



The Australian Rangeland Society

Council meeting No. 225 and Joint Meeting with the Publications Committee

MINUTES

3.55 pm WA Time – Tuesday 25th September 2012

Board Room, Department of Environment and Conservation, Ivanhoe Road, Kununurra

1. **Present:** John Taylor, Carolyn Ireland, Graeme Tupper, Annabel Walsh, Larissa Lauder, Ben Forsyth, Peter Marin, Kate Masters
Publications Committee, Advisory and Associate Editors and others: Ken Hodgkinson, Wal Whalley, John Milne, Don Burnside, Neil McLeod, Noelene Duckett, Margaret Friedel, Chris Anderson
Apologies: None

Joint Council/Publications Committee Meeting

Major Issue and challenges: Individual membership has declined from highs of around 350 in 2006 to around 300 (range 249-306) over the past 5 years, while Institutional/library members have grown from 61 in 2005 to 94 in 2011. Over the next 5 years around 60% of agency staff (research and extension) and academics will retire and drift away from the ARS, with implications for the viability of both the Society and The Rangeland Journal. The challenge is to attract new members and retain existing members. The focus of this joint meeting is to review recent initiatives in this area and to develop strategies and an action plan to tackle this challenge.

Individual membership: trends and patterns – brief update (Graeme Tupper, Subscriptions Manager)

Graeme questioned the "around 300" members. Current active members are 249. Numbers drop during non-conference years. Recruitment happens at conferences. New members come mainly through the website, but no idea why new members join. 36 new and returned members this calendar year. Producers only a very small number.

Comments: this is a worldwide phenomenon – happening in all Societies. Societies do not attract younger members. Those Societies that can run successful journals or other publications add to their finances. Need to look instead at the financial situation of the Society which is strong.

Institutional/library subscriptions: trends and patterns – brief update (Chris Anderson, CSIRO Publishing)

Society Journal costs decided by number of Institutional and individual members – large numbers lower the cost. 100 Institutional subscriptions – Government Departments,

Universities, Individuals, Consortia etc. Consortia like TRJ as online rather than print and can have up to 400 members - our Journal receives a pro-rata amount of money. Membership and these other arrangements influence our income. Trend of growth in Consortia. Journal is in a very buoyant position – Americans now recognise it as a strong competitor. Can grow the Journal by increasing to 6 issues a year. **Comment:** What does the society get? Positive revenue to the Society. Loss carried by CSIRO Publishing. Can be very profitable. Chris will provide a financial history to Peter Marin.

Chasing ‘expired’ members (Graeme Tupper, Subscriptions Manager)

“Expired Members” are on a data base. Electronic message goes out to all members or it goes by post for renewals plus two reminders. Then expired members are removed. Low proportion of these actually do renew eventually.

Presence at International Meetings (John Taylor, President)

We have presence at some international meetings. Many forms distributed but no new members resulted. USA is a very hard market. **Comment:** This is not a surprise that a foreign national would not want to join. However it does raise the profile of the Society. Society has contributed our Abstracts and Conference Proceedings to the Global Rangeland Repository.

Members’ needs survey (John Taylor, President)

Survey in April/May – 28% response rate. John gave a summary of the results. Council will discuss this later in the meeting.

International experience and perspectives (John Milne, Editor in Chief - TRJ)

Experience in three Societies – all had the same issues. They moved into new areas of research – some successful, some not. Could join with other Societies but Members do not want this. Could shift away from scientific to one that is applied research – farming advice. Could combine with other societies and create a new Journal. Model that is developed is different for different Societies. Move into areas which are growth areas. Journal needs to have more international papers. **Comments:** Various Grassland Societies in NSW and Victoria are strong and we are unlikely to “poach” any of their members.

Discussion of strategies to grow membership

We need to canvas people who are at the conference and are not members. We are acting like a discipline but we are a community of geography. Do we want a Society at all?

Institutional/library subscriptions (Chris Anderson, CSIRO Publishing)

Ideas: Societies that get together with other Societies or the New Zealanders. Use the conference as a membership drive at the registration stage. Include a Student forum or young Indigenous award. Women in the Rangelands issue in the Journal. Diversifying membership. Journal needs institutional subscribers in industry.

Wrap-up by John:

Council and Publication Committee need to talk separately about these issues. Action: Develop a survey to capture member and non-member feedback and put on seats on Thursday morning.

