



Council meeting No. 249

MINUTES

6 pm QLD Time – Wednesday 2 December 2015 by Teleconference

1. **Present:** David Phelps (Chair), Don Burnside, Carol Ireland, Dionne Walsh, Andrew Ash, Gus Whyte
Apologies: Megan Munchenberg, Cathy Waters
2. **Minutes of the previous meeting:** The Minutes of Council Meeting 248 on Tuesday 6 October 2015 held by teleconference were approved. Moved: Dionne, Seconded: Gus, Carried
3. **Business arising from the minutes:**
 - A. Strategic Plan (David). The latest version of the SWOT Matrix was circulated to the new Council. More Weaknesses and Threats than Strengths and Opportunities.
Action: All members of Council to study the document and see if there are more Strengths and Opportunities and Strategies.
Action: Council to have a look at other Societies regarding membership numbers and activities.
 - B. Progress on Council Skills Audit (Carol). The Audit of Council Skills has been completed, circulated to Council and filed by the Secretary for future reference. **Item closed.**
 - C. Alice Springs 2015 Conference. (David and Don). David circulated a draft of his letter of thanks to The Organising Committee. Council approved this letter. **Item closed.**
Action: Send edits to David and he will send the letter.
 - D. Report on Rangelands Australia Sub-Committee findings (David and Dionne)
Dionne and David have reported to the members the outcomes of the report most probably in the RMN. **Item closed.**
Action: Circulate to Council for comment and send to RMN
 - E. South Australian bid for the 2017 Conference. The ARS Conference Proposal Template has been completed by the 2017 Organising Committee (2017 OC) and sent to Council for approval. The 2017 OC has also sent out tenders for the PCO to 4 possible bidders. The next meeting of the 2017 OC is scheduled for Saturday 5 December. Don reported that things are travelling well. A Program Committee has yet to be set up. Logistics etc look fine.
Moved: That the Conference Proposal be approved. **Moved:** David, **Seconded:** Gus, **Carried.**
Action: Convey approval to the Organising Committee
Action: Don/Carol to convey that a Program Committee needs to be set up soon
Action: Don/Carol to suggest the Council need a Schedule and Milestones – a timeline.
Action: Don/ Carol suggest a landholders day, Gus happy to give advice
Action: Carol/Don to keep Council informed of progress
 - F. Sandfire Resources Sponsorship (Ben). Deferred to next meeting.
Action: Ben to pursue this

G. Daryl Green's Motion at the AGM regarding the future of ACRIS and subsequent writing of a Ministerial (David and Daryl). Waiting for a report from the Federal Government before writing the letter. Key report unavailable for much longer. Deferred to next meeting.

Action: Cathy, Andrew and David to draft a letter requesting the report on ACRIS from the Federal Government via the Minister.

Action: Cathy and Andrew to assist David with the letter supporting the retention of ACRIS, Gary Bastin to be asked to look at the letter.

H. Fee structure for online access only to TRJ. Separate item on agenda. **Item closed**

I. Succession Planning for a new Secretary (Carol)

Carol retires at the AGM in 2017, but would like to hand over the role of Secretary well before that to enable a smooth transition.

Action: Don to write an advertisement for the November RMN.

J. Request from Gus Gintzburger to advertise his book collection.

Don has asked Noelene to advertise this in the November RMN. **Item closed.**

K. Charitable status for the Society (David)

Roll this over into the Strategic Plan. **Item closed.**

4. **General business:**

A. **Membership Issues – Graeme Tupper for Annabel Walsh**

Don Burnside circulated an analysis of ARS members and Institutional subscribers through CSIRO, leading to a summary of income and costs for TRJ and RMN for 2015, and a review of membership subscriptions, for consideration by Council. The Society only has 137 full fee-paying members, which is very concerning. It was unclear if income for Institutional subscriptions is shared between CSIRO and the ARS, and Council deemed it necessary to seek clarification.

Action: Don to send the table to Ron with a view to the Publications Committee investigating the costs/benefits of CSIRO Publishing.

Graeme and June are intending to undertake the field project (Travel Grant application deferred from last year due to Graeme's health problems) in April-May 2016 and seek Council's approval for this.

Action: Council approved this deferral, David to convey this.

B. **Finance – Don Burnside/Peter Marin – Don Burnside for Peter Marin**

The Profit and Loss Statement for January through September 2015 was tabled and Don went through this with Council. Additional costs this year for the website and other extraordinary expenses. We will probably make a loss of around \$20,000 for the year.

There is \$146,580.40 (September \$154,945.55) across all accounts with \$2,531.35 (September \$1,029.98) in the everyday account, \$708.19 (September \$1920.39) in the conference account, \$799.12 in the new Business Transaction Account (linked to the website) and \$142,541.74 (September \$151,995.18) in the online saver account.

