought to complete the project and options are currently being considered for raising any necessary additional funds. A budget is being drawn up by CSS. No timing has been set for the on ground works at the time of writing this report but this will be advertised once details are known.

#### **Macleay and New England Area Karst (Kempsey Region)**

Karst in this region is currently managed by various Government agencies including, Northern Rivers CMA, Kempsey Shire Council, Department of Water and Energy, Macleay Valley Landcare Group and Parks & Wildlife Group of DECC. The Karst & Geodiversity Unit (KGU) of DECC convened a meeting of all stakeholders including representatives of Kempsey Speleological Society to discuss a collaborative karst management approach by the various stakeholders. The meeting gave in principle support to the idea and proposed to establish a Karst Management Cooperative, including the involvement of representatives from KSS. It was also proposed to investigate funding opportunities to employ a dedicated project officer within DECC for the area. KSS are cautious about the proposal but feel they need to be involved to have input.

#### **Kosciuszko National Park (KNP)**

In accordance with the Plan of Management for KNP, a Karst Management Committee was required to be established. The NSWSC wrote to the Regional Manager, South West Slopes Region of DECC, expressing strong support for the establishment of the mandated committee and requested advice on its establishment, progress on the Terms of Reference and the proposed makeup of the committee. NSWSC was advised that a Kosciuszko Speleological Reference Group was to be established with possibly 4 representatives from speleological groups. The KGU has been tasked with developing the Terms of Reference and it is intended the Reference Group be in place in the first half of 2009.

The NSWSC has offered assistance in canvassing suitable candidates from the speleo community and requested specific representation by at least one nominee from ASF.

A draft Terms of Reference is expected to be available for comment by the end of 2008.

### **Bungonia State Recreation Area**

A new Bungonia SRA Activity Code of Conduct has been drafted and released for review and comment by stakeholders. The draft Codes have been circulated to NSWSC members with a request for comment. Drum Cave was closed two weeks early this year on 18 October due to increased bat activity.

### **Wombeyan Caves**

Mike Chalker retired as Manager and at this time the Managers position is still to be filled.

An incident involving a caver at Wombeyan in May this year almost resulted in a fatality. The NSW Cave Rescue Squad were frustrated in their initial attempts to assist in the rescue and they believe had they been allowed to take an active role in the rescue earlier, a retrieval could have been effected more quickly with a reduced risk of what very nearly resulted in a fatality.

A prosecution of the individual concerned ensued, resulting in a substantial fine for breaches of two provisions under the NPW Regulations. I mention this only because of the situation of "double regulation" concerning caving under the National Parks and Wildlife Regulations in NSW. Effectively there are two provisions which make it an offence to go caving on a DECC reserve without permission and potentially liable to twice the penalty. Other adventure type activities such as Base jumping, abseiling, rock climbing, etc are subject to only one provision. The Regulation is shortly coming up for review and Chris Norton is hoping to have the opportunity to raise this disproportionate provision if KMAC is consulted in a review of the Regulation. I am advised that ASF has made unsuccessful representations in relation to this previously and it may be appropriate to have another crack at it.

### **Timor Karst**

A proposal for a new limestone quarry near Timor came to the attention of NHVSS. Members of NHVSS were able to persuade the proponents of the quarry and landowner to allow them to conduct a survey of the area to identify if any caves or karst features existed in the proposed area. No caves were located but karst features were located and a feature of potential heritage value which they recommended for further investigation.

### **Borenore Caves Reserve**

There has been a recent breach of the gate on Cathedral Cave at Borenore. This has been an ongoing issue for this cave which was gated by OSS and the then responsible Lands Dep't Ranger in the early 90's when an extension was opened. It is believed these are locals with no affiliation with a caving club.

On this latest occasion a section was cut away on either side of the gate frame. Three 40 cm long stals were found broken off in the extension, along with some small sections of helictites. Bathurst Parks and Wildlife were advised and some temporary steel bars were welded over the openings. An on site meeting was arranged with the senior ranger, Steve Woodhall, along with another Parks ranger and Russell Commins from the KGU and it was proposed that a new bat friendlier gate will be constructed in the entrance by Parks and Wildlife staff early in the new year.

### **Far South Coast Escarpment Parks (Deua Region)**

The draft Plan of Management for the Far South Coast Escarpment Parks, released for comment in 2006 is currently being reviewed by the KMAC.

ISS and CSS are assisting the Far South Coast Region, Parks and Wildlife Group of the DECC with the development of a Karst Area Management Plan (KAMP) for the Deua area which is recommended in the POM. Under some form of contractual arrangement with Far South Coast PWG, ISS and CSS have been revising their current data and/or collecting new data on the caves and karst of Bendethra, Wyanbene, Cleatmore, Deua and Marble Arch to hand over to DECC, to assist with the development of management protocols for the caves and karst in the region under the Karst Area Management Plan.

### **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for Data Sharing with DECC**

A MoU for data sharing between ASF and DECC NSW is being developed to allow exchange of data on NSW caves and karst. It will provide the framework for both parties to be able to access information contained in each others databases to improve each others knowledge base of NSW karst heritage. It is also expected to foster a closer relationship and improved communications and hopefully contribute to more favourable karst management outcomes.

A draft of the MoU is being worked through between the NSW and ACT arm of ASF and the NSW DECC via the KGU. The KGU drew up a draft which has undergone a detailed review and amendment by various ASF and NSWSC executive members.

A recent meeting of the NSWSC resolved to accept the MoU wording in principle with the finalisation of the draft to be vested with the President of the NSWSC in consultation with Nic White and Chris Norton. The draft is currently back with DECC for their review and response to our amendments.

### **KID Updating in NSW**

SUSS has been doing some updating of Jenolan data in the KID. All other updating in NSW is generally stalled and there is wide agreement that there may be some need to raise funding for employment of a project person/s to facilitate the updating in a more acceptable time frame. A working group has been established by NSWSC to formulate a project proposal and to investigate opportunity to fund the project from grant monies, possibly in partnership with DECC, once a MoU is finalised.

### **Timor Book Launch**

A successful launch of the Timor book was held on 2 August 2008 at Murrurundi.

Congratulations again to Jodie Rutledge, Garry Smith and NHVSS on an excellent publication and resource book on the Timor caves and karst.

### **General Items**

During the year two NSW clubs celebrated anniversaries with SUSS celebrating their 60th anniversary since formation, and KSS celebrating their 50th anniversary since formation.

Early in the year the Karst Conservation Unit (KCU) of the DECC changed its name to the Karst and Geodiversity Unit (KGU) with a slightly expanded role.

## **SA Speleological Council**

Nil Report.

## **Commission Reports**

### **Administration**

**Convener:** Chris Dunne

No report provided.

