

2015 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - Meeting #246
27 May 2015

37 Pioneer Crescent, Bellbowrie, Queensland, 4070

MINUTES

1. Open meeting

The meeting was opened at 5.05 pm (EST).

Present: John Taylor, Peter Marin, Carolyn Ireland, Graeme Tupper, Dionne Walsh, Ron Hacker, Cathy Waters, Megan Munchenberg, Angus Whyte, David Phelps

2. Apologies

Andrew Ash, Margaret Friedel, Martin Andrew, Don Burnside

3. Minutes of the 2013 Annual General Meeting (Meeting #231)

The 2014 AGM was held on 21 May 2014. Graeme Tupper moved that the minutes be received as a true and accurate record of the meeting. Seconded: Peter Marin, Carried.

There were no items arising from the minutes for discussion.

4. President's Report – John Taylor

Your directors present their report on The Australian Rangeland Society – hereafter “the Society” - for the year ended 31st December 2014.

The names of directors in office at any time during or since the end of the year are:

J.A. Taylor (Principal, TaylorMob RD&E Services, Age 64)
C. Ireland (Principal, Ireland Resource Management Pty Ltd, Age 68)
P.F. Marin (Senior Consultant, MLCS Corporate Pty Ltd, Age 41)

The Society's operations for the year resulted in a loss of \$42,730.

The Society publishes and circulates three newsletters and six journals to the members annually, runs a biennial conference, provides grants to assist members with travel and research, and promotes the advancement of the science and art of using Australia's rangeland resources for all purposes commensurate with their continued sustainability and productivity. There were no significant changes in the nature of these activities in the 2014 Year.

Review of operations

Council met six times by teleconference during 2014 and held an Annual General Meeting on 21 May 2014 (a total of 7 meetings). Five of the teleconferences were scheduled meetings, and one was an 'out of session' meeting to address specific topics. The agenda for every scheduled meeting included discussion of membership, finance and Publication Committee reports, and the progress in planning for the 2015 Biennial Conference.

The following were members of the ARS Council, and attended () meetings during 2015:

J Taylor (7)	President
C Ireland (6)	Secretary
P Marin (5)	Finance and Audit Officer/Company Secretary
G Tupper (5)	Subscription Manager/General Member
B Forsyth (4)	General Member
K Masters (1)	General Member (From 01/01/2014 to 19/05/2014)
A Walsh (6)	General Member
D Phelps (5)	General Member

Other Council activities during 2014 have included:

- An audit of governance training and experience among Council members, and identification of skill development opportunities in various States.
- Strategic Planning. Information on key trends and issues has been collated and a draft SWOT compiled. In 2015, the focus will be on strategies to seize the opportunities and address the Society's weaknesses and threats.
- Discussion of a draft report from the Committee established to explore continuation of the Rangelands Australia educational initiative, and especially the Range Science and Management postgraduate coursework program.
- Developing plans to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Society in 2015.
- Reviewing and endorsing a plan to upgrade the Society's website. This will be progressed in 2015.
- Raising awareness of the Ecosystem Science Long-Term Plan and the Federal Department of Environment's review of 'Waterpoints in the Rangelands as a key threatening process'.
- Consideration of recommendations from the Publications Committee for appointments and renewal of appointments of Associate Editors, Advisory Editors and the Editor-in-Chief of The Rangeland Journal.
- Planning for the 18th Biennial Conference. This meeting was originally scheduled for 2014, but deferred until April 2015 because of the commitments of key members of the Organizing Committee. Council members, John Taylor and Ben Forsyth, have been members of the Conference Organizing Committee and have kept Council informed of progress. An exciting program has been developed, high profile speakers attracted, and the meeting promoted using the website and social media.
- Succession planning. With half of the Council members due to retire in 2015, a plan has been developed to attract new Council members with the necessary skills and qualifications to lead the Society forward. This has involved documenting the various roles on Council and their time commitments, along with key competencies and knowledge for effective performance in these roles. These role descriptions have been publicised in the Range Management Newsletter, and were used to source expressions of interest in filling the vacancy on Council created by the

resignation of Kate Masters. Council is pleased to confirm that Dr Andrew Ash will fill that General Member position from the beginning of 2015.

