

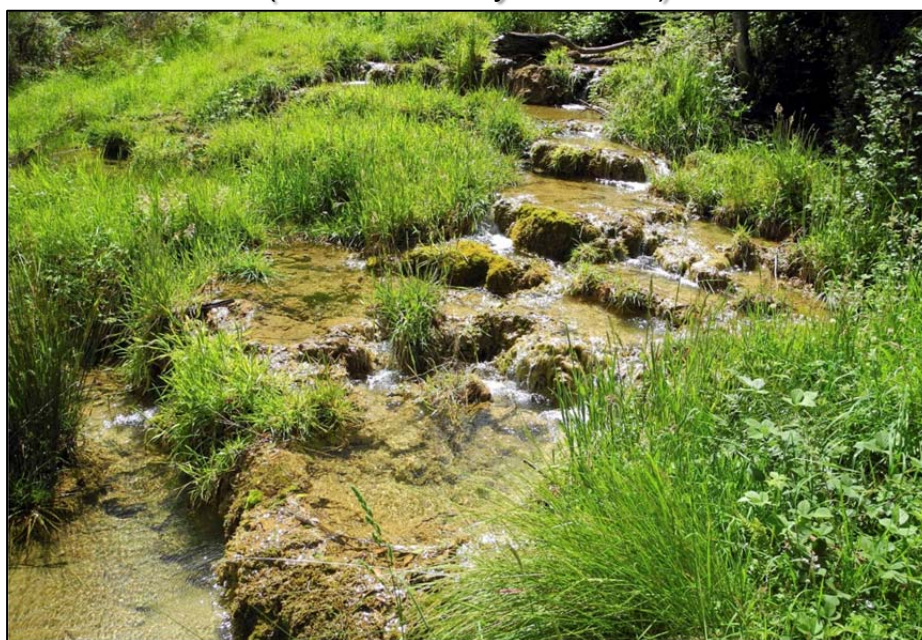


# **Australian Speleological Federation Inc. (A.C.T.)**

**ABN: 15 169 918 964**

## **2013 Annual Report**

**(for Calendar year 2012)**



**Scrubby Creek Tufa Dams - Photograph by Geoff Rebeci**

**(Adopted January 2013)**

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Scrubby Creek Entrance by Daryl Carr

## Executive Members

President	Stan Flavel
Senior Vice President	Joe Sydney
Vice President	Jim Crockett
Vice President	John Cugley
Vice President	Phil Maynard
Treasurer	Grace Matts
Executive Secretary	Deb Hunter
General Secretary	Bob Kershaw
Membership Secretary	Colin Tyrrell
Non-executive Vice President	John Dunkley
TROGalong Conference 2013 Convener	Bob Kershaw

## President's Report

President: Stan Flavel

I have stated at previous conferences that The Australian Speleological Federation is in "a good place". It is a large collection of speleologically centred clubs that support and nurture a host of likeminded individuals. "Likeminded" may be the only obvious common feature of cavers since we vary wide and far in our own individual specialities, quirks and characters.

The ASF has the hallmarks of a dynamic Federation with developed guidelines and policies, positive financial investments and planning and the ability to fund a range of activities. It has the ability to consider forward planning for significant events such as hosting International congresses such as IUS in 2017. The ASF is also committed to preserving the documentation and data that represents Australian Speleology. Clubs are encouraged to preserve their own Records and documents of significance, and if that is no longer viable then ASF should and will assist in the storage of what is priceless and unique information in an efficient manner.

ASF is a mature Federation that is continuing to be seen and identified by Government, Non-government organisations and Land managers across Australia. We need to be recognised as a professional body that has something substantial to offer the wider community. Defining and marketing our skills and expertise is a developing skill. We need to promote ourselves in a range of ways that make our products marketable. What do we offer? In the past clubs have provided high grade surveys and locational information to land managers, we have contributed to management plans. We have produced books, postcards, posters and interpretive information to the public. We have worked with land managers to restore caves and cave environments after neglect and damage of both human and natural origin. ASF clubs provide research data in a range of speleological disciplines. We have many experts and many willing workers.

So what are my concerns and aspirations?

ASF is mature and we have a biological demographic profile, not unlike the whole of Australia, of an aging population with a decreased birth rate. ASF must encourage clubs to continue the breeding process need to sustain and encourage growth. This must happen by adopting and nurturing individuals into clubs and allow the mentoring and enthusiasm that we received when we first started caving to not just new members that are enthusiastic but to produce the potential long term and Life Members that provide the stability of our clubs and Federation.

Caving is one of many outdoor activities that can enthuse and inspire an individual. Often it becomes just one of the "tick the boxes" activities that people try conquer and move on. We need to capture the hearts and minds of young people to become the discoverers and explorers of wild places beneath the surface which is our common drive.

This past year has seen the loss of a number of respected speleologists in different states and we pay our respects for the work they started. We seek people to pass the baton onto. It is never a race but it is what drives us to finish work that is started.

ASF is developing a better more functional website that allows a better interaction and access to more vital and viable information.

ASF continues to promote conservation of karst and this has occurred in ways as diverse as weed clearing and land acquisition.

ASF executive have worked together to discuss and plan ways of providing a better service to clubs by communicating and seeing the needs and fine tuning required.

The ASF commissions work to provide specific developmental outcomes to the refinement and professional outputs of the Federation. This is seen in our operating manuals, our guidelines for safety and training and our publications containing activities, research findings and cave information. I wish to thank individuals who share the passion of Speleology and are active in clubs and individually and whose efforts are the essence and life-blood of the Federation.

I look forward to meeting and sharing visions at Trogalong and any other place and will continue to allow the encouragement and mentoring of fellow cavers to achieve more than we can imagine now.

