



The Australian Rangeland Society

General Meeting held at the Kambri Cultural Centre, ANU, Canberra 2019 ARS Conference

Time: 7.30am (Eastern Standard Time) **Date:** Thursday 5th Sept 2019

1. **Present:** Don Burnside, George Wilson, David Phelps, Bob Shepherd, Andrew Ash, Gus Whyte, Terry Beutel, Paul Novelly, Ron Hacker, Carolyn Ireland, Barney Foran, Roxane Blakley, Steven Bray, Dionne Walsh, Milou Dekkers, John Taylor, Kath Ryan, Richard Silcock, Ken Hodgkinson, Alex Holm, Dana Kelly, Brad Witt, Kate Forrest, Cathy Waters, Ian Houston, Margaret Friedel, Hayley McMillian & Russell Grant, Mark Stafford-Smith, Bruce Alchin & Graciela Metternicht.

Apologies: Megan Munchenberg

2. **Minutes of the Previous General Meeting**

Motion: That the minutes of the general meeting held at Port Augusta ARS Conference on the 28th September 2017 as distributed via the 2019 Conference App are a true and correct record.

Moved: Carolyn Ireland

Seconded: Andrew Ash

Carried

3. **Business arising from the minutes:**

- Need to commence recruiting new ARS Council members as current members' terms conclude.

4 **Correspondence** (nil)

5 **Reports**

5.1 **President's Report** (David Phelps)

- *Strategic planning* – since the 2017 Port Augusta ARS Conference, council has completed a comprehensive review and update of the strategic plan covering all areas of the society's role. Holding the 2019 ARS Biennial conference in Canberra has provided ready access for people who are involved in policy development. An ABC Radio interviewed the ARS President Dr David Phelps about the conference.
- *New ARS award* – as at the 2019 ARS AGM, an "Award of Excellence" has been created in addition to the ARS Fellowship awards. This is for people who are not necessarily ARS members who have made an outstanding contribution to/in the Rangelands. Awardees can be recognised for their contribution to policy, R&D, extension, communication or rangeland management. A medal and certificate will be presented at a subsequent ARS conference. Nominations are continuously open, and should be sent to the ARS Council for consideration.
- *Global engagement*
 - The ARS is supportive of the International Year of Rangelands & Pastoralists (IYRP)
 - Dr Dana Kelly is the Chair of the IRC Continuing Committee which is organising the 2020 IRC in Nairobi Kenya.
 - The ARS has organised a Bid Committee chaired by Pieter Conradie to develop the case to host the 2025 IRC in Australia. The most likely location if the bid is successful is Adelaide with tours in other part of Australia.
 - Due to Dana Kelly's efforts, the ARS was successful in applying for and gaining observer status at the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA). The ARS is one of the few rangelands member and one of the few Australian members. Dana Kelly attended the 4th meeting of the UNEA in Nairobi in March 2019 which had a traditional knowledge in rangelands focus. Seventy people attended including representatives from The International Livestock Research Institute (Africa) and Mongolians attending. The UNEA

passed a resolution recognising the value of rangelands and the IYRP. A final decision on the IYRP will be made at a UN meeting next year.

- ARS members present supported Dana's actions.
- The Rangeland Journal has a significant number of international articles.
- **Publications Committee –**
 - President David thanked Dr Ron Hacker sincerely for his achievements and dedication in the role of Chair of the Publications Committee. David's comments were supported by acclamation by all members present.
 - TRJ – the journal has an impact factor of 1.6 which means that articles in the journal have a long citation period.
 - RMN – A review of the newsletter was done by Ron Hacker and Noelene Duckett to improve readership by members. Their recommendations were endorsed by Council. The newsletter will be cross-pollinated with relevant articles from kindred organisations and other newsletters. State correspondents will be sought to identify issues, people and stories suitable for the RMN and social media.
 - ARS Website – Due to the deterioration of the ARS website and the demise of the host company, Council decided to enlist the services of a new company Blue Platapus develop a new website with additional functionality at a cost of \$13,000 upfront and an annual fee of \$1800.
 - Social Media
- **ARS Grants –**