### **Awards**

**Convener:** Lloyd Robinson

The awards process is to be modified to speed up the lag time that exists after award recipients have been announced. There are a number of areas where delays occur; one being the gift associated with the Edie Smith Award. Recipients were entitled to select a gift of their choice.

The gift and other matters have caused delays, angst, etc. So much so, a past President became frustrated with award problems. As a result, the executive relieved the President of also filling the role of Awards Convenor.

The Commission aims to have a common, inscribed object to present to Edie Smith Award recipients. Samples were sourced and displayed at the last council meeting. Many trophy outlets were sourced and while keen when first approached, soon lost interest with two to four year time frames and then often only one required. This pointed towards a bulk purchase costing dollars. This is what the executive intends to do and possibly also cover the Award of Distinction in a similar manner.

In due course it is intended to present the Award items as the Awards are announced at the Cavers Dinner.

## **Bibliography**

**Convener:** Greg Middleton

The Bibliography Commission has continued with its function of preparing abstracts of information published on Australian caves/karst and cave/karst science. These are contributed to the IUS Commission on Bibliography for incorporation in the Union's Speleological Abstracts.

The 2005 abstracts (526 from material published in Australasia; 98 from elsewhere) were compiled in early 2006 but were not published until April 2008 in SA issue No. 44. Abstracts for 2006 have been prepared (637 + 104 to date) and forwarded for incorporation in the 2006-07 issue.

The international commission has been having difficulty funding the publication of a hard copy of Speleological Abstracts so it is likely that No. 44 will be the last in that format. In future it may be that the abstracts will only be available on CD – and possibly on the web. The abstracts can be subscribed to through the Commission's webpage: [www.ssslib.ch/bbs](http://www.ssslib.ch/bbs)

Once again I express my appreciation for the continuing efforts of our small and dedicated band of abstractors; efforts to find local abstractors for WA and Queensland continue to be unsuccessful. Those contributing to the 2005 issue were Ross Ellis, Ken Grimes, Jill Rowling, Susan White, Dave Smith (NZ) and the Convener.

The Commission operates without a budget and without members claiming any costs.

I am prepared to continue to act as Convener of the Commission.

Greg Middleton, Convener 30 October 2008

PO Box 269, Sandy Bay, Tas. 7006 Phone: 03 6223 1400  
<ozspeleo@bigpond.net.au>

## **Cave Diving**

**Conveners:** Tim Payne and Peter Kraehenbuehl (report provided by Tim)

From a commission perspective it has been a quiet year. The relationship with the CDAA has continued to improve and the CDAA are now considering the use of the ASF codes to fill a deficiency in their own.

It has not been a quiet year from the perspective of Cave diving and many of the nations caves have been extended, mapped or researched.

It has consequently been a year of consolidation and lots of cave diving without controversy or issues.

## **Cave & Karst Numbering**

**Convener:** Peter Dykes

This year I have been very active in NSW concerned with developing methods for updating the KID such that I have had little time to liaise with other state coordinators, however the issues raised in NSW concern all of ASF. In September 2008 I produced a report to the ASF Executive and NSW Speleological Council on these issues, the following is abbreviated version of that report. In NSW several issues have been "hot topics" in 2008, namely:

1. **The State of the KID**
2. **A Karst GIS Database**
3. **How to Update the KID and to a Karst GIS Database**
4. **The Role of Government Agencies**
5. **Memorandum Of Understanding with NSW DECC**
6. **The Grant Application**

### **1. The State of the KID**

While I can only speak for NSW, the KID is grossly out of date. There are about 2,138 features for NSW on the KID (Matthews 1985) and depending on the area; the data is at least or between 25 or 35 years old.

None of the data has accurate grid references which would allow it to be displayed in GIS software like ArcMap or Arcview. The KID also does not contain any information on karst outcrops and has a very poor data fields on karst areas.

**Issue 1** - In NSW as at September 2008 I expect that there are between 6,000 and 10,000 features (both existing and new) requiring updating. Taking an estimate of 7,500 features and allowing ½ hour per feature to update the KID, I estimate it would take a person/s full time for 1.8 years to update all existing information for NSW on the KID.

When it was originally conceived the KID was decades before its time – no other environmental and/or cultural data was really collated into a database until the early to mid 1980's. However since then the KID has become a relic from a past age. All other comparable environmental and cultural databases used in NSW (Aboriginal, threatened species, plant and fauna, cultural sites) were converted in 1990's to GIS based databases, the KID remains the only national environmental database that is not either GIS based or whose data is not able to be projected into GIS software. ASF has made no investment into the KID structure (programming etc) since it was web based in the mid to late 1990's.

Put simply the KID cannot be updated by purely voluntary labour – ASF needs to consider getting a grant to pay someone/s to do the job. The KID also needs have accurate grid references for all features to allow the KID to be upgraded to a GIS KID. ASF also needs to consider programming upgrading of the KID.

**Issue 2** – ASF has not collected in-depth information on a structured national basis like we did for karst features for karst areas and karst outcrops. It is this information on areas and outcrops that I believe most environmental planners really want. In reality the KID is not a database on karst, but a database on only karst features. ASF needs to consider expanding the KID to allow the collection of data on areas and outcrops as part of an upgrade to a GIS KID.

## **2. A Karst GIS Database**

So what would a Karst GIS database look like? Using Arcview it would be composed of 3 themes. Using ArcMap the 3 themes that would be incorporated into one karst geodatabase composed of 3 layers. Either way a Karst GIS database has 3 components:

1. A karst administrative layer/theme
2. A karst outcrop layer/theme
3. A karst feature layer/theme

I will be able to demonstrate what these 3 components look like at a workshop at the ASF Conference in January.

## **3. How to Update the KID and to a Karst GIS Database**

**Current Practice** - At present ASF relies on cavers/caving clubs voluntarily updating the KID. For a whole of lot of reasons that I don't want go into in this report, that hasn't happened in NSW and for most of Australia and probably won't happen.

**The NSW Proposal** - Essentially NSW proposes to seek commonwealth and/or state environmental funding to pay for the updating of the KID as well as for the collection of additional karst outcrop data and karst area information. Also I want to ensure that the KID can be used in GIS software. To do this we need some minor changes to the KID (an additional access port), a better server to store the KID on the web (basically the hardware is very old and it will need replacing) and most importantly the collecting of full GPS grid references for all karst features.

For NSW I proposed that by breaking the state up into "regions", the process of updating the KID could be done on a "regional basis" over 4 years with commonwealth and/or state environmental funding. A similar process could be used in other states.

## **4. The Role of Government Agencies**

No commonwealth or state government is going to fund the updating of the KID unless there is a broad community value in doing so. Put simply the major justification for funding the KID updating and the collection of other karst information datasets is in their potential use as an invaluable planning and decision support tools. This is also the major rationale why the KID has to become a GIS KID.