In Caving  
Stan Flavel  
Jan 2013



A sump inside Scrubby Creek Cave Photo by Daryl Carr

## Treasurer's Report

Treasurer: Grace Matts

Presented and Grace noted that we need a new auditor for future returns.

## The ASF Karst Conservation Fund

Report by: John Dunkley et al

The Fund had a very active year in 2012. In the year to 30 June we received 88 donations totalling \$65,552.48. Grants totalled \$61,177.94 but the balance remaining does not include several grants approved and advised but not yet claimed and acquitted, totalling at least \$5,000. Expenses came to \$980.86. The main project funded was for the purchase of a property at Buchan, Victoria, containing Scrubby Creek Cave. As a result, the property is now owned by Rimstone Co-operative, which has long experience in owning and managing 'Homeleigh', the cavers' base in Buchan, and is led by speleologists. A management plan will be drawn up for the long-term conservation of this important cave. This is a ground-breaking first case in Australia where a group of cavers has purchased a cave for long-term conservation purposes. Nick White did a huge amount of work to achieve this and deserves commendation all round.

A separate appeal was conducted for a project relating to research on the endangered population of Ghost Bats at Mt Etna in central Queensland. Top-up funding was also approved to supplement ASF Grants for 'Extravaganza' and for data loggers on the Nullarbor, both of which had a strong conservation theme.

Peter Berrill passed away early in 2012, fortunately living long enough to see Mt Etna acquired as part of a national park, and to see the Fund involved in its first project related to purchase of land and a cave, something he always envisioned. A founding Director, Peter had championed a Fund as a major plank of his Presidency of ASF from 1997 to 2002 following advice from Stephen Comino, his legal advisor for the Mt Etna court case.

With vacancies on both bodies, the Management Committee and the Directors have discussed among themselves and with others (including ACKMA and the ASF Executive) the future management and directions for the Fund. An opportunity presents for generational, skill set and perhaps

geographical change or widening. The Management Committee is particularly anxious to acquire one or two people with expertise in one or more of fund raising, financial management, publicity and/or assessment of grant applications. One or more energetic new Directors are needed with an understanding of karst, communication / promotion skills and sound judgment. A call for Expressions of Interest has been made and suitable names and a recommendation will be placed before the Executive as soon as possible.

It is 11 years since establishment of the Karst Conservation Fund! Eleven years to have its potential permeate the consciousness of Australian speleologists!

The day has come when we cannot rely on governments to look after all our karst and cave heritage. We will increasingly be dependent on private landholders to do this, and the Karst Conservation Fund is now at a point where we have the potential to achieve much more.

Tony Culberg, John Dunkley, Grace Matts,  
Nicholas White (Management Committee)

Maria Comino, Tony Culberg, John Dunkley,  
Kevin Kiernan (Directors)

## Conservation Commission Reports

### National

Convener: Nicholas White

Much of this year has been spent on two major projects. These were consulting about a major research project "Tracking and Tracing Central Queensland's Macroderma" and initiating the purchase of land at Murrindal, Victoria "Scrubby Creek Cave Acquisition Project". These necessarily needed a lot of attention precluding other issues.

It is apparent that with the financial stringency at Federal and State levels that the environment is missing out with restricted budgets for staffing and new initiatives. It is imperative that we do not relax in efforts to ensure that karst management does not suffer. Stringent budgets also provide opportunities because selective funding favours things such as research on climate change. There is currently considerable funding for examining speleothems for their climate history. Equally, cave biota deserve study because of their susceptibility to change. Changed surface use affects caves quickly but climate changes will also adversely affect cave biological

communities. We need to jealously protect biodiversity in cave biological communities and foster their study.

The Commission made a submission to the Federal Government Consultation Paper on the Australian Heritage Strategy in June 2012. This called for better Federal legislation and funding for protecting geological heritage.

#### Tracking and Tracing Central Queensland Macroderma

This project being undertaken by the Queensland Department is studying the ghost bat population based on the Mt Etna karst has been supported by the ASF Karst Conservation Fund. This population was severely threatened by the vandalism associated with quarrying and the population has declined and is also threatened by increasing urbanisation. ASF is supporting the genetic profiling of the population by Professor Jane Hughes at Griffith University. The project has found that the population is very small and has a very restricted gene pool indicating a close familial relationship of all bats sampled. The research is not finished and nor are the findings published but a total population of less than 50 individuals all closely related may be in jeopardy. Should the population become extinct it will be a consequence of the quarrying and human interference and it will be a tragedy.

#### Scrubby Creek Cave Acquisition Project

This has been the largest project undertaken by the ASF Karst Conservation Fund. It would not have happened without the backing of the Fund. It has broken new ground for the caving community as the first such acquisition to preserve and protect one of Victoria's iconic cave systems. There are still loans which need to be paid out but Rimstone Cooperative is now undertaking management of the property. In this project we had to act deliberately and quickly. It needed caver support from across the ASF membership.

ASF needs to be alert to cave and karst acquisition opportunities as the alternative of State acquisition is becoming less likely.

#### Jenolan Privatisation

Whatever your opinion of State versus Private management of karst resources. The quality of management and its environmental sensitivity is what is important. There have been several calls asking what the Commission is doing about it. My response has been that we should represent and ensure that any lease of the property has to build in environmental safeguards and requirements that they be adhered to.

Conservation Commission Report for Western Australia was not received this year.

#### **Conservation Commission Structure**

- **There needs to be a renewal of the State or Club Commission membership.**
- **The Commission needs a publicist to support communication on issues affecting the ASF aims and objectives.**

#### **Cave Conservatories or Karst Conservancies**

Karstcare Nov 2011 to Nov 2102  
Co-ordinator: David Wools-Cobb

Karstcare has been much quieter this past twelve months, partly due to organiser in-availability, and huge delays in the Tasmanian Parks and Wilderness Service decision making process when approached with project suggestions.

