



The Australian Rangeland Society

2014 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - Meeting #239

21 May 2014

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, Annabel Walsh, David Phelps, Richard Silcock

2. Apologies

Peter Johnston, Don Burnside, Dionne Walsh, Margaret Friedel, Ron Hacker, Dana Kelly, Noelene Duckett, Tony Pressland, Bruce Alchin

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

The 2013 AGM was held on 23 May 2013. Peter Marin moved that the minutes be received as a true and accurate record of the meeting. Seconded: Carolyn Ireland, Carried.

There were no items arising from the minutes for discussion.

4. President's Report – John Taylor

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

J.A. Taylor (Professor, University of Queensland to June 2012, Age 63)
C. Ireland (Principal, Ireland Resource Management Pty Ltd, Age 67)
P.F. Marin (Senior Consultant, MLCS Corporate Pty Ltd, Age 40)

The Society's operations for the year resulted in a loss of \$20,427.

The Society publishes and circulates three newsletters and four journals (soon to be six) 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 2013 Year.

Review of operations

Council met six times by teleconference during 2013 and held an Annual General Meeting on 23 May 2013 (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 following were members of the ARS Council, and attended () meetings during 2013:

J Taylor (7)	President
C Ireland (7)	Secretary
P Marin (5)	Finance and Audit Officer/Company Secretary
G Tupper (6)	Subscription Manager/General Member,
B Forsyth (3)	General Member
L Lauder (0)	General Member (From January to April 2013)
K Masters (3)	General Member
A Walsh (6)	General Member
D Phelps (5)	General Member (From May to December 2013)

Other Council activities during 2013 have included:

- Endorsing a Policy and setting a schedule of fees for advertising in ARS publications.
- Endorsing the recommendation of the Publications Committee that Dr Ron Hacker be appointed Chair of the Publications Committee, replacing Dr Ken Hodgkinson. A plan was implemented to ensure a smooth transition.
- Responding to the motion from the General Meeting at Kununurra regarding support for the Rangelands Australia educational initiative by establishing a committee of Council and Ordinary members, chaired by Ben Forsyth, to explore options for continuation of the only Rangeland Management program in Australia. Council endorsed the planned membership and terms of reference for this committee and received an interim report in late 2013.
- Consideration of recommendations from the Publications Committee for appointments and renewal of appointments as Associate Editors and Advisory Editors of The Rangeland Journal.
- Discussion of the results of the surveys of members and conference participants conducted in late 2012. A summary of the findings was published in the Range Management Newsletter and further feedback on strategies to address members and potential members' needs was sought from ARS members.
- Consideration of the report of the 17th Biennial Conference (2012 Kununurra). The field trips, program and networking were widely valued, and Council congratulated the Organizing Committee (chaired by Paul Novelty) and Meeting Masters, the Conference Organizer, for a very successful conference. The review of the conference will be a valuable guide to future conference organizers.
- Planning for the 18th Biennial Conference. Discussions with key players in the host city, Alice Springs NT, have led to this meeting being deferred until April 2015. Council members, John Taylor and Ben Forsyth, were nominated as members of the Conference Organizing Committee and have kept Council informed of progress.

- 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.
- Developing a strategy for securing the ARS archives that have been stored at Middleback Station. With the Defense Department taking over the station, a new home for the archives was sought and plans developed to move the archives to Moorna Station for safe storage. This will be actioned in 2014.
- Revising the guidelines for ARS travel grants and scholarships to improve clarity. These were endorsed at the 2013 AGM, posted on the Society's website and published in the Range Management Newsletter. Applications were subsequently sought for 2014, and Neil MacLeod, Graeme and June Tupper and Graeme Hand were the successful applicants.

In addition to Council, the Society continues to rely heavily on volunteers who fulfill vital roles. As of 31 December 2013 these are:

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

Dr R. B. Hacker	Chair
Professor S. Blake	
Dr D.G. Burnside	
Dr J. Davies	
Dr N. Duckett	Editor of Range Management Newsletter
Professor D.J. Eldridge	
Mr R. Grant	Editor of Society Website
Dr P.W. Johnston	
Dr K.C. Hodgkinson	
Dr J. Milne	Editor-in-Chief of The Rangeland Journal
Dr R.D.B. Whalley	

Dr R. B. Hacker was appointed Chair of the Publications Committee from 1 July 2013, replacing Dr Ken Hodgkinson who continued as a member of the Committee. The terms of Drs Eldridge, Hodgkinson, Johnston and Whalley, terminated on 31 December 2013 with all except Dr Johnston accepting reappointment from 1 January 2014. Dr A. J. Ash will replace Dr Johnston from 1 January 2014.

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

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

A/Professor M.E. Fernández-Giménez resigned during the year and Professor E.M Abraham and Dr G Wardle were appointed.