Council meeting No. 225

2. **Minutes of previous meeting** The Minutes of Council Meeting 224, 2 August 2012 were approved. Moved: Larissa, Seconded: Graeme, Carried

3. Business arising from the minutes:

- A. Concise Policy and Guidelines and Schedule of fees for Advertising in ARS Publications. Waiting for PC guidelines.
- B. Rangeland Alliance links for our website. John has forwarded a list of organisations to Russell. 14 organisations have agreed to have links to our website. Item closed.
- C. Changing articles. Once approval comes through, Carolyn will make changes to Articles and send copies to Council, Publications Committee and Website. Peter to send ASIC letter to Carolyn.
- D. Resignation of Ken Hodgkinson as Chair of Publications Committee (PC) in Dec 2012. Search Committee has formed and will approach suitable people. Carolyn to field Applications. No further information at this stage.
- E. Survey of Membership and Strategy for Cash Reserves. Survey completed. Support shown for travel and research grants and scholarships firstly, then the current range of Membership services and youth and producer events equal second. Other suggestions were made e.g. promoting indigenous land management systems, professional accreditation, supporting the next generation of rangeland scientists. Council members to digest this information and meet again on 31 October to discuss.
- F. Sponsorship opportunities. On hold until the Membership survey is discussed.
- G. Council and Director Development. On hold until the Membership Survey discussed.
Action: Council members to provide feedback on E, F, G by the October 31st meeting.
- H. Kununurra Conference (standing item on agenda) –
 - i. Request from Sandra van Vreeswyk for more funds. Item closed.
 - ii. NT members to be approached for a bid for 2014. John has contacted people in Katherine and Alice Springs to gauge interest. NT Department very enthusiastic, CRCREP not organising any conferences. At best a warm response. Tasmania or South Australia are possibilities. John to follow up.
 - iii. Publications Committee wishes to meet with Council – see first agenda item. Item closed.
- I. Reappointment of associate editor Bernard Hubert. Action: John to ask the PC to offer a renewal of Bernard's term. Action: John to write a letter of thanks to Esther.
- J. Review of Guidelines for Travel Grants and Scholarships. **Action:** John and Carolyn to work on proposed changes, circulate to Council and put to AGM in May 2013

4. General Business:

A. Membership – Graeme Tupper:

ARS now has 249 active members. Approval of Council sought to hire a contractor to upgrade the software in the old data base. **Action:** Graeme to get two quotes. Moved John Seconded Ben Carried.

B. Finance – Peter Marin:

Profit and Loss Statement tabled. Current account \$4064. Savings account \$195,496. Conference account \$111,634. Total ~\$313,000. Profit and Loss Statement tabled. Report noted by Council.

C. Publications Committee

No matters to discuss

5. New Business:

Rangeland Alliance meeting next week – Peter to attend and report back

Ben to consider contacting SRM and GSSA youth groups

Succession plan – John Gavin has offered to be a member of Council when a vacancy occurs.

6. Correspondence:

INCOMING

20-Aug-12	Card	Virginia Jackson (daughter of Bill Bolton-Smith)	Advising us of Bill's death
04-Sep-12	Email	Andrew Ash	Rangeland Journal and Web of Science citations
04-Sep-12	Email	Carolyn Ireland	Seeking Directors' approval for expenditure for TRJ Lecture in Adelaide
10-Sep-12	Email	Ken Hodgkinson	Seeking Directors' approval for financial support for John Milne's travel

OUTGOING

03-Aug-12	Email	Paul Novelly	Answers to K12 matters for consideration of Council
03-Aug-12	Email	Ken Hodgkinson	Answers to Publication Committee matters for consideration of Council
01-Sep-12	Card	Virginia Jackson	With sympathy message from ARS
04-Sep-12	Email	Carolyn Ireland	Giving Directors' approval for expenditure for TRJ Lecture in Adelaide
10-Sep-12	Email	Ken Hodgkinson	Giving Directors' approval for financial support for John Milne's travel

7. Next meeting –

An Out of Session Meeting of Council will be held by teleconference on **Wednesday 31st October 2012 at 6 pm Queensland time** to discuss the Member Survey.

A Council Meeting will be held by teleconference on **Thursday 6th December 2012 at 5 pm Queensland time**.

Meeting closed at 7 pm WA time.