- Securing the ARS archives. These had been stored at Middleback Station, but with the Defence Department taking over the station, plans were developed to move the archives to Moorna Station (NSW) for safe storage. This was completed in early 2014.
- Exploring the possibility of an Australia-New Zealand bid for an International Rangeland Congress in 2020.
- Reviewing and endorsing a strategy to develop social media facilities for the Society. This will be implemented in 2015.
- Reviewing reports from successful applicants for 2014 ARS Travel Grants, Neil MacLeod and Graeme Hand, and noting the deferral of the grant to Graeme and June Tupper due to ill health.
- Consideration of three applications for ARS Travel grants and Scholarships for 2015. Lauren Young (University of Sydney) was the only successful applicant.
- Further revisions of the guidelines for ARS travel grants and scholarships to clarify the maximum amount to be offered to individuals and the total annual allocation. These will be presented to the 2015 AGM for ratification.
- Planning for the 19th Biennial Conference. Interest in holding this meeting in South Australia in 2017 has been confirmed, and an Organizing Committee is to be established in 2015. Council will be seeking representation on this Committee.
- Reviewing the honoraria paid for various roles relating to membership, finances, publications and communication with members.

In addition to Council, the Society continues to rely heavily on volunteers who fulfil vital roles. As of 31 December 2014 these are:

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

Dr A. J. Ash	
Professor S. Blake	
Dr D.G. Burnside	
Dr J. Davies	
Dr N.J. Duckett	Editor, Range Management Newsletter
Professor D.J. Eldridge	
Mr R. Grant	Editor, ARS website
Dr R. B. Hacker	Chair
Dr K.C. Hodgkinson	
Dr J. Milne	Editor-in-Chief, The Rangeland Journal
Dr R.D.B. Whalley	

No changes to membership of the Publications Committee occurred in 2014.

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Dr A.J. Ash	Australia
Dr B.T. Bestelmeyer	USA
Dr B.D. Cooke	Australia
Professor O.P. Dube	Botswana
Professor B. Hubert	France
Mr N.D. Macleod	Australia
Dr A.J. Pressland	Australia
Dr D. Race	Australia
Dr M. Stafford-Smith	Australia
Dr G. M. Wardle	Australia
Dr R.D.B. Whalley	Australia

ADVISORY EDITORS

Dr J. R. Brown	USA
Dr M.H. Friedel	Australia
Professor I. Gordon	Scotland
Professor J. Huang	China
Professor Z. Nan	China
Professor O. Sala	USA
Dr B.H. Walker	Australia
Professor D. Wang	China
Dr A. Waters-Bayer	The Netherlands
Dr I. Wright	Ethiopia

Publications

The Rangeland Journal

In 2014, 125 manuscripts were received. This continues the upward trend in submitted papers which has risen from 81 papers in 2009. The increasing submission rates indicate increased confidence / interest in the Journal. Because of the higher submission rates, the number of issues published annually rose from four to six beginning in 2014. Two of these six issues were Special Issues.

The Journal has a significant web presence on the CSIRO Publishing site. Archival back content (all Volumes to date) has been made available to all subscribers. The back content has been downloaded at an increasing rate with the 'most read' papers and Special Issues attracting the highest interest. The TRJ web site was well utilized with an increasing number of subscribers/ARS members accessing the site. Papers were downloaded 27,262 times, approximately 75 individual papers per day, in 2014. The most read paper was:

"Can Changes to pasture management reduce runoff and sediment loss to the Great Barrier Reef? The results of a 10-year study in the Burdekin Catchment, Australia" by R. Bartley *et al.* published in Volume 36 (1) in January 2014.

The ISI Citation Impact Factor is based on a narrow window of citation and is reported in June each year. The Impact Factor for a given year is based on the ratio of citations to papers published in the previous two years. The Citation Impact Factor for 2013 was 1.064 whilst the 5-year Impact Factor was 1.365. The Citation Impact Factor places the Journal in rank 109 out of 141 journals listed in the Ecology category.

Two Special Issues, entitled '*Savanna burning: role and opportunities in a rangelands carbon economy*' (Guest Editors D. Walsh, R. Cowley and J. Russell-Smith) and '*Social and ecological aspects of grassland use in northern China: implications for adaptation to climate change*' (Guest Editors F. Li, W. Whalley, X. Hou, W. Ren and S Banerjee), were published in 2014.

Two Rangeland Journal Lectures, promoting the Journal and the Society, were delivered during the year. One was delivered by Leo Dobes in Canberra, Australia and the other by John Milne in Zaragoza, Spain. Both were well attended.

The Society Website

Change in the ARS website was galvanized in September 2014 by the announcement by Link Digital, the website provider, that the Link CMS software underpinning the site was sufficiently outdated that it would no longer be supported. This led to a call for tenders for design of a new website, the tender finally being awarded to Fat Beehive Ltd. Redesign of the site is currently in progress. In the interim, Link Digital is maintaining the site at an hourly rate when problems occur. This support has been required for a number of small but troublesome issues associated with the subscription and email systems.

The new website will incorporate social media links and these accounts will be managed initially by a social media consultant who has been contracted by the Council. After this initial period (12 weeks from the date of launch) ongoing management of the accounts will be undertaken by a Social Media Editor appointed by the Council, with an annual Honorarium of \$2,500.