In NSW Dept. of Environment and Climate Change (DECC), Karst Geodiversity Unit (KGU) is charged with preparing information datasets to enable state, regional and local planning of karst resources as well as developing decision support tools. So to put it in simple terms ASF needs DECC KGU if ASF is going to get the funding in NSW to do the KID updating. The reverse is also true, at least for present time, DECC KGU need ASF and its knowledge of caves and karst if it is to develop its karst planning and decision support tools.

The same rationale can be applied across Australia with other state government land management agencies.

#### **5. Memorandum of Understanding with NSW DECC**

As stated above it is important for ASF to establish relationships with Commonwealth and State land management agencies. As part of that process a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) will need to be negotiated. Over the last year, ASF with the support of the NSW Speleological Council has negotiated a MoU with DECC KGU and hopefully it should be signed by the Conference and available for other states to use an example of what a MoU should contain.

#### **6. The Grant Application**

Where is ASF to source the type of funding it needs to do this task? In my opinion the Commonwealth Government new Caring for Country Environmental Grant Program is the place. A new round will be called sometime between March and May 2009 with a possible start date between September and November 2009.

#### **Summarising:**

At the ASF Council meeting and associated conference there needs to be some important decisions made about the future of the KID, how it's to be updated and whether ASF should move towards a GIS based KID. Following on there may also be need for decisions on MoUs, grant application and what information on caves and karst ASF should or can release to government agencies. In my opinion these decisions can't put off any longer. It is proposed to run a workshop on the KID and the other associated issues at the Conference and for this reason I have delayed putting forward any recommendations until some consensus appears.

### **Codes and Guidelines**

*The convener position for this position is currently vacant.*

### **Helictite**

**Convener:** Sue White

Issue 40(1) was published at the end of 2007 and 40(2) is being currently worked on. This is taking considerably longer than we had hoped. We have some material but still need more. This issue of material is never ending and getting suitable material is getting worse rather than better. The commission will need to address this but I am unsure what can be done.

It is increasingly difficult issue as academics can no longer submit high quality articles to such a small and low ranking journal. Three similar journals are included in the Science Citation Index (Journal of Cave and Karst Studies, Acta Carsologica and the International Journal of Speleology) and cave and karst scientists are often required by their institutions to publish in journals with Impact Factors (IF), a measure of the citations to science and social science journals, which is frequently used as a proxy for the importance of a journal to its field. To turn this around would take us several years of regularly producing high quality issues; a lot of hard work. We would have to produce one per year and of a standard that would eventually get us listing. The articles we publish are good but they are too few.

No complete sets of back issues exist and we will not be producing any more. The gaps are now too large to fill them with photocopying. The stock of issues prior to Volume 36 has been written off in the accounts. This should make the stock control more straight forward.

We are working towards digital publishing but it is in its early days. Glenn has scanned Volumes 1-8, which now can be provided as searchable pdfs. I have started discussions with organizations (one in USA and one in Australia), regarding using a portal arrangement for back issues. This is still in its very early days and will be worked on over the next months.

## **Insurance**

**Convener:** David Chitty  
Mobile 0419280614  
agati@netc.net.au

### **Overview**

I have been the ASF insurance office for only part of the year but in that time have attended a Piltch seminar on Risk Management and Insurance for not for profit organisations and had a range of discussions with the insurers and various ASF members. I have also looked at how other peak bodies manage their insurance policies and risk management for members.

The Public Liability insurance cover for the year appears to have been generally adequate for our needs. I do have some concerns regarding:

- The lack of professional indemnity insurance cover for the officers of the member clubs
- That there seems to be some lack of understanding of what the PL insurance actually covers

### **Claims**

There have been no claims or incidents that could result in claims that have been reported to myself.

### **Cave training by clubs**

Hands on cave training activities were thought by some not to have been covered by the policy. This is not true! It is covered as I have had confirmation from the insurer. Note however:

- All those participating MUST be ASF insured club members and have paid their insurance fee component
- ASF members are not covered for personal injury or against claims by other ASF members. It is doubtful if a member could successfully sue the ASF or the Club involved in an incident, as they ARE the ASF and the CLUB (Or a part thereof). I don't believe that you can sue yourself!
- Third parties (Non ASF person who may be in the cave or the area and Land and Cave managers seem to be the only parties actually covered by the PL Insurance.

### **Understanding of insurance cover**

There is a need for simple information on who is covered and how. I will contact our insurers and develop Draft information for the executive's approval in early 2009 (have not had time to date).

### **Suitability of cover**

The PL is adequate for our needs but seems a little costly, as there is minimal actual risk to the public from club activities.

The Directors and officer's PI policy needs to be extended to cover the officers of member clubs as well (If possible) and if this occurs the PI policy is possibly currently underpriced.

Could balance out though if we negotiate properly with insurers.

### **Risk management**

A review of the ASF risk management, procedures would be appropriate in the first part of the next year, as this should happen on an annual basis. The results being promulgated to all clubs and members and our Insurers

The development of Adventure Activity Standards in various states (Started in Victoria) needs to be watched and the ASF should participate to ensure that these are adequate and appropriate and reflect the ASF Guidelines. They are designed for the management of activities for DEPENDENT groups (At least in the

Victorian AAS) and I recommend that the ASF risk management procedures be redeveloped with **guidelines for dependent groups** separate from the standard safety procedures currently shown.

### **Risk concerns**

Incidents (Or the perceptions of the public and Insurers regarding the safety of caving) resulting from Non ASF group practices or accidents will of course have an impact on ALL premiums including that of the ASF.

Some concerns that I have noticed or been advised of, regarding caving generally includes: (Note that most are not relating to ASF clubs but other cave parties).