4 projects were undertaken, either specifically or as part of normal caving:

Lynds cave cleaning and track marking	9.5hrs
Kubla Khan Xanadu track marking	1 hr
Servicing Boot wash stations Kubla Khan	3 hrs
Replacement of lock, Kubla Khan	12.5hrs
	Total 36hrs

The coordinator of Karstcare, David Wools-Cobb was also engaged to contribute to a management plan of Nice Cave, Wee Jasper. An article of cleaning techniques was recently published in "Caves Australia."

## Speleological Council Reports

### NSW Speleological Council

President: Denis Marsh

On behalf of the NSW Speleological Council Executive and Federation Members in ACT and NSW, I present the following report on the affairs of this State Liaison Council for 2012.

The Council met twice during the year in May and October. Meetings were well attended with 11 Corporate members and 1 Associate represented at both meetings. In addition the 29th ASF Conference planning committee held several meetings during the year.

During the year the ASF in NSW was represented by caver delegates at meetings of the Kosciuszko NP Speleological Reference Group, the Karst Management Advisory Committee (KMAC), Bungonia Reference Advisory Group (BRAG) and the Wombeyan speleological interest forum.

A very enjoyable annual NSW caver's dinner was held in October with guest speaker Seamus Breathnach, a VSA member, giving an entertaining talk on an Irish caving expedition to Papua New Guinea he had participated in.

A number of clubs in NSW have run joint caving trips with other clubs during the year and this is seen as a positive action by all concerned.

#### NSWSC Charter

Following a review of the NSWSC Charter some minor amendments have been proposed, mainly for the purpose of corrections to clause numbers or clarity. These are currently being considered by the NSWSC Executive before circulation to all Corporate members in NSW and ACT. It is also planned to advise these proposed changes to the Federal Executive for their consideration also before being put to a future NSWSC meeting.

#### Publication of 'Karst Atlas of NSW – The Documentation System'

With great assistance from the ASF Publications Commission (PC) copies of this publication were printed and released for sale during the year. Congratulations to the author Peter Dykes and other contributors, as well as all those who assisted with editing etc. A supplementary volume on the Lithgow/Mudgee karst region is being planned with a steering committee in the process of being set up to

facilitate compilation of material. An administrative arrangement has been drawn up between NSWSC and the ASF PC to establish protocols for publishing further volumes by the ASF.

#### Macleay Karst Area Management Plan (M KAMP)

The Karst and Geodiversity Unit (KGU) of NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) are working with local area managers to develop a management plan for the Macleay karst on OEH reserves. KSS are being consulted regarding any appropriate cave access restrictions to be included in the plan. It is understood that where access restrictions are to be imposed, the reasons for those restrictions will be indicated in relation to each cave.

#### Cave Surveying Course

A second successful basic cave surveying course was run jointly by Hills Speleological Club and Highland Caving Group members in October for ASF members in NSW. These courses are assisting with up-skilling cavers in basic surveying techniques and production of cave maps.

#### Wyanbene Cave Rehabilitation Project

CSS and ISS are coordinating a cave cleaning/rehabilitation project in Wyanbene Cave in the Deua NP. Funding to around \$6,000 has been approved by the Director NPW for cleaning equipment, detrog mats and signage etc. Other clubs are invited to assist with the project.

Contacts for information are John Brush (CSS) johnbrush@ozemail.com.au or Bob Kershaw (ISS) rkershaw@ozemail.com.au

#### Investigation of possible MOU between ASF and SSS

Following ASF endorsement of this proposal at the last Federal Council meeting, the NSWSC wrote to SSS seeking support for some initial discussions to investigate the potential and possible mutual benefits in drawing up an MOU between both organisations. To date we are waiting on a reply from SSS on this matter.

#### Proposal for a new water storage dam to flood Cliefden Caves.

A recent NSW Government commissioned review by Infrastructure NSW looking at a 20 year state infrastructure strategy and the adequacy of water storages has recommended several new dams be built in regional NSW

over the next 20 years, including one on the Belubula River at the Needles below Cliefden caves. If such a dam were to go ahead it would see the majority of the Cliefden caves flooded. This dam site has been proposed several times in the past since the late 1800s, the most recent occasion initiated an environmental campaign by cavers in the late 70's. At that time the proposal was stopped through political persuasion. We will be keeping our ear to the ground on this issue in the future

### **Tasmanian Speleological Liaison Council**

Report by David Wools-Cobb

The liaison council continues to meet on an intermittent basis, as and when issues arise and the opportunity for delegates from all Tasmanian caving clubs is available (usually coincided with another event).

Cave search and rescue skills training has been a major priority, with numerous training days held, but we have been finding difficulty to get all other search and rescue organisations to a joint exercise, hopefully a mutually suitable date can be found early in 2103.

Member clubs have been involved in large projects such as continuing the Exit Cave survey, documenting the Mt Cripps karst area, hosting an activity site for the venturer scout national jamboree, and continuing negotiations with PWS in issues of cave management and access.

### **Speleological Council of Western Australia**

A verbal report by Greg Thomas  
Fostering the development of the WA Karst Index data base and increased in size to 16gb that includes trip reports, entrance photographs and it will be reissued on a periodic basis.

The 2015 ASF Conference is being planned to be held at Exmouth in the middle of the year.

### **Commission Reports**

#### **Administration**

Convener: Peter Brady  
nil received

#### **Australian Cave Rescue (ACRC)**

Convener: Ross Anderson  
nil received

#### **Awards**

Convener: Lloyd Robinson

The nominations for awards for presentation at Galong are in the hands of the President and past Presidents who will determine the recipients.

It seems that our members are having difficulty with the June 30 deadline. An extension to August 31 has been suggested.