5.2 Membership Report (Don Burnside)

- Don informed the meeting that the previous Membership Director, Annabel Walsh was making a slow recovery from her stroke.
- Current membership details are:-

Category	Hardcopy Journal + RMN	E-journal + RMN	RMN only	Total
Paying members	130* (108**)	50* (44**)	29* (27**)	209* (179**)
Complimentary***	5 (5)	29 (29)	0 (0)	34*** (34)
Institutional subscribers****	11	79	0	90
Total	146 (124)	158 (152)	29 (27)	333 (303)

* Total number of members to pay in 2017

** Number already paid in 2017

*** There are 40 complimentary members, but 6 of these have volunteered membership subs for 2017.

**** Institutional subscribers are not ARS members and pay subs direct to CSIRO

- Institutional members will increase these numbers eg through the new CSIRO contract
- Registrations for the Port Augusta Conference encouraged an increase in new members
- Demographics of members is not known
- Demographic information will be added to the membership forms in future

5.3 Financial Report

- Financial & membership data is shown below:-

Year	Member-ship	Assets \$	Revenue \$	Surplus/ (loss) \$	Conferences Surplus (loss) \$
1996*	573	117,592	36,205	(14,353)	(5,731)
1997	538	121,093	38,374	3,501	
1998*	450	100,829	31,417	(20,264)	(1,746)
1999**	410	88,691	30,507	(12,138)	
2000*	410	79,881	33,093	(8,810)	(5,607)

2005	321	163,228	25,902	(25,911)	
2006*	351	218,437	254,034	55,209	55,561
2007	303	216,887	39,924	(1,550)	
2008*	302	297,264	262,806	80,377	69,216
2009	273	315,216	102,540	17,592	
2010*	306	282,424	242,391	(32,792)	10,667
2011	297	217,682	30,986	(64,742)	
2012*	260	221,118	222,875	3,436	(4,377)
2013	246	200,691	44,165	(20,427)	
2014	220	157,961	66,373	(42,730)	
2015*	221	125,533	223,771	(32,428)	1,459
2016	182	86,034	54,216	(39,499)	
2017*	243				20,000 est

* ARS Conference year

** Townsville IRC year

- General trend in ARS finances is downwards
- On-line membership payments in 2016 were a big problem, resulting in a loss of previously current members
- Society costs in a non-ARS Conference year are \$39,000
- Special editions of The Rangeland Journal earn an extra \$10,000 each, with two special editions budgeted each year (each conference is required to publish a special edition based on the proceedings); additional special editions are planned.
- Subscriptions for the e-journal result in an overall reduction in printing costs
- Likely surplus from the 2017 Conference will be approx \$20,000.

6 Next ARS Conference: (Mark Stafford-Smith)

- 2019 ARS conference will be held in Canberra.
- This will be the 20th ARS conference and the first to be held in Canberra
- A preliminary committee is in place
- Focus areas may include:-
 - Policy challenges
 - Temperate rangelands & pastoral activities in the region
 - Supporting international rangeland needs eg ACIAR
 - Encouraging a range of federal government agencies to support rangeland activities
 - Role of women in rangelands
 - Traditional knowledge
 - International year of Rangelands & Pastoralists
- By timing the conference with university holidays, accommodation costs will be reduced and a wider range of venues will be available
- Parliament may be sitting and 2019 could be a federal election year
- The Fenner School (ANU) could be a possible venue
- More youth is needed on the conference organizing committee

7 General/New Business:

7.1 ACRIS (Australian Collaborative Rangelands Information System) – what is its fate? The ARS pursued this in 2015, but could gain no traction.

7.2 IRC 2024 - bids are open to host this congress.

7.3 Port Augusta ARS Conference - Vote of thanks was carried by acclamation to the Port Augusta Organising Committee for holding an excellent conference.

8 Meeting close: 8.25am