- Very large and inappropriate groups caving at places such as Britannia Creek in Vic and Wee Jasper in NSW
- Large dependant groups with only one leader
- People caving without helmets
- People and groups using bike and other helmets
- Even in Vertical caves
- People caving with hand or slung torches (Including in Vertical caves)
- IE:- Scouts in Victoria do not use headlamps when vertical caving at Buchan
- Lack of safety and environmental information at some cave areas
- Poor laddering practices
- Laddering without belay or safety lines
- Ladders attached to a single anchor without back up (and also no belay lines)
- The use of Assumption of risk forms by clubs for members to protect against litigation (In particular re introductory short memberships)
- These forms are not applicable to members AND MAY ACTUALLY MAKE THE CLUB OR ASF LIABLE (provision of incorrect information or expectations) as the members are not able to sue anyway (The policy PROTECTS them from litigation by a third party)
- That some clubs are running caving for school and other youth groups under the guise of membership drives
- Might be doubtful if taken to court as no parents are involved and may also be outside of ASF membership rules and PL cover
- Needs clarification

### **Recommendations**

The following are my recommendations for 2008 / 2009

1. That we obtain quotes from at least THREE insurers to ensure that we have the best cover possible
2. That we obtain quotes with the inclusion of PI cover for all club officers as well as those on the ASF executive
3. That we develop a simple guideline for what our insurance covers and that this be
  - Available on the website
  - Provided to all members on joining
  - Guidelines for who can be an introductory member (Minors in what circumstances etc?)
4. That all clubs be advised that TRAINING is covered by our PL policy
  - Also that training MUST be carried out prior to allowing new members to participate (Duty of care) as this could come under scrutiny by state work safe agencies if an accident occurred (Might depend on state legislation but in Vic at least clubs come under the work cover act)
5. That we clarify where minors can be involved as club members without parents
  - I recommend that we ban the running of caving for school or other youth groups except where the specific activity has been approved by the ASF executive and we have written acceptance by the Insurer
  - That the guidelines for short term introductory membership be reviewed and promulgated
6. That the ASF safety and group management guidelines be reviewed

7. That the ASF participate in the development of the various State AAS
8. That the ASF safety Guidelines be amended to include:
  - 8.1 That ONLY UIAA helmets be acceptable for ALL caving vertical or otherwise
    - Not expensive
    - If can't afford or don't have should not be running the activity
    - Removes any area of doubt as to what is suitable
    - State confined space rules specify UIAA helmets and we may be breaching duty of care
  - 8.2 That HELMET lights be made mandatory for ALL caving
    - Not expensive (LED technology etc)
    - If cant afford or don't have should not be running the activity
    - Groups using bring your own hand torch systems (such as Vic scouts and many schools) are probably breaching duty of care
9. That the Risk management review includes a look at ASF and club responsibilities under the various work safe legislations and amend our procedures and guidelines as appropriate.

The information above is what the situation appears to be in my opinion and to obtain more accurate information I believe that the ASF should engage a lawyer to provide advice on the actual litigation risks to members and clubs executives etc.

## **International Relations**

**Convener:** Nicholas White

The Commission's role is to assist where one can with travel planning and to provide representation at IUS meetings.

The ASF assisted the International Association for Subterranean Biology with the 19th International Symposium of Subterranean Biology, held in Freemantle, WA 21-26 September 2008.

ASF participants attended the 13th International Symposium on Vulcanospeleology, Jeju Island, Korea in September 2008. ASF will host the next such Conference in two years time at Undara, Queensland and the Volcanic Province of Western Victoria. Contact Greg Middleton.

The International Association of Geomorphologists are holding their next Conference in Melbourne during July 2009. ASF will assist with organising a karst program focussed on "How Old are the Caves?" and associated field excursions. The karst session is jointly convened by Susan White and John Mylroie (Mississippi State University).

The Fifteenth International Congress of Speleology is in Texas USA in July 2009 Kerrville, Texas, USA More information: <http://www.ics2009.us/>

## **Library**

**Convener:** Cathy Brown (Report by Cathy Brown & John Dunkley)

Regrettably, neither of us have found much time to devote to Library development work this year, but in addition to the regular flow of journals into the library, we have also received some donations. Some of this material will be incorporated into the library, and other items will be auctioned off at the Conference, for the benefit of ASF members.

We have had a steady trickle of enquiries, including one from overseas, for information on caves in Laos. In this particular case, we were able to obtain additional UIS ([Union Internationale de Spéléologie](#)) material from a Sydney caver. Thank you Mike!

Due to a change of work commitments, Cathy is once again regularly reviewing geoscience publications and has been able to provide copies of several relevant articles to the library (e.g. on the Devonian limestones of the Canning Basin, northern WA). These finds will be reported in Caves Australia and/or Espeleo.

**Archives:** On a visit to Rockhampton, John was shown the company papers on Mount Etna, and has received a favourable response to a request for digital copies to be lodged with the ASF library.

John continues to seek out both library and archive material relevant to caving, particularly in Australia, but also in SE Asia.

While we still have work to do, to better organise our electronic holdings, and would welcome advice from other librarians about how they are managing their material, the intention is to make a summary holdings list more widely available in 2009.

## **Membership**

**Convener:** Jodie Rutledge

At the time of writing, ASF had 746 individual members spanning 28 corporate member clubs, and 1 Provisional member clubs and 11 of these Individual members outside the club framework. No new applications were received for either corporate or provisional membership in 2008. Some Individual Membership applications were received and each of these was very carefully considered as it is preferable to have applicants join as via a club rather than outside the club framework. As a result applications have been declined recently and directed to their nearby clubs.

### **Un-representation by Clubs at Council meetings**

In 2008, 4 clubs were not represented (CCV, MSS, UTSSS & TESS). It is asked that club committee's please arrange representation either in person or by proxy at each meeting. Unfortunately MSS was also un-represented in 2007 which means they will lose their Rights and Privileges of membership as per Division 7 of the ASF Constitution. These Rights and Privileges of membership will be reinstated if representation is made at the January 2009 Council meeting.

Excerpt from the Constitution...

*85. The rights and privileges of a Corporate Member shall be automatically suspended if at the commencement of any Council Meeting that Corporate Member is not represented by Councillors and/or proxies and that Corporate Member has not been so represented at the two preceding Council Meetings.*

*86. If the right and privileges of a Corporate Member remain suspended pursuant to clause 85 for two successive Council Meetings, that Corporate Member shall at the end of the second successive Council Meeting, for all purposes, cease to be a Corporate Member of the Federation.*

*87. The rights and privileges of a Corporate Member shall be automatically reinstated if that Corporate Member becomes properly represented at a Council Meeting before it would, but for this clause, cease to be a Corporate Member in accordance with clause 86.*

### **CQSS**

At the 2008 Council meeting it was reported that CQSS were to fold but overwhelming support from the clubs and ASF meant that the resignation of CQSS was not accepted. John Dunkley and Peter Dykes was appointed to at that meeting (Resolution 10) to resolve the issues surrounding their letter of resignation. But it has been a rollercoaster year for the club with the sudden back flip of Cemex (formerly Cement Australia) gifting the Mt Etna Land to QPWS instead of ASF as promised and also having Peter Berrill fall very seriously ill has been devastating to all.

CQSS remain un-financial in 2008 (so far) and were un-financial in 2007. According to Division 7 of the ASF constitution...

*83. If membership fees are not paid in respect of a Member in accordance with the by-laws for two years, the Member shall, for all purposes, cease to be a Member of the Federation.*

Basically at the January 2008 council meeting CQSS will cease to be a member unless they pay their fees beforehand. It is hoped that I will have an update on the situation for the Council in January 2008.