It has also been suggested that I have been Awards Convener for too long. This may be true, so with this in mind, I will resign this post at the end of the current round.

Past President, Miles Pierce has agreed to take over the role of Awards Convener and the Executive have endorsed Miles as Convener and informed him of their decision.

#### **Bibliography**

Convener: Greg Middleton  
PO Box 269, Sandy Bay, Tas. 7006  
ozspeleo@iinet.net.au

Activity of the Commission continues to wind down.

An apparent reinvigoration of the IUS Commission on Bibliography has resulted in publication of the 2006 and 2007 issues of Speleological Abstracts and it is understood a combined 2008-09 issue is in production. The Convener contributed Australian abstracts for this issue, assisted by only one abstractor, Ross Ellis of Sydney. Not one other Australian or New Zealand caver has offered to contribute, despite appeals and requests.

I may contribute abstracts for the 2010 issue but this is likely to be the last.

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

I am prepared to continue to act as Convener of the Commission until its future is determined.



## Cave Diving

Conveners: Tim Payne and Peter Kraehenbuehl

The ASF Cave diving commission and CDG have had an active year. There have been only 3 new divers register with the CDG taking the membership to 50 divers, although it is unknown how many are currently active. However, members have made substantial progress discovering and exploring caves in a number of regions which has often included multiple and persistent efforts over a number of years at considerable personal cost and endurance. Many of these explorations have been the topic of both public and caving publications and so are not reported further here.

Following from a number of cave diving deaths in Mount Gambier last year a number of ASF-CDG members, but particularly Dr Richard 'Harry' Harris, have been key in building cave diving rescue and recovery expertise across Australian cave divers both within the ASF and CDAA and two SROP courses have now been held involving both ASF and CDAA members. Indeed this effort has made a substantial contribution to the current good relationships that exist between the two organisations.

In conjunction with this, ASF cave divers are now in discussion with the CDAA regarding opening access to a number of sites, particularly on the Roe Plains, to the CDAA in a limited manner. The sensitivity of these sites is causing the CDAA to re-examine the importance of minimal impact caving and will hopefully result in a change to CDAA training and the highlighting of the importance of conservation.

## Cave and Karst Numbering

Convener: Peter Dykes  
nil Received

## Codes and Guidelines

*Cathy Brown*  
Apologised for no work this year in this area

## Grants

Convener: Fiona Beckwith  
The ASF Grants Commission had some communications issues during this year with members away and then some computer problems, but despite these hurdles it was able to award three grants. The successful applicants in 2012 were:

1. Wyanbene Cave Rehabilitation Project - ISS (Bob Kershaw) and CSS (John Brush) An excellent project well-presented and costed. Funded to the maximum amount for this category \$500.
2. Equipment for Exit survey - STC (Tony Veness and Geoff Wise) An ongoing project with previous funded project very successfully undertaken. Well thought out, costed and presented. Funded to the maximum amount for this this category. \$500.
3. Junee Resurgence diving exploration and research. STC (Peter Buzzacott, Janine McKinnon and Ric Tunney) - Exploration grant of \$500 for this diving project in the Junee Resurgence. Funded to the maximum amount for this category.

A condition of the funding is that recipients provide a report for Caves Australia or Helictite, and a copy for the Grants Commission, when funded project (or the component supported by ASF funding) is completed. We have received reports for some of the 2011 Grants but have not seen others. We realise that sometimes this takes time to complete the write up for these grants but a new grant will not be awarded to those with outstanding reports for previous grants.

The grant application notice has gone out for the 2013 round and was published in the last ESpeleo. A notice will be in the forthcoming Caves Australia. The closing date is 28 March, 2013 (just before Easter). Prospective applicants are strongly advised to read the details on pp. 5-6 of Caves Australia 182 or on the ASF website ([www.caves.org.au](http://www.caves.org.au)). In particular, please become acquainted with eligibility criteria, how to get started, in-kind and partner support, selection procedures, and expectations of successful applicants for the specific type of grant that you seek. Note that some of these requirements vary according to the type of grant sought.

For all enquires please email [grants@caves.org.au](mailto:grants@caves.org.au)

## Helictite

Convener: Susan White

The Helictite Commission continues to be run in tandem with the Publications Commission. When ASF received Helictite from the Speleological Research Council (SRC) it was agreed to form a separate commission to enhance the chances of continuation of the journal. The Commission currently consists of

Susan White (Chair and joint editor), Ken Grimes (Editor), Stefan Eberhard (Editor), Grace Matts (ASF Treasurer), Glenn Baddeley (Business Manager) and John Dunkley. The ASF President is an ex officio member.

Volume 41 is a double issue on the Gregory Karst and comprised of invited papers. This volume was published in May 2012. We have 40 still to sell (\$27.00 ea). Some positive feedback has been received.

We also have enough general papers for Volume 42. These are being sent out to referees. The submitted paper situation is much better but there is still a need for more. We have limited material promised after Volume 42.

The updated Helictite page on the web site to states that hard-copy sets and back issues are no longer generally available, and this service will be replaced by PDFs on the web site or PDFs mailed by disk. PDFs of the main articles from Volume 36 onwards are downloadable from the website, but these are not OCR which will take longer. There are no complete sets of hard copies to sell although a very limited number of hard copy back copies are available from Susan White. Financially we remain healthy.

Scanning of back issues has continued and we intend to have these available on CD as PDF and as we move towards digital publishing downloadable from the website. This will also relate to having material on the Karst Information Portal, an international system for digital dissemination of karst material, which was outlined in the 2009 annual, report. Australian hosting sites are also being investigated. The Commission needs to work this through carefully so it has taken some time.