During the year the website continued to be a key avenue for publicising society business and other events or opportunities of potential interest to members. This included the use of the web email system to advise members of specific items of interest as well as subscription requirements. Progress was made in loading further proceedings of Biennial Conferences as well as some back issues of the Range Management Newsletter. However, completion of this task has been paused while the new website is being developed to avoid unnecessary duplication of the uploading task. Website support was provided to publicise the 18th Biennial ARS conference, but the conference organisers maintained a separate web address as the one point of truth for registration and information.

The currency of the website is largely maintained by posting news in the "What's New" and "What's On" areas. There has been a sporadic flow of information for these areas but a concerted effort in sourcing new material across the membership could increase the value of the website.

The Range Management Newsletter

As in previous years, three issues of the Newsletter were published in both electronic form on the Website and as hard copy to a small number of requesting members.

A number of the major articles received this year were volunteered by the authors rather than requested by the Editor which was pleasing to see. It has remained difficult, however, to get readers to contribute shorter general interest articles such as conference/meeting reports, book reviews and research updates. There has been an excellent flow of information about ARS business from Council and from the Publications Committee, and John Taylor and Ron Hacker should be thanked for their help in this regard. As usual, Graeme Tupper handled the printing and posting of the hard copy RMN with his usual efficiency. Print quality of the hard copy was also improved this year with the inclusion of colour on some pages containing complex figures – this was possible because of reduced colour printing costs.

The Editor, RMN is looking forward to working with the updated newsletter template as part of the new website later in 2015. Statistics generated from the new website will provide excellent feedback on what particular articles are being read by members and the general public which will help to determine future directions for the RMN.

Biennial Conference

The biennial conference is a significant event in the Society's calendar and provides the main mechanism for members and guests to interact and exchange ideas about the use and management of Australia's rangelands.

Planning is well in hand for the next conference, to be held in Alice Springs in April 2015. The theme of the conference will be "Innovation in the Rangelands", and it is hoped that over 200 people will attend.

Membership

Membership of the Society had remained more or less stable at around 350-400 members from 2002 until 2012. However in 2013 numbers dipped to 336 by year's end, and in 2014 numbers were 311 by year's end.

In December 2014 there were 220 members managed by the Society with CSIRO Publishing managing another 91, giving a total of 311. The corresponding figures for December 2013 were 246 plus 90 (=336), December 2012 were 260 plus 94 (=354), December 2011 were 297 plus 94 (=391), December 2010 were 306 plus 79 (=385), December 2009 were 273 plus 83 (=356), December 2008 were 302 plus 83 (=385), December 2007, 303 plus 84 (=387), December 2006, 351 plus 75 (=426) and for December 2005, 321 plus 61 (=382). This compares with 438 in 2004, 434 in 2003 and 427 in December 2002.

The addition of new members has always fluctuated between conference and non-conference years. There were 22 new members in 2014 (a non-conference year), 26 new members in 2013 (a non-conference year), 44 new members in 2012 (a conference year), 23 new members in 2011 (a non-conference year), 84 new members in 2010 (a conference year), 19 new members in 2009, 70 new members in 2008 (a conference year), 23 new members in 2007, 41 new members in 2006 (a conference year) and 30 new members in 2005. However, the trend in new memberships is negated by losses through retirements, and an increased number of non-renewals, in spite of rigorous efforts by the Subscription Manager to encourage all members to renew.

The majority (94%) of members and subscribers come from Australia, with about 54% of Australian members coming from Queensland and New South Wales. There were 13 international members, compared to 7 in 2013, 14 in 2012, 13 in 2011, 23 in 2010, 20 in 2009, 15 in 2008 and seven in 2007.

The membership figures include five ARS Fellows, 13 Student members, and seventeen “ex-officio” non-paying members such as the National Library of Australia, and Associate Editors for The Rangeland Journal. It is also noted that the Society has about 22 landholder addresses amongst its members.

Subscription rates for those subscribers managed by the Society remained unchanged for 2014 (\$100 for full members resident in Australia). For members wishing to receive a printed copy of the Range Management Newsletter an additional \$15 is payable, plus a “late” fee of \$15 is added to the subscription for continuing members who fail to renew by 31st March.

In addition to publishing The Rangeland Journal, CSIRO Publishing manages subscriptions for the Society’s “Library” subscribers as well as some of its “Institutional/Corporate” subscribers. Mailing labels were prepared for 91 CSIRO subscribers for the last Newsletter of 2014.

Many societies today are facing declining memberships, as social media replaces some of the need for inter-personal interactions. The survey of members and non-members at the Kununurra Conference in 2012 provided some insight into what’s valued among the benefits of membership, and it is intended that this survey is again conducted at the 2015 Conference. Hopefully, this will provide signals on how to maintain and possibly grow the membership.