### **Speleological Councils**

Currently ASF has two Speleological Councils, the NSW and the SA. It is pleasing to report that the Tasmanian clubs wish to form a Speleological Council in Tasmania. A motion on Notice has been moved by David Wools-Cobb of the Northern Caverneers for this to occur at the up and coming Council meeting in January. The new Speleological Council will be known as the "Tasmanian Speleological Liaison Council". The Tasmanian Speleological Liaison Council (TSLC) has drafted a Charter for its operation. This charter has been submitted to the ASF Executive.

**Motion on Notice:** "That the Tasmanian Speleological Liaison Council be accepted as a recognised organ of ASF, as per Division 5 of the constitution."

Moved by David Wools-Cobb.

### **Associates**

The NSW Karst Conservation Unit had a change of name through 2008 and is now called the NSW Karst Geodiversity Unit.

### **Membership Database**

The database is being used regularly by most clubs which is wonderful as my work load is now a quarter of what it was 3 or 4 years ago. I would like to remind club committee's to continue being pro-active with checking that it is up to date on a regular basis. At the time of writing five clubs had no current members listed at all (yes I am chasing those up). I do try and be vigilant with this but really it should be the responsibility of each club now. David Connard of SUSS is the programmer behind the database and should be congratulated for an outstanding job behind the scenes.

## **National Cave Rescue**

**Convener:** Ross Anderson

This year has not seen the level of activity anticipated in the Commission that was hoped for at the end of 2007.

This year has seen:

- The Cave Rescue Orientation Program (CROP) presented in Western Australia.
- Ongoing revision of the Cave Rescue Orientation Program material and presentations.
- The ongoing development of Michie Phones by several people around Australia but generally being led by Joe Sydney.

NSW update: 6 Michie phones have been built by Joe Sydney. A total of 20 hand units have been made with the following distribution: 6 units donated to CRS, another 6 are available to cavers and Expeditions thru Joe Sydney. Three have been issued to key NSW cavers with expert cave rescue skills and the remaining will be kept as stand-by for emergencies. These now compliment the units that CRS has.

Michie phone international: Australia has been instrumental in acquiring parts needed for NZ, Germany, WA & Tasmania in building the v2005 Michie phone.

Base station: Work on three base stations has commenced. Two prototype designs with key features have been drafted. Two designs will be made. 1. a caver/expedition loan unit and a 2nd version for rescue with MP3 recording feature. The Michie circuit and Amplifier components have been made for one unit and

components are now being sourced for final assembly. Completion date for caver loan unit is hopefully by the Conference date.

A guide on 'how to make circuit boards and Michie phones' with a current component list is available on request.

Nicola MkII update: I have just received the parts list and PCB design for the Nicola MkII units. Our aim is to build more Nicola's for rescue and caver loan units. In regards to the radio interface, the original designer has been contacted and he is searching his files for the PCB design and information we require to build this unit. Contact has been made and questions sent to the UK and France re availability of the Nicola MkIII and its radio interface.

- Further development of the Micro-shaving techniques and equipment by eastern states cavers.

NSW update: NSW Cave Rescue Squad have perfected the microshaving technique and now have four complete sets of kits including one battery operated drill, one main drill and cave engineering equipment required to support this technique. The Squad has a draft version of an operational manual and is currently working on training notes/aids for internal use. A 'pilot' training session was conducted in September 2008 to train members and fine tune training notes.

The technique was also successfully used to extricate a trapped caver in Bouvier Cave-Wombeyan in July 2008.

- Cave Rescue exercise in Tasmania by STC. Two members of the NSW cave Rescue Squad attended and successfully tested the Nicola deep cave communication radio during the exercise in Mystery Creek cave and Benders Quarry – Ida Bay.
- The review of several publications and video's for potential use as training material as part of the initiative to see the ASF host cave rescue training materials that all cavers have access to.
- Gathering of documents and forms from other rescue organisations to enable the creation of a national cave rescuer recording system that the ASF can host.
- Clarification of the required first aid skills of cavers. Liaison with national First Aid training providers has so far not resulted in a suitable cost effective upgrade qualification from the inadequate senior/advanced first aid qualification held by most ASF trip leaders.

The French 'Nicola deep cave communication system: Successful field trials have been held at Bungonia, Wyanbene, Jenolan and Ida Bay-Tasmania.

Speleo Secours Francaise training manual: SSF have provided an electronic copy of their training manual for NCRC use.

Regional liaison: 2008 saw a close liaison with New Zealand cavers in relation to building of Michie phones and exchange of training material. This interaction is on-gong with New Zealand.

It is hoped that 2009 will see more of the objectives from the 2007 report achieved, and the CROP being presented in more states.

To enable this to be achieved, the NCRC meeting at the 2009 ASF conference will be asked to ratify the following:

- Adoption of Al Warilds book "Vertical" as the principle training resource for SRT training
- Adoption of Dr Dave Merchants book "Life on a Line – 2nd Edition" as the principle training resource for vertical cave rescue.

It was also hoped to present an SRT training video for adoption as a training aid however, some negative feedback of this publication has put the adoption of this resource on hold.

If we can source a suitable training video and a trainer's document we will have a suitable base of material for clubs to conduct in-house training using internationally recognised resource material.

Recently it has come to light that the National Cave Rescue Commission as it has been known for several years may not have been formally created through a vote at a ASF council meeting. It has been suggested to rectify this by presenting a motion at the 2009 ASF council meeting.

**Motion on Notice:** "The Australian Speleological Federation formally create a new commission by the name of the "Australian Cave Rescue Commission".

This commission will be charged with the following objectives:

- facilitate the provision of cave rescue training to cavers
- facilitate the exchange of information and training related to cave rescue
- facilitate the provision of skills and equipment for cave rescues Australia wide
- provide a national communications framework for cave rescue organisations
- encourage an ethos of minimal impact for cave rescue training and rescues
- facilitate the establishment of cave rescue organisations in states where such organisations do not exist
- organise national cave rescue workshops at the Biennial ASF Conferences
- spread the self-rescue ethos amongst other caving groups
- enhance the first aid skills of cavers and other caving groups
- establish relations with overseas cave rescue organisations
- in nearby countries where cave rescue organisations don't exist, establish relations with relevant organisations to enable the delivery of assistance
- education of government bodies and management authorities about cave rescue.

It is proposed that the commission will be structured as follows:

- Convenor
- Vice-convenor
- State Representatives for each state and territory.

Unallocated positions may be filled at any stage by majority vote of office holders.

## **Publications**

**Convenor:** Sue White

Publications is a very public front of ASF and it is important that we continue to produce high quality interesting material using a variety of media and for a range of audiences. Some material produced is for ASF member consumption but other material is for the public at large. It is important that we service both audiences as well as we are able.