We are moving towards digital publishing of Helictite, and the last Council meeting cleared the way for this to proceed. However, the problems of Helictite continue to relate to the time available for volunteers to edit and produce the Journal. This is further complicated by changes in the expectations of academic publishing, which has limited the articles available, which is further compounded with the refereeing process. Many ASF members do not appear to understand refereeing and editing processes.

The issue of Helictite having its own commission continues to be raised. It is

important for Council and clubs to realize that the arrangement by which ASF received Helictite for the Speleological Research Council (SRC) was that a separate Commission be established and maintained. Having the same convener/chair has minimized duplication. I believe this is still important for the 2 entities to be related but separate. I would like the club representatives to please inform club members about this.

I would like to thank those who have put time into Helictite in the past year, especially Ken Grimes, Glenn Baddeley and John Dunkley and the reviewers of papers. I would welcome anyone else who is interested in becoming involved.

## Insurance

Convener: Phil Maynard

The ASF maintains two insurance policies. The first policy is the Association Liability cover designed to protect the Federation and its membership against claims for wrongful acts, such as libel. The second policy is the Adventure Activities Combined Liability insurance, which protects the Federation and its membership against claims for Injury and Damage during trips. These policies protect the Federation, the executive of member clubs, individuals including trip leaders, and landowners. The coverage is worldwide, excluding the United States and Canada.

The policies are subject to all of the normal insurance **exclusions, of which two are particularly important and are brought to the attention of members: *Firstly, travel to and from trips is not covered; members are expected to be covered by motor vehicle insurance, or by travel insurance for other transport modes. Secondly, illegal activities such as trespass are not covered; all trips must have access approved by landowners.***

There were no claims against either policy in 2012, and no claims are pending as the renewals for 2013 are negotiated.

The question of accident insurance for members has been raised. We have asked our broker for a quote and will present the final quote to the Council at the beginning of 2013 for consideration

## International Relations

Convener: Nicholas White

Correspondences I have had with several IUS Bureau members have encouraged us to present a formal bid for the 2017 IUS Congress.

The IUS Congress is in Brno, Czech Republic from 21-28 July 2013. ASF has indicated to the IUS Bureau that it intends to formally bid to host the 17th UIS Congress in 2017. This bid has been worked on by Jim Crockett and the Executive who will present their findings in January 2013 at the Trogalong Council Meeting.

The last ASF Council resolved that the feasibility study continue and that a report be made to Council upon which a decision would be made as to whether to formally bid for the Congress.

**Action: That ASF Inc presents a bid to the IUS Bureau and Congress delegates at the Brno, Czech Republic Congress to host the IUS Congress in Australia in 2017. (Item General Business 12.1 on agenda papers).**

## Library and Archives

Convener: Cathy Brown

Thanks to all the clubs who continue to supply journals and other publications to the Library and to John and Jeanette Dunkley for continuing to house it. The digital catalogue of Australian material was updated again this year. Copies are available on request. More overseas journals have been added to the digital catalogue this year and we are still working to progressively add records for the books and various CDs we hold as well.

John Dunkley continues to do a fantastic job in chasing and acquiring material to fill gaps in our collection. Thanks also to Colin Tyrell and Bruce Welch for digitising Management reports and various other materials for the library and archives too.

The British Cave Research Association has been in touch this year and were keen to reinstate our exchange with them and fill in all our missing issues of their publications. They were even willing to pay the (sea mail) postage! Hopefully by the time of the Council Meeting, the material will have arrived.

We have also had some further discussions with Elery Hamilton-Smith this year, and he has donated some 15 large boxes of his collection of management reports, commercial publications teaching materials and newsletters from various cave, conservation and management organisations to the Library. At this stage we have a summary list, per box, available to those interested. We are hoping to acquire more material from Elery in the future.

Thanks to some financial assistance from ASF, John Dunkley was able to acquire a compactus in 2012, to appropriately house Elery's collection, and allow for some reorganisation of other library materials.

## Membership

Convener: Colin Tyrell

### Membership

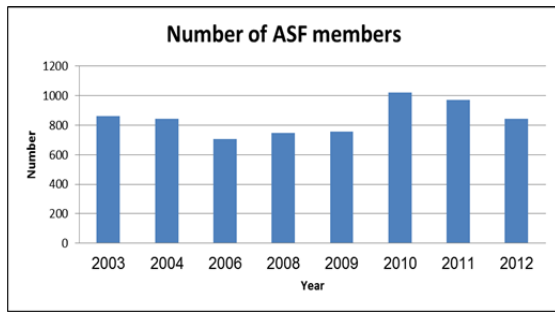
Membership declined this year (-183), with currently 795 members spanning 27 corporate member clubs with 11 Individual members outside the club framework. As at 1/11/2012 there were 2 clubs with no financial members on the system.

As at 9/12/12 the membership figures have been revised up to: 842 members which includes 9 students and 58 new students.

These figures have been updated to include very late updates to the membership database and late payments by a couple of clubs as a result of being chased up by the executive. Clubs must maintain their information and pay their fees in a timely manner. The executive should not have to chase this information, in some instances 6 months after due date. In some instances club members had paid their fees but the database had not been updated and members then wrote to complain about not receiving their copy of Caves Australia!

NUCC are still showing no members!

This decline seems related to university clubs' introductory (Orientation week) student numbers being less than 2011 (Last year there were around 220 student type memberships, this year only 9!). This year, again, has seen an increase in the number of individuals enquiring about Individual membership. There are 2 Associates and one Complimentary Associate (ACKMA). There are 3 Caves Australia subscribers



### Membership Database

Its primary use is for ASF to record members. The email lists operating through the membership database is used for all official ASF correspondence. As such it acts as a vehicle for communications (to club contacts (asf-admins), to individuals (all-comms).

The Membership database is also used for sending the eSpeleo newsletter to those who have their email address recorded.

It is also the distribution list of Caves Australia, which comes as part of ASF membership.