Profit for the Conference was around \$11,000.

Moved : The Financial report by Don Burnside, **Seconded:** Andrew Ash, **Carried**

Action: Don/Carol to discuss the budget with the Organising Committee of the 2017 Conference with a view to cutting costs and making more of a profit.

Action: Don to do a budget for 2016

C. **Publications Committee – Report from the Chair, Ron Hacker**

The Publications Committee met on 18 November 2015. Matters for Council consideration arising from this meeting and subsequent events are:

1. THE RANGELAND JOURNAL

An active search for a replacement Editor-in-Chief has been pursued since shortly after Professor Milne's death. Two formal Expressions of Interest have been received to date but the PC considered that the search should be expanded beyond Associate Editors, Advisory Editors, Guest Editors and 197 former reviewers known to at least one member of the PC. A general call has now been made via Facebook and via email to an extended list of former reviewers (2,235). The deadline for submission of a preliminary Expression of Interest is 11 December. The assistance of CSIRO Publishing in facilitating email contact with former reviewers and guest editors has been invaluable.

The PC agreed in principle to support the publications in 2017 of a Special Issue tentatively entitled 'Pathways to climate change adaptation, ecosystem function and sustainable development in Mongolian steppe ecosystem'. This would build on previous special issue on climate change adaptation in Chinese grasslands. The proposer has offered to fund a visit to China by a nominated co-editor with English as the primary language to work on the manuscripts. This offer has been accepted in principle. Potential has been identified for three other Special Issues which will be subject to further investigation within the PC. There are currently no contracted Special Issues beyond 2016 so these developments are most welcome.

2. WEB SITE EDITOR

As foreshadowed in the last report to Council, the PC recommends the appointment of Ms Camilla Osborn as Web Site Editor with effect from 1 January 2016. The term of the current incumbent, Mr Russell Grant, expires on 31 December 2015 and he has indicated that he does not seek re-appointment. Ms Osborn's application is attached to the PC Report.

Recommendation 1:

That Council appoint Ms Camilla Osborn as Web Site Editor with effect from 1 January 2016.

Action: Council approved this recommendation

3. SOCIAL MEDIA FACILITIES AND SOCIAL MEDIA EDITOR

Ms Heidi Wright's contract for initial management of the Society's social media accounts terminates 4 December with the Final Report due 14 December. Policy documents drafted by Ms Wright for the operation of these accounts are still under consideration by the PC. Ms Amber Marshall, appointed as Social Media Editor (SME) with effect from 23 September 2015, has been collaborating with Ms Wright, taking over partial responsibility for management of the Facebook account. She will assume full responsibility for all accounts from 5 December 2015. The number of Facebook likes has been steadily rising (currently 453) and the Society appears to have built a firm foundation for its social media activity. The PC resolved that Ms Marshall should be provided with the draft versions of the social media policy documents even though these have yet to be finalised by the PC and signed off by Council.

Council has approved a role statement for the SME indicating that the line of responsibility is directly to the PC rather than to the Web Site Editor. However, the role statement does not indicate if the SME is an ex-officio member of the PC, as are the Web Site Editor and the RMN Editor. The PC resolved that the SME should be an ex-officio member of the Publications Committee.

Recommendation 2:

That council amend the Role Statement for the Social Media Editor to indicate that the appointee is an ex-officio member of the Publications Committee and communicate this to the SME.

Action: Council approved this recommendation

4. RANGE MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

The November RMN will include an obituary for John Milne written by Andrew Ash. Publication will be delayed until after the Council meeting on 2 December so that 2016 subscription rates

can be included in this issue. This will be the last newsletter to be published in hard copy.

5. EXTENSION OF APPOINTMENTS

At its last meeting Council agreed in principle to extend the appointments of 4 Associate Editors and all 10 Advisory Editors, and to confirm these appointments following advice from the Chair of the PC that the individuals were willing to continue. Three of the four Associate Editors have agreed to continue and one has elected to retire.

Eight of the 10 Advisory Editors have agreed to continue, one has elected to retire and no response has yet been received from another (possibly due to family illness). The PC will keep this latter situation under review and will in due course make recommendations for replacements. The individuals involved are listed, together with their contact addresses in the PC Report.

Recommendation 3:

That Council:

- confirm the appointments of those individuals willing to continue as Associate or Advisory Editors and advise the individuals accordingly;
- convey its appreciation to those individuals who have elected not to accept re-appointment.

Action: Council approved these recommendations

Action: David to send these emails/letters

6. ROLE STATEMENT FOR ADVISORY EDITORS

At present there is no role statement for Advisory Editors. A draft role statement approved by the PC is attached to the PC Report.