As the Publications Commission has several sections I have subdivided the report accordingly.

### **Caves Australia**

CA production moved to Tasmania at the beginning of 2008 and is being co-ordinated by Alan Jackson. Alan has put together a team to do the actual production and posting, and Brooke Grant remains as Editor. CA 172, 173, 174 and a double issue 175 were produced and posted out. A second double issue, 176 will probably be out by the end of the year or early January 2009. The double issues are to attempt to catch up the back log. The double issues have a single number but with double dates, being the actual dates of publication. Single issue are of 24 pages and double of 44 pages. This means that we are gradually catching up the backlog.

Several new initiatives have been implemented: new sections titled Conversations on Conservation, Classic Caving Areas of Australia, and a revamped Down Under All Over. The new production team and its layout team have changed the layout to a clearer format and changed font.

The new production team is still enthusiastic and very competent. This job is perhaps not one you can keep doing for ages and perhaps we need to look at change every few years, if nothing else but to give people a break.

### **ESpeleo**

Ross Anderson is producing these email newsletters on a roughly 2 monthly schedule. There were initially some issues with incorrect email addresses which have been generally resolved and I remind clubs that they

are expected to maintain their membership details through the new membership web based membership database. If there are problems we are not told about, they continue to fester. This initiative should take some of the "currency" heat off CA. Ross liaises with Brooke Grant so that material is not unnecessarily duplicated. No material in ESpeleo is suitable for abstracting.

### **Website**

Colin Tyrrell has replaced Carol Layton as webmaster and has gradually been updating aspects of the website. I would like to thank Carol Layton for all the work she put in to getting the website established and running it for some years.

New pages for the Conservation Commission and Karstaway Konferenz have been added and I would like to see pages for the various commissions. There is a real need for more information to be put on the site.

We intend to do some restructuring and major upgrading, but this needs to be thought through rather than done in a piecemeal fashion.

### **Other publications**

Steady sales of the Jenolan book have occurred and we have now virtually been repaid our outlay and so profits will now be shared between us and the Jenolan Caves Historical Society who provided a lot of the photos and material. The print run is almost sold and John Dunkley is dealing with a reprint of a similar size. Any more becomes an issue of storage.

The Wee Jasper book has started further movement and I have draft text of the main section from Andy Spate and we have started looking at the maps. The scans from the original plates are not as good as those we have already or can do from the hard copy. Andy has sorted out some copyright issues with the Joe Jennings estate.

The Conservation book has slowed down and a serious attempt at moving this project along is needed. I am discussing this with the editors (Greg Middleton and John Dunkley) to try and unstick this!

We have a box of the 50th book still to sell. There are a few copies of older publications still available for sale.

### **General points**

I continue to monitor content in all of our publications to make sure that we are not exposed to problems of libel etc. This is common practice for websites, newsletters and other published material and this system has worked well with minimum problems.

The policy for use of material from any of our publications is as follows:

- (i) The person/ organization needs to appear to be reputable and indicate why they want to use it. This use needs to be appropriate to our general aims.
- (ii) Material use must be appropriately acknowledged to ASF.
- (iii) If possible we receive a copy of the document our material is used in, or at least some information of the use.
- (iv) If permission is given by the executive, the Publications Commission is informed and vice versa.

I recently became aware that we are eligible to receive money from the Copyright Agency Limited (CAL) where some educational institutions have included their downloads from the website in the surveys undertaken by CAL even though we have been happy for people to use our material with acknowledgement for free. We need to join CAL to claim the money and this is in hand.

## **Safety, Leadership and Risk Management**

**Convener:** Caroline Forest

Nil report provided.

## **Survey and Mapping Standards**

**Convener:** Ken Grimes

RRN 795 Morgiana Rd., Hamilton, Vic 3300

regmap1@ozemail.com.au

As usual, little activity this year.

I feel that it is time for me to hand over to someone more active in the field of cave surveying.

In particular, someone with experience in the new developments in computerised mapping. We need guidance (and perhaps some articles in Aust Caver) on the new methods, especially:

\* Digitising the sketch info - as against the simple base line info.

\* Transferring the digitised cave maps to and from GIS and combining them with other data (eg scientific or management data about sites within the cave).

Both of the above probably need development of standards for data storage and data transfer.

No significant costs for 2008. No expected major costs for 2009.

## **Special Interest Groups**

### **ASF Cave Diving Group**

**Liaison person:** Paul Hosie

Report submitted by member Richard Harris.

Report of Diving Activities by the following ASF-CDG Members:

C Challen, John Dalla-Zuanna, R Harris, P Horne, Ian Lewis, G Pearce K Smith.

The past 12 months have been very busy for our small group of divers (which included some non ASF divers also), with a number of successful projects being commenced and mostly completed. Projects included exploration and mapping of Kilsby's Sinkhole 5L 046, Piccaninnie Ponds 5L 072, The Blue Lake, Cocklebidy Cave Western Australia and The Pearse Resurgence NZ. This is a brief summary of those projects.

#### **Kilsby's Sinkhole**

As a CDAA special project, divers accessed Kilsby's Sinkhole near Mt Gambier over 6 days to explore and add detail to the original survey by Peter Horne et al. Utilising trimix and rebreathers for the diving below 40m depth, the extremities of the cave were explored and surveyed. No major new passage was located and a maximum depth of 64m was located. The map was updated and a photo and video survey was performed. Subsequently deeper trimix diving has been opened up to all suitably qualified members of the CDAA.

#### **Piccaninnie Ponds**

Arguably Australia's best known and beautiful aquatic cave feature, the sensitive nature of the site and the early fatalities have seen diving restricted to 36.5m depth. With water and hydrology become a political hot potato in Australia, it was an opportune time for our group to approach the Department of Environment and Heritage to seek permission to further explore, map and study the unique features of this site. As a CDAA Special Project, the team is making excellent progress with this ongoing project. Exploration and mapping have extended the cave to a depth of 110m and some extraordinary geology has been documented in the lower level, including an enormous new chamber never before documented. Water sampling, rock and sediment samples and photo and video documentation of the site are well under way. The project is generating significant interest in this coastal feature, which is strongly influenced by its marine proximity. A fabulous 3D representation of the cave is being produced by the team and will soon be in the public domain. Piccaninnie Ponds is currently the 3rd deepest cave in Australia after The Shaft and Kija Blue.