A secondary use is to validate if a person is an ASF member and covered by insurance. Parks Tasmania is the only known non-club user of this facility. Several clubs use the facility to confirm whether a visiting member is actually a financial club.

The main issue to arise this year continues to be that some clubs have been slow in updating their member records and keeping member details current. There have been several emails from people receiving Caves Australia at an address vacated by a financial member.

The main impact is that members missed receiving a copy of Caves Australia, and not being covered by insurance.

Clubs should update membership data as members pay their fees.

**It should be noted that it is not the responsibility of either the ASF Treasurer or Membership Secretary to update members on the database for clubs. If, as a club, you are experiencing problems updating members please ask for help from the Membership Secretary.**

### Publications

Convener: Susan White

The Publications Commission has had a very busy year.

#### Caves Australia

CA continues to progress and the current issue in production (191) at the printers. We are slightly behind schedule.

However the problem remains that it is a limited number of people who write for CA. We still intend to use some material from the Sale conference, but we always need more. The regular columns are proving a success, but the CA team is concerned that Victoria and Tasmania dominate the articles. Is this because little caving is being done outside these clubs? I hope not.

Discussion on digital printing is still ongoing. This should at least decrease the returns, which remain a problem. Attached to this report is the latest version of the situation with digital CA. However it takes time to get people to swap over to digital receiving of publications. I do not see any real change for at least 12 months but then it should bring benefits.

#### ESpeleo

Ian Binnie has proved to be a good editor and has generated 5 ESpeleo this year. Please keep the information flowing to him on activities, notices, ads etc. Please email material to [espeleo@binnie.id.au](mailto:espeleo@binnie.id.au).

#### Website

It is really good that the executive is proceeding with the upgrade of the Website. I look forward to having a revamped site. Colin continues to do sterling service in getting material on the site quickly. The site had 3138 visits between the beginning of January 2012 and the end of October.

#### Other publications

David Rueda Roca (VSA) volunteered to be the **publications sales officer** after the ad in ESpeleo. He and I have set up a spreadsheet, which we share on Google docs, to keep track of sales and stock. An order form and sales notice has been placed on the Publications page on the website (please note that David's snail mail address has changed). Although there are not large numbers of sales, this should solve the problem of supplying the small number of sales enquiries. We are currently looking at finding someone who can

publicize this further but having a page and order form on the new website should help.

The **New South Wales Karst Atlas** (The Documentation System) is now published and available. We have only printed 100 of these and I still have plenty left. I would like to thank the people who helped get this volume published, especially Cathy Brown and John Dunkley for helping sort out lots of glitches, Bruce Welch for his excellent layout skills and Fran Head for editing the whole volume.

Peter Dykes has always seen this volume as the first of a series. Although we are not having volume numbers, I suspect the books will come out intermittently, Denis Marsh and I have set up a process and protocol which will manage further volumes. Overall the NSW Karst Atlas is a joint project of the Speleo Council and the Publications Commission. The protocol is available on request to the publications chair. There are 2 areas that work is well underway for subsequent volumes, so it is important that we have a process to handle the, especially as we need to be vigilant regarding publication of locations, except those that are already in the public domain. The sandstone caves of the Blue Mountains area volume should be at the printers soon. I am seeking information on who are interested in buying this at this conference.

The sales of the Jenolan and Wee Jasper books continue to be a success. John Dunkley has organised some assistance with distribution of these, especially to Jenolan. However we will need to look at reprinting/new edition of the Dunkley Jenolan book later in 2013 as stocks are running low.

The **Conservation Book** is still stuck. We need to work out what is happening with this and it is "in the queue" of things I will attempt to address as soon as possible. However it is NOT an easy project.

Although there continues to be misunderstanding of publication processes across ASF but I feel we are making some progress here. There is still a little complaining about my "Commissar" behaviour regarding editing but I feel that this has lessened overall, especially as publications are being produced and look good, read well and have interesting material. The misconceptions about publications continue to include a lot of misunderstanding about the role of a publisher vs. the author and editors and producers/printers.

The small profits from these books will be available to publish new material which will further our aims. There is great potential in publications to further the aims of ASF in the general public but more people need to be involved with writing stuff. We still get stuff where people have spent a lot of time on layout that is stripped out anyway as layout programs generally need plain text. Photos and diagrams need to be high quality, sources acknowledged and grammatical mistakes corrected.

#### Copyright

There are several issues about copyright the executive needs to be aware of and maybe assist with.

ASF is a member of the **CAL**, and CAL is holding a little bit of money us for copyright fees, mainly of the codes by schools. TAFE etc. The copyright statement on the website for material is now appropriate. We want people to use our codes not be put off by overly legal language, whilst still acknowledging our copyright. On a related matter, it is my considered opinion that ASF members should not have to seek formal approval to use the codes; they are their codes after all. They should include the copyright statement with anything printed/published but permission is gratuitous. On the other hand outside organizations that wish to use our codes should seek permission if it is being incorporated into their material and this includes government agencies.

Publications is a big commission and it does take quite lot of effort but it is a rewarding task, especially when we see the finished results out in the public arena.

I trust that the executive is happy with what we are doing. Please let me know if there is anything you feel we need to do better (and can!)

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

Convener: Caroline Forest  
Comments received after reports were accepted

### **Survey and Mapping Standards**

Convener: Alan Warild  
nil received

## Special Interest Groups

ASF Cave Diving Group

see cave Diving Commission Report

## Judbarra-Gregory Karst Research S I G of the A S F – 2012

Liaison person: Mark Sefton (Chair)

The 2012 expedition commenced in July with the just-released Special Issue of the journal *Helictite*. This issue of 94 pages was solely dedicated to the biology, geology and history of the caves and karst of the Judbarra-Gregory National Park and was an outcome of our expeditions to the park since 1990. All papers were written and edited by members of our group.