Carolyn Ireland moved that the Directors’ Report for the year ending 31 December 2012 be accepted. Seconded: David Phelps, Carried.

5. Financial Report – Peter Marin

The financial affairs of the Society remain on a strong footing with a loss from ordinary activities of \$42,730 (2013: loss of \$20,427) and total equity/accumulated surplus of \$157,961 (2013: \$200,691).

The Society’s total equity is \$157,961 which is considered adequate to cover any liabilities.

The loss of \$42,730 for the Society in 2014 was higher than previous years due to the provision of seed funding to the Conference Committee for the 2015 Alice Springs Conference. A number of up front and initial costs were incurred during 2014 for the 2015 Conference which has contributed to the higher than normal loss.

The Society continued to work on improvements to programs and protocols to allow it to complete its commitments to standard reporting of its financial position as required under law.

Ron Hacker moved that the Financial Report for the year ending 31 December 2012 be accepted. Seconded: Dionne Walsh, Carried.

6. Elections for office bearers of the Society

Section 16 (a) of the Articles of Association of the Society provide for elections in each alternate year beginning in 1983 commencing at the end of the next Annual General Meeting. Positions are held for 4 years and Members of Council may not serve more than two four-year terms (eight consecutive years) on Council. The Officers of the Society are President, Finance and Audit Officer

and Secretary. Up to five General Council Members complete the eight-member Council.

Sections 16 (b) states that nominations for vacant positions must be received by the Secretary no later than April 10 of the year in which the elections were held. The following nominations were received and are held by the Secretary.

President John Taylor – retires (has completed two four-year terms)
David Phelps – continuing Member – has nominated as President

John Taylor thanked all retiring members of Council and welcomed new members of Council. He then handed the Chair over to the new President, David Phelps.

David Phelps as the incoming President thanked John Taylor for his efforts as President for the past four years. He then announced the outgoing and incoming members of Council.

Secretary **Carolyn Ireland – continuing Member – has nominated as Secretary**
Finance and Audit Officer Peter Marin – retires (has completed two four-year terms)
Donald Burnside – has nominated as Finance and Audit Officer
General Council Members Annabel Walsh – retires (has completed two four-year terms)
Graeme Tupper – retires (has completed two four-year terms)
Ben Forsyth – retires (has completed one four-year term)
Andrew Ash – continuing General Council Member
Dionne Walsh – has nominated as a General Council Member
Cathy Waters – has nominated as a General Council Member
Angus Whyte – has nominated as a General Council Member
Megan Munchenberg – has nominated as a General Council Member

Under Section 16 (b) of the Articles of Association, if only one nomination is received for any office, no election shall be necessary, and the person nominated shall be deemed elected.

7. Motions on notice

Motion 1

Solvency resolution

‘That the Directors have reason to believe that the Australian Rangeland Society Ltd will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.’

Moved: Ron Hacker, Seconded: Angus Whyte, Carried.

Motion 2

Alterations to the Guidelines of the ARS Travel Grant and Scholarship

‘That the Council of the Australian Rangeland Society (the Society) recommends that changes be made to the Guidelines of the Travel Grant and Scholarship to allow the following:

- Restrict the amount given to each grantee to \$2,000. As the total amount available for Travel Grants and Scholarships is \$6,000 annually, this would allow three grants/scholarships to be

awarded each year to Members of the Society who have been financial Members for at least 12 months at the time of their application.”

NOTE: Section 15 of the current Guidelines of the Travel Grant and Section 16 of the current Guidelines of the Scholarship state that the Guidelines may be altered by a majority vote at a special general meeting or an Annual General Meeting after notice has been duly served.

- The proposed new wording in the Society Awards Guidelines is:

TRAVEL GRANTS

5. One or more Travel Grants (maximum of \$2000 each) can be awarded in a calendar year. The maximum amount available for distribution in a calendar year is \$6000 based on relevance, innovation and merit.

7. Successful applicants are required to submit an article reporting on their activities, suitable for publication in the Society’s Newsletter and on the Society’s Website, within six months of completion of travel.

SCHOLARSHIPS

5. One or more Scholarships (maximum of \$2000 each) can be awarded in a calendar year. The maximum amount available for distribution in a calendar year is \$6000 based on relevance, innovation and merit.

8. Upon conclusion of a course of study a recipient of a Scholarship will be required to write an article on their experiences, suitable for publication in the Society’s Newsletter and on the Society’s Website.

Moved: Ron Hacker, Seconded: Dionne Walsh, Carried.

8. General Business

There was no general business.

9. Close meeting

The President closed the meeting at 5.40 pm (EST).