



The Australian Rangeland Society

Out of Session Council meeting No. 218 – 11 August 2011

MINUTES

4pm Queensland Time by Teleconference

1. **Present:** John Taylor, Peter Marin, Carolyn Ireland, Graeme Tupper, Larissa Lauder, Kate Masters, Annabel Walsh
Apologies: Ben Forsyth,
2. **Minutes of previous meeting**
Minutes approved for Council Meeting 217, 28 July 2011 Moved/Graeme, Seconded/Annabel, Carried.
3. **Business arising from the minutes** This meeting was held to seek information from Finance and Audit Officer Peter Marin and develop responses/strategies regarding the following matters. Peter took us through the items:
 - **Current financial position and trends:**
Peter – There has been a decline in net income (loss) over the past 4 years [2007 - \$329.89, 2008 - \$59,810.61, 2009 - \$20,165.92, 2010 – (\$8,068.59), First half 2011 – (\$33,701.59)]. Peter took over in 2008. Loss for First half of 2011 year looks bad; however we have had some high expenses. These include paying two years worth of honoraria early in the year – (approximately \$12,000), Travel Grants approximately \$6,000, Prepayment of \$4,000 to Kununurra Conference, a new computer for Subscriptions Manager \$1,868, late lodgment of GST \$550, extra accounting fees around \$1,200.

Membership fees this year are approximately \$17,000 which is less than previous years, particularly conference years. Average is around \$20,000 for non-conference years.

Graeme – website renewals have not worked very well. People who change email addresses often may also be missed. Graeme is going to issue a paper invoice for every member next year. New members, who join at the conference, pay for 15 months in advance, so do not “pay” in the next year. In spite of this we still have a drop in membership.

Peter – we generate interest of about \$10,000 per year. We have had an “abnormal year”. Large profits from conferences are **not** the norm e.g. Renmark and Charters Towers. As he remembers we started in 2008 with about \$200,000 so we are not doing too badly.

Graeme – it is thus important to have a good reserve.

Annabel – many of these expenses will not occur in future years.

Peter – strategies: need to keep existing and encourage new members. Use some of the reserves to do a survey of current and past members.

John – Asked that Peter provide a consolidated list of the abnormal items for this financial year that can be inserted in the RMN.

Council noted the abnormal items and will review items like Honoraria at the appropriate time.

- ***Item from AGM: Separation of Treasurer/Finance and Audit Officer Roles, and the need for an independent bookkeeper.***

Peter - We have an independent auditor so the roles are actually separate.

Carolyn - Peter gets an Honorarium – as a Director he should not get one. It is proposed that we get a bookkeeper who is paid.

Peter - Auditor can provide a bookkeeper. Bookkeeper should be in the same state as the Treasurer. Peter to get a quote. Carolyn to see if she can find anyone.

Council agreed that this was the best course to take.

- ***Bourke Conference Final Report***

\$16,000 left in the bank account when the bank account was handed back. Report states that total profit was approximately \$26,000. We are due to get about \$2,000 back in GST.

John: 1) Council notes there is a discrepancy. 2) Are there any lessons that we have learned? – yes, we are keeping a much closer eye on the Kununurra Conference and we require updated budgets – both of these to be overseen by Larissa and Peter. John to convey this to Larissa. 3) Is Council ready to accept the report? Moved/Carolyn, Seconded/Kate, Carried.

Council recorded its appreciation of Russell Grant, Natalie Bramble and the local Organising Committee of the Bourke Conference.

- ***Is there a need to raise Membership Fees***

We have lost membership income but if we up the fees we may lose members. Look at ways to find out what our members want.

Graeme – we need to do a survey of members to find out what members think. We have made the decision not to put up membership fees. Maybe look at this again next year.

Annabel – we should send out a survey prior to next call for membership fees. Or a questionnaire in the newsletter.

John – the issue is maintaining and growing the membership, not so much about fees. He suggested that we conduct a survey of members current and past, in a mailout and an electronic version. Explore fees, value for dollar and explore if there are other ways that we can better serve the members. Annabel – we could put something in the Farm

Journal. Graeme – there are many other ways we can advertise. Annabel suggested articles rather than advertisements.

Council to initiate a survey. Moved/Annabel, Seconded/Graeme, Carried. John to approach Larissa to draft a questionnaire (with John's assistance) for the next meeting on 22 September.

Action: Council members to list potential sources (including date of next copy deadline, editor and cost) for articles, advertorials and advertisements in their respective states, for the next Council meeting on 22 September.

- **Item from AGM: Strategy to use Cash Reserves**

John – We need to be a bit cautious given the up and down nature of our business. We are meant to be a not for profit.

Action: to conduct the survey mentioned above and address the specific questions about the cash reserves. We need to hear what the members think. Should give us a good idea about what sort of financial position we should maintain.

John thanked Peter for making his time available at short notice.

4 Other business

- Change signatures for the conference account to allow WA Organising Committee to use the account.

Council moved a motion that Sandra van Vreeswyk, Don Burnside and Ray Bird be added as signatories to the account and that Peter Marin remain as a signatory. Also that Russell Grant, Daryl Green and Natalie Bramble be removed as signatories to the account. Moved/Carolyn, Seconded/Annabel, Carried.

5 Next meeting

The next meeting of Council will be held by teleconference on 22 September 2011 at 4 pm Queensland Time.

The meeting closed at 5.45 pm