As was the case in recent years, the 2012 expedition to the Judbarra-Gregory National Park comprised two separate camps – one based at Bullita and the second at Spring Creek. On some days, both parties joined forces to work in the caves and karst of the southern karst region west of the East Baines River. During weeks one and two of the 2012 expedition, the party based at Bullita confirmed the location of many of the caves on the north side of Limestone Creek and surveyed caves that had not been previously examined close to Limestone Gorge. In week three, three members of this party surveyed new caves in the section of the known karst north of Limestone Gorge and extended them eastwards where more caves are known to exist. During week one, members also examined several leads in the main karst block (Bullita Cave System) but, this year, concentrated their efforts on the north side of Limestone Gorge to take advantage of there being no water in Limestone Creek which made it easy to cross. In most years previously, the water in the Limestone Creek had made it difficult to find a safe way to some of the caves on the northern side.

Two of the local rangers caved with this group in the southern karst during the first week, and in the third week, these rangers and two PWC volunteers joined us in the karst north of Limestone Gorge. These trips are an opportunity for rangers to learn about the environment of the karst and park in general.

Bob Kershaw was able to use his extensive knowledge gained since 1997 to assist one of the rangers, who has been charged with the

task of documenting the Traditional Owner cultural sites in the park.

The second party, based at Spring Creek, carried out a substantial amount of surveying of caves located in isolated limestone outcrops in the Spring Creek karst. Some of these cave surveys are approaching completion. Others still required substantial work.

The work in the southern karst block resulted in the linking of three previously separate large caves and also uncovered a major underground drainage system.

The surveying process involves a lot of on-site data collection. After the expedition, it takes several months to input and consolidate the data. Initial estimates of the data collected in 2012 indicate that we surveyed approximately 17.5km of new passage this year, bringing the total of mapped cave passages in the park to approximately 241 kilometres.

Report prepared by Bob Kershaw and Megan Pryke, September 2012

## System Administration:

Mike Lake

The ASF has a significant IT investment and requirements in order to provide the services that are expected of the national body. Our requirements are similar to many medium sized businesses. A simple hosting account at an ISP would not provide the flexibility or services that are needed and a fully hosted and managed site located in Australia would be beyond our budget. We use virtual private servers hosted by Linode.com. These are managed entirely by Mike Lake and Dave Connard and provide us with the flexibility the ASF needs at an affordable rate. We pay a base rate per server then extra based on how much disk space and memory we need. We can add more disk space or memory to our servers within minutes.

We actually run two identical servers at Linode.com - one is the production server and the other is a test server. The test server allows us to test software upgrades and new software installs such as the Joomla Content Management System (CMS) that the main ASF site will be moving to in 2013. It can also act as a backup for our main production server. Both servers are hosted in Fremont, California. We might move the test server another city or country in order to provide backup in case

California has a disaster, however that then stops us swapping over IP addresses quickly in the case of our main server failing. We also have daily and weekly snapshot backups of the production server.

The servers host our main web pages at [www.caves.org.au](http://www.caves.org.au) and also Helictite - Journal of Australasian Speleological Research, the Membership and Karst Index Databases and the Sydney University Speleological Society website. The latter is a very good site and shows what clubs can do with an ASF sub-domain.

Websites at [http://your\\_club.caves.org.au](http://your_club.caves.org.au) (sub-domains of [caves.org.au](http://caves.org.au)) are free and available as part of your ASF membership if you wish to use this. Many clubs though have their own web site, if so perhaps you may also wish to just have a static page up at [your\\_club.caves.org.au](http://your_club.caves.org.au) with a link to your own site and some contact details. More links to your site will also raise your Google ranking.

Currently the ASF is in the process of redesigning its web site and moving content into a Joomla CMS. There is consequently quite a bit of work for David Connard (he looks after the Membership database and the mail server side) and myself to ensure that this install goes smoothly and to ensure that we try and maintain server security. This has necessitated code and database changes to both the Membership database and the Karst Index Database.

## Committee Reports

### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Committee

*Established in January 2008.*

Chair: Peter Dykes  
nil

### Conference Committees

#### Karstaway 2009

Chair: Margaret James  
nil

#### TROGalong 2013

Chair: Bob Kershaw

The excellent TROGalong team have produced a conference to the best of their

ability under the constraints of the current financial position in Australia, the aging demographics of the Australian caving movement, the perceived high cost of the conference and possibly the remote conference location to any karst areas in NSW. As well as the fact that a few past attendees to conferences are not attending this year for various reasons. But after last minute registrations the final numbers are:

Full time attendees: 64 Adults and 2 Children

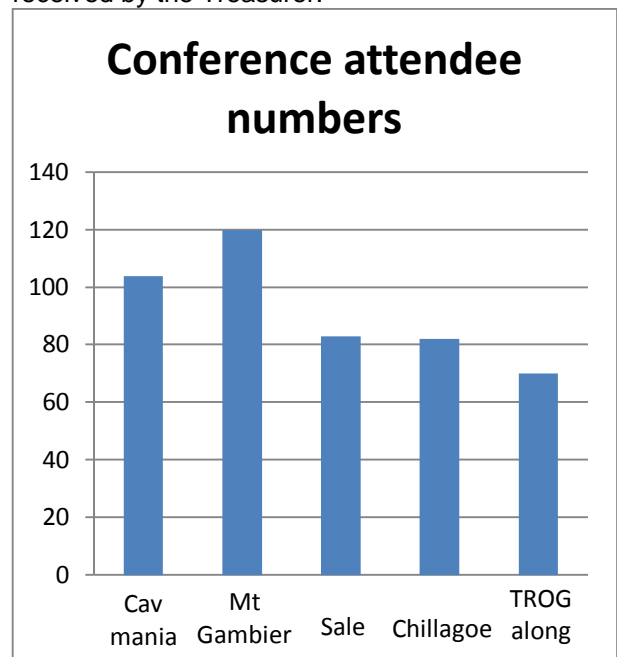
Part-time attendees: 25

The conference site is excellent and the perceived cost equates to past conference total costs. As the caving population ages the number of presenters is being reduced, there have been a few geological presenters from outside the organisation commit to a presentation for the conference.