#### **The Blue Lake**

Mt Gambier's famous volcanic Blue Lake has rarely been dived as it serves as the town's water supply. Our team were invited to participate in some survey and sampling dives in various locations in the lake. Core tube sampling at depths of up to 75m were performed and analysed by the CSIRO for trace elements and industrial contaminants.. Video and still photos were taken of the various formations and structures within the lake, including the amazing stromatolites. This multi-departmental project represented a rare opportunity to explore the mysterious lake, and we were honoured to be involved.

#### **Cocklebidy Cave**

Cocklebidy Cave is currently Australia's longest "single conduit" submerged cave. The only longer cave is Tank Cave in the Mt Gambier region, which has a total length of over 8km in a honeycomb pattern. Our trip this year had the main goal of getting Craig Challen into a position where he could lay some new line at the

end of Chris Brown's epic dive back in 1995. Using closed circuit rebreathers and some specially developed lithium ion batteries in our scooters, we set up the cave over a period of 9 days before we were ready to send Craig to the end! Craig set off for a 16-hour return trip to the end of the cave. Near the limit of previous penetration, Craig removed his rebreather and forged ahead initially on side-mount open circuit, then on a single no-mount tank with an H valve. Richard Harris waited in the darkness for 70 minutes for his return. As well as laying some new line, the team also managed to mark 4 separate pinger/GPS locations in the 3rd sump, which will assist Tim Payne and the mapping group. A significant correction was made to previous data in the location of Toad Hall. The new scooter batteries gave an awesome burn time of 3 hours, which was crucial to the success of the dives. Ken Smith swam far into the 3rd sump to retrieve the pingers as well as doing some trail marking with reflectors in the lake chamber and in Toad Hall. He was also busy on the surface with the radiolocation work. The trail markers will no doubt assist in keeping cavers on a single trail in future as the cave is showing some signs of wear. All in all a spectacularly successful and enjoyable trip! We are returning to the cave early next year to continue exploration and survey work on site.

### **The Pearse Resurgence**

In the northern part of the South Island of NZ lies Mt Arthur and famous vertical caves like Nettlebed Cave. Close by is the Pearse Resurgence which has been incrementally explored by various divers over the years. These include Keith Dekkers, Chris Brown, David Doolette, David Apperley, Rick Stanton and Richard Harris. The trip in March 08 saw two ASF-CDG and one CDAA diver further the exploration over 2 weeks. In very cold water (7 degrees) the cave was extended to a new record depth of 182m and the map updated accordingly. More video and images were recorded. A submerged kiwi fossil was documented and identified by an ornitho-paleontologist. The cave continues at depth with more exploration likely in future in this very challenging site. Our thanks to the local cavers in Nelson for their assistance with this expedition.

## **ASF Gregory Karst Research Group**

**Liaison person:** Mark Sefton (Chair)

Members of the Gregory Karst Research Special Interest Group of the Australian Speleological Federation Inc. (Gregory SIG) conducted the annual Gregory Karst expedition from the 5th to the 18th July 2008. During this time, they continued exploring and surveying the Bullita Cave System which is now a little over 117 km in length. Surveying efforts in this system are increasingly aimed at sorting out existing gaps in the current survey and sorting out a small number of mapping problems. Notwithstanding this changing emphasis in the mapping program, the length of the Bullita Cave System continues to grow – albeit more slowly than before. The group also conducted exploration and surveying in two other karst areas in the park and mapped several new caves, some several kilometres in length.

During the two weeks at Bullita, members took rangers from the Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory into the cave and we continue to maintain excellent relations with the Commission. During the year, members of the SIG were able to respond positively to a request from rangers for information that could be used to inform tourists about features in the Gregory National Park.

The third AGM of the Gregory SIG was conducted at Bullita on the 16th July 2008. At the meeting, Mark Sefton and John Redpath were re-elected as Chairman and Secretary respectively of the Gregory SIG, while John Dunkley, Deborah Hunter, Bob Kershaw, Dorothy Robinson and Bruce Swain were re-elected to the Gregory SIG Committee. The meeting also resolved to support members who wished to present scientific data on the park at upcoming ASF and UIS conferences and the publication of scientific papers about the Park in Helictite, subject to approval by the Parks and Wildlife Commission.

## **Committee Reports**

### **Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Cultural Committee**

*Established January 2008.*

**Chair:** Peter Dykes

Nil report provided.

## **Conference Committee (Karstaway 2009)**

**Chair:** Margaret James

The organisation for Karstaway, the 27th ASF Conference in Sale, is going well at the time of writing (October 2008). All four major Victorian caving groups (VSA, CCV, Victorian Scout Caving Team and VLCT) are represented on the central committee and/or are helping to plan post conference field trips. The conference venue, Gippsland Grammar School, has excellent facilities and is conveniently close to all other essential services. Accommodation is not part of the paid conference package, except for the option of the school boarding house which only became available late in the piece. Otherwise people have been making their own arrangements as per information on the conference website. Finances are solid, with foundation loans totalling \$2000 from ASF, VSA and CCV. This has been augmented by formal sponsorship in cash and kind negotiated with (to date) Wellington Shire Council, the Outdoor Recreation Centre Victoria Inc, the Cave Divers Association of Australia, and outdoor equipment shops. Their contributions include the total costs of the Welcome BBQ, valuable items for auction and prizes, information for distribution, and direct cash donations. The conference program is looking good, with presentations and workshops already organised on a wide range of topics. The conference has been widely publicised via the ASF website, E-Speleo, Caves Australia, ASF yahoo groups, ozcavers, vic cavers, direct mailing to ASF clubs, notices in Victorian club newsletters and journals, and posters in Victorian outdoor equipment shops. As a result registrations have been rolling in, even though the early payment fee continues for another month. We are all looking forward to another thoroughly successful conference and AGM.

## **Documentation & KID Committee**

**Chair:** Nicholas White

This review committee was established at the January 2008 ASF Council Meeting to develop policy responses to the changing needs of cavers, cave researchers and managers for data held in the database and whether the data fields or data groups should be expanded to include better area profiles or explicit location coordinates of sites for example. The brief was to:

***Establish a committee to review the documentation and database needs of the ASF. This should include development needs of the Karst Index Database (KID); the updating of the KID; the intellectual property issues of data; and access conditions of the KID.***

There is also the question of resolving the access question of a updating exercise. Cavers have always been jealous of their data and location information. At the present time there is a hiatus about bringing the KID up to date.

### **Background**

There are contractual questions because of the proposed Memorandum of Understanding between ASF and the Karst and Geodiversity Unit of DECC, NSW. Discussions between the Karst and Geodiversity Unit officers and members of the ASF Executive and the NSW Speleological Council have resolved and brought into focus the issues that need further discussion in ASF.

The ASF Inc disbanded the Documentation Commission some years ago. When Mike Lake agreed to work on the Karst Index Database (KID) he did so on the understanding that he confine his work to the database and its further development and operation. He certainly did not take on the Documentation Commission and the much larger overarching questions of what cave data ASF should collect, centralise, share etc.