ADVISORY EDITORS

Dr J.R. Brown	USA
Dr M. 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 Rangelands Journal

In 2013, 122 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 will rise from four to six beginning in 2014. Two of these six issues will be Special Issues as in the recent past.

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 number. The TRJ web site was well utilized with an increasing number of subscribers/ARS members accessing the site. Papers have been downloaded 26,820 times, approximately 74 individual papers per day in 2013. The most read paper in 2013, was "*Revegetation with Australian native grasses – a reassessment of the importance of using local provenances*" by R. D. B. Whalley, I. H. Chivers and C. M. Waters published in Volume 35 (2) in June 2013.

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 2012 was 1.276 continuing a generally upward trend over the past few years. This means that the Journal has maintained its strong profile in the research community while consolidating the content to four regular issues over the citation periods. The Citation Impact Factor places the Journal in rank 95th out of 136 journals listed in the Ecology category. The steady rise in the Impact Factor (from 2009 to 2013) is directly related to publication of 'high impact' papers, rigorous reviewing and 'active encouragement' for readers to cite papers. The most cited paper (31 citations) over this 4-year period is "*Climate change impacts on northern Australian rangeland livestock carrying capacity: a review of issues*" by McKeon G. M.; Stone G. S.; Syktus J. I.; et al. published in Volume 31 (1) in March 2009.

Other highlights for the Journal included:

- Publication of a Special Issue entitled Celebrating Diversity: people, place and purpose from the papers submitted to the 2012 Biennial Conference in Kununurra. The Special Issue was edited by Dr R B Hacker and comprised 12 papers including a synthesis by the guest editor based on his summary of the conference presented to the final plenary session.

- Development of the contract format and protocol for production of future Special Issues. Publication of two Special Issues per year will be a vital component of the move to six issues of the Journal per year from 2014.
- Two Rangeland Journal Lectures, promoting the Journal and the Society, were delivered during the year. Dr Joel Brown (USDA-NRCS, Las Cruces, New Mexico) presented a lecture entitled Providing rangeland ecosystem services: improving management decisions with a systematic approach in Brisbane in September and Dr Margaret Friedel (CSIRO Ecosystem Sciences) presented a lecture entitled A million years of change: wind, flood and fire in the Simpson Desert in Alice Springs in November. Both lectures were well received by audiences of approximately 60 in Brisbane and 100 in Alice Springs. The Alice Springs lecture is available on the ARS web site.
- A survey of Advisory Editors was undertaken on the scientific direction of the journal and whether there were new initiatives that the journal should make. The Advisory Editors were supportive of the current direction that the journal was taking but suggested that there was a need to attract more social science papers.

The Society Website

The ARS website and associated email system was regularly updated with current information as a significant means of communicating with members and the public during the year. However discussions have been ongoing towards updating layout and format in the near future. The task of scanning and loading the papers of proceedings of Biennial Conferences continues. Eventually all papers will be electronically published and available on both the Society and the Global Rangelands Repository websites. Range Management Newsletters will be scanned in 2014 and placed on the Society's website.

The Range Management Newsletter

Three issues of the Newsletter were published in both electronic form on the Website and as hard copy to members requiring this. The flow of articles for 2013 was similar to previous years with both volunteered and invited major contributions being received. Initiatives undertaken during the year included a revamping of the book review process and the continuance of the ARS member profile articles which first appeared in late 2012. Regular updates from Council were also included in each issue.

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 in train for the next conference, to be held in Alice Springs in April 2015.

Membership Report – Graeme Tupper

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.

In December 2013 there were 246 members managed by the Society with CSIRO Publishing managing another 90, giving a total of 336. The corresponding figures for 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 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.

Council continues to support a presence at major international range-related events in an effort to grow the membership, but this has not resulted in an increased overseas membership.

The majority (97%) of members and subscribers come from Australia, with about 50% of members coming from Queensland and New South Wales. There were 7 international members, compared to 14 at the same time 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 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 24 landholder addresses amongst its members.

Subscription rates for those subscribers managed by the Society remained unchanged for 2013 (\$100 for Full Members resident in Australia). However, 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 90 CSIRO subscribers for the last Newsletter of 2013.

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

5. Financial Report – Peter Marin

The financial affairs of the Society remain on a strong footing with a loss from ordinary activities of \$20,427 (2012: profit of \$3,436) and total equity/accumulated surplus of \$200,691 (2012: \$221,118).

The Society’s total equity is \$200,691 which is considered adequate to cover any liabilities.

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.

Richard Silcock moved that the Financial Report for the year ending 31 December 2012 be accepted. Seconded: Graeme Tupper, Carried.

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: John Taylor, Seconded: Carolyn Ireland, Carried.

6. General business

There was no general business.

7. Close meeting

The President closed the meeting at 5.20 pm (EST).