The profit remains to be determined but as a result of the reduced number of attendees, any profit derived will be minimal. With more attendees we would have been able to do more for the conference participants. Sponsors from most outdoor businesses have been nil as they support single charities within the Australian or overseas community.

Support from the Yass region and St Clements has been excellent and we thank them for their assistance.

The use of electronic registration has proved a success with only a few paper registrations. EFT payments have made life easier for all concerned, although a few cheques have been received by the Treasurer.



## Documentation

Chair: Nicholas White  
Nicholas resigned as chair.

## ASF Server and Karst Index Database

Mike Lake

There have been no changes to the Karst Index Database this year. I had planned to add Google Maps functionality to the interface but

the running a nice farm has kept me busy. I also have some bugs that were found by the VSA members that I have yet to follow up and fix and a bug that was picked up on the training day for NSW cavers that was held in October 2011. I'm pleased that there has been some interest from Tasmania and I will be following that up. Hopefully this will result in some Tasmanian caves being updated with longer lengths and deeper depths and new ones being added. The KID is linked to from 71 sites throughout the world.



Inside Scrubby Creek by Daryl Carr



## Contact List

ASF is Incorporated in the ACT  
PO Box 388 BROADWAY NSW 2007

## Corporate Members

<b>Australian Capital Territory</b>	
<b>Canberra Speleological Society Inc.</b> PO Box 156 Curtin ACT 2605	<b>National University Caving Club</b> c/o ANU Sport and Recreation Association ANU Building 19, North Road Acton, ACT 0200
<b>New South Wales</b>	
<b>Blue Mountains Speleological Club</b> PO Box 37 Glenbrook NSW 2773	<b>Metropolitan Speleological Society</b> PO Box 178 Thornleigh NSW 2120
<b>Cavers and Adventurers of the Snowy Mountains</b> Contact- Email Alan Beck:al-shiva@hotmail.com	<b>Newcastle and Hunter Valley Speleological Society Inc.</b> PO Box 15 Broadmeadow NSW 2292
<b>Central West Caving Group</b> 605 Jaunter Rd Jaunter NSW 2787	<b>Orange Speleological Society</b> PO Box 752 Orange NSW 2800
<b>Highland Caving Group</b> PO Box 54 Georges Hall NSW 2194	<b>Rover Speleological Society of NSW</b> c/o 22/102 Crimea Road Marsfield NSW 2122
<b>Hills Speleology Club Ltd.</b> 3 Heights Place Hornsby Heights NSW 2077	<b>Sydney University Speleological Society</b> Box 35, Holme Building Sydney University NSW 2006
<b>Illawarra Speleological Society Inc.</b> PO Box 94 Unanderra NSW 2526	<b>University of Technology Sydney Speleological Society</b> c/o The Union, PO Box 123 Broadway NSW 2007
<b>Kempsey Speleological Society</b> PO Box 31 Kempsey NSW 2440	
<b>Queensland</b>	
<b>Chillagoe Caving Club Inc.</b> PO Box 92 Cairns Qld 4870	
<b>South Australia</b>	
<b>Cave Exploration Group South Australia Inc.</b> PO Box 144 Rundle Mall SA 5000	<b>Flinders University Speleological Society</b> Alan Mitchell Sports Centre Flinders One Flinders University GPO Box 2100 Adelaide SA 5001

<b>Tasmania</b>	
<b>Mole Creek Caving Club Inc</b> PO Box 209 Mole Creek TAS 7304	<b>Southern Tasmanian Caverneers Inc.</b> PO Box 416 Sandy Bay TAS 7006
<b>Northern Caverneers Inc.</b> PO Box 315 Launceston TAS 7250	
<b>Victoria</b>	
<b>Victorian Speleological Association Inc.</b> GPO Box 5425CC Melbourne Vic 3001	
<b>Western Australia</b>	
<b>Cavers Leeuwin Inc</b> P.O. Box 1192 Margaret River WA 6285	<b>Western Australian Speleological Group Inc.</b> PO Box 67 Nedlands WA 6009
<b>Speleological Research Group of Western Australia</b> PO Box 1611 East Victoria Park WA 6981	<b>Cave Exploration Group of Western Australia</b> PO Box 1821 Wangara DC WA 6947
<b>Provisional Members</b>	
<b>Victorian Limestone Caving Team</b> c/o 39 Esdale St Blackburn VIC 3130	
<b>Associates</b>	
<b>Australasian Cave and Karst Management Association</b> PO Box 36, Carlton South, Vic 3053	<b>Scouts Australia (ACT Branch)</b> 22 Lance Hill Ave, Dunlop ACT 2615
<b>Karst Geodiversity Unit (NSW, OEH)</b> Level 2, 203-209 Russell St, Bathurst NSW 2795	<b>UNE Mountaineering Club</b> C/- Sports, The University of New England, Armidale, NSW 2351
<b>NSW Cave Rescue Squad</b> PO Box 122, Bankstown, NSW 2200	<b>Victorian Scout Caving Team</b> PO Box 2277 Mt Waverley VIC 3149
<b>ASF Special Interest Groups</b>	<b>Cave Conservatory</b>
<b>ASF Cave Diving Group</b>	<b>KarstCare</b>
<b>ASF Judbarra-Gregory Karst Research Group</b>	