To some extent my promptings at the 2008 ASF Council Meeting drew attention to these issues and to the need for ASF to look at these issues and decide a policy framework for Documentation. I have not had time to conduct a discussion through this Committee till now (November 2008).

### **Discussion**

ASF is currently discussing an MOU for data sharing between ASF and the Karst and Geodiversity Unit of the NSW DECC. The discussions have prompted a number of questions within the NSW Speleological Council.

These discussions have moved the agenda forwards by accepting some in principle decisions about the KID as it exists and the development needs for the KID.

I provide statements of what can be said of the KID and its further development as a starting point for discussion.

ASF cannot claim to be the karst experts if our knowledge is not accessible.

The KID is the best way of representing this knowledge.

The KID is an invaluable tool for cavers as it is to speleologists, karst managers and planners.

It is now necessary to provide/ have available specific location information for numbered sites.

It is appropriate that a Geographic Information System interface be developed for the KID.

The KID may need to be hosted on a new server.

It is imperative that the KID be updated with data accumulated over the last 25 years.

The impetus for the updating properly belongs with the State Coordinators and there is an urgency that needs to be applied to the task.

A strategy should be developed to achieve the updating and further development of the KID.

The strategy may identify how the task of bringing the KID up to date is best achieved. This may need coordination and facilitating in various ways. Once a framework is in place it may be appropriate to seek funding to support rapid progress on priority areas.

### **Conclusions**

The above statements frame some of the direction I believe needs taking. There is certainly an urgency to bring the KID up to date. Discussion about this needs to occur at the forthcoming Conference.

## **Membership Database Committee**

**Chair:** Jodie Rutledge

The Membership Database Committee was established in January 2005 with the view to set up a web-based membership database for clubs to manage and update their members and also to sort out an easier method to calculate and collect fees. The database is now operational and accessible by all clubs. Member clubs can also now view online the fees owed by their club.

This committee did not meet in 2008. All additional work on the database during the year has been carried out by our programmer (and member) David Connard and myself.

## **Organisational Identity Committee**

**Chair:** Ross Anderson

The Organisation Identity committee was established at the 2007 conference in Mount Gambier to investigate building ASF organisational identity and funds through means of publishing and merchandising.

Between September 2007 and March 2008 personal issues distracted a number of members of the committee from pursuing the objectives of the committee.

As the chair of the committee my time commitment to other objectives has not seen me able to allocate reasonable time to the ongoing activities of the committee. Other members of the committee have not sought ongoing activity either.

Cathie Plowman and myself will conclude the report on the ASF survey, conducted in August and September of 2007 and present this report to the ASF council meeting in January 2009.

After this time council endorsement of the committee will cease and the committee will be disbanded.

# Contact List

## Corporate Members

**Australian Capital Territory**  
**Canberra Speleological Society Inc.**  
PO Box 156  
Curtin ACT 2605

**New South Wales**  
**Blue Mountains Speleological Club**  
PO Box 37  
Glenbrook NSW 2773

**Cavers & Adventurers of the Snowy Mountains**  
10/ 35 Clyde St  
Jindabyne NSW 2617

**Central West Caving Group**  
PO Box 428  
Oberon NSW 2787

**Highland Caving Group**  
P O Box 54  
Georges hall NSW 2194

**Hills Speleology Club Ltd.**  
3 Heights Place  
Hornsby Heights NSW 2077

**Illawarra Speleological Society Inc.**  
PO Box 94  
Unanderra NSW 2526

**Kempsey Speleo Society**  
1645 Hickey's Creek Road  
via Kempsey NSW 2440

**Northern Territory**  
**Top End Speleological Society**  
PO Box 706  
Katherine NT 0851

**Queensland**  
**Chillagoe Caving Club Inc.**  
PO Box 92  
Cairns Qld 4870

**South Australia**  
**Cave Exploration Group South Australia Inc.**  
PO Box 14  
Rundle Mall  
Adelaide SA 5001

**National University Caving Club**  
c/o Sports Union, GPO Box 4  
Canberra ACT 2601

**Metropolitan Speleological Society**  
PO Box 178  
Thornleigh NSW 2120

**Newcastle & Hunter Valley Speleological Soci  
Inc.**  
PO Box 15  
Broadmeadow NSW 2292

**Orange Speleological Society**  
PO Box 752  
Orange NSW 2800

**Rover Speleological Society of NSW**  
c/o 22/102 Crimea Road  
Marsfield NSW 2122

**Sydney University Speleological Society**  
Box 35, Holme Building  
Sydney University NSW 2006

**University of Technology Sydney Speleolog  
Society**  
c/o The Union, PO Box 123  
Broadway NSW 2007

**Central Queensland Speleological Society**  
c/- Peter Berrill  
PO Box 6343  
Rockhampton Qld 4702

**Flinders University Speleological Society**  
c/o Clubs & Societies Association  
Flinders University  
Bedford Park SA 5042

**Tasmania**  
**Mole Creek Caving Club**  
PO Box 209  
Mole Creek TAS 7304

**Southern Tasmanian Caverneers Inc.**  
PO Box 416  
Sandy Bay Tas 7006

**Northern Caverneers Inc.**  
PO Box 315  
Launceston Tas 7250

**Victoria**  
**Caving Club of Victoria**  
PO Box 254  
Mulgrave Vic 3170

**Victorian Speleological Association Inc.**  
GPO Box 5425CC  
Melbourne Vic 3001

**Western Australia**  
**Cavers Leewin Inc**  
20 Village Green  
Margaret River WA 6285

**Western Australian Speleological Group Inc.**  
PO Box 67  
Nedlands WA 6009

**Speleological Research Group of West  
Australia**  
PO Box 1611  
East Victoria Park WA 6981

## **Provisional Members**

**Victorian Limestone Caving Team**  
c/o 39 Esdale St  
Blackburn VIC 3130

## **Associates**

**Australasian Cave & Karst Management Association:** PO Box 36, Carlton South, Vic 3053  
**Victorian Scout Caving Team:** 14 Glendale Cr, Berwick, Vic 3806  
**NSW Cave Rescue Squad:** PO Box 122, Bankstown, NSW 2200  
**Scouting Australia (ACT):** PO Box 7547, Sutton NSW 2620  
**Karst Geodiversity Unit (NSW):** Level 2, 203-209 Russell St, Bathurst NSW 2795  
**UNE Mountaineering Club:** C/- Sports, The University of New England, Armidale, NSW 2351

## **Special Interest Groups**

**ASF Cave Diving Group**  
**ASF Gregory Karst Research Group**

## **Karst Conservancies**

**KarstWatch (Mole Creek)**