Recommendation 4:

That Council approve the draft Role Statement for Advisory Editors and distribute it to all Advisory Editors who have accepted re-appointment.

Action: Council approved this recommendation

Action: David to attach Role statements to emails

7. PROPOSAL FOR JOHN MILNE MEMORIAL RANGELAND JOURNAL LECTURE

The PC resolved to recommend to Council that the Rangeland Journal Lecture delivered at each subsequent Biennial Conference be re-named the John Milne Memorial Rangeland Journal Lecture. The PC considered that Dr Iain Gordon, as a close associate of Prof Milne, could be an appropriate first presenter but this is ultimately a matter for the Organising Committee of the next conference.

Recommendation 5:

That Council endorse the renaming of the Rangeland Journal Lecture delivered at Biennial Conference as 'The John Milne Memorial Rangeland Journal Lecture' and advise the Organising Committee of the next conference accordingly.

Action: Council approved this recommendation

Action: Don/Carol to convey this to the Organising Committee and also David to inform Netta

Action: David to convey all of Council's decisions to Ron Hacker

5. New business:

A. Subscription Costs for 2015-2016 (Don, David and Andrew)

No substantial rise in fees for many years., we have no concessional membership fees which other Society's do. Don suggested about a 25% rise in fees. There should be differences between electronic access and others. Possibilities for life or multi-year memberships exist. Concessional category is new should be over 65 and not working; it is about retaining members beyond retirement. What are company memberships and do we need them? Changes were suggested to Don. **Please see Appendix 1 for details.**

Moved: by Carol that the new rates be approved, **Seconded:** Don, **Carried**

Action: Don to send paper to Noelene for publication in RMN

Action: Don to pursue life or multi-year memberships

B. Applications for Awards:

a. Ravinesh Deo

Council determined that whilst the topic was of significance to rangeland management, the narrow scope of the proposed research did not justify an ARS travel grant. The case presented to Council was not compelling.. **Application not supported.**

Action: Reject the application and David to inform the applicant

b. Kate Forrest

Council determined that the applicant made a strong case and the subject area is interesting and timely. Attendance at the IRC in 2016 will benefit both the applicant and the Society. **Application supported for \$2,000.**

Action: Approve the application and David to write a letter

c. Sarah McDonald

Council determined that the applicant made a strong case, especially as a Student proposal. Council noted its support of students travelling to International conferences as it has a huge impact on their learning, especially when also presenting a paper. **Application supported for \$2,000.**

Action: Approve the application and David to write a letter

d. John Gavin

Council determined that the applicant made a solid case that by attending the IRC in 2016 there will be benefits to both the applicant and the Society through shared knowledge. **Application supported for \$2,000.**

Action: Approve the application and David to write a letter

C. Report from the 1st Rangeland Carbon Conference for noting (Gus). **Item closed.**

1. **6. Correspondence**

INCOMING

07-Oct-14	Email	Paul Beaton	Can now begin to process new memberships online
07-Oct-15	Email	Jutta Werner	Confirmation that her new membership application worked
15-Oct-15	Email	Don Burnside/Peter Marin	Email traffic re banking arrangements for the ARS
16-Oct-15	Email	John Gavin	Draft Tender Documents for PCO at 2017 Conference
04-Nov-15	Email	Jodie Gregg-Smith	2017 Conference Proposal
18-Nov-15	Email	Ravinesh Deo	Application for Travel Grant
20-Nov-15	Email	Gus Whyte	Report from 1st Rangeland Carbon Conference
26-Nov-15	Email	Kate Forrest	Application for Travel Grant
28-Nov-15	Email	Patrick Beck	Seeking help with citation of a 2015 Conference paper
29-Nov-15	Email	Sarah McDonald	Application for Travel Grant
30-Nov-15	Email	John Gavin	Application for Travel Grant

OUTGOING

15-Oct-15	Email	Don Burnside/Peter Marin	Email traffic re banking arrangements for the ARS
26-Nov-15	Email	Heidi Groffen	Advertisement in RMN for Social Media

7. Next Meeting

The next Council Meeting will be by Teleconference on 3 February 2016 at 6 pm QLD time.

Meeting closed at 8.25 pm

APPENDIX 1:

Subscription costs for 2016

Introduction

At Council Meeting 248 (6 October 2015), a request was made for a recommendation from the Chair of the Publications Committee regarding setting a subscription rate for members who opt to have access to an electronic copy of *The Rangeland Journal* (TRJ) instead of a hard copy. This was discussed with Ron Hacker and Andrew Ash by email exchange. After those discussions, Don Burnside, David Phelps and Andrew Ash have prepared this submission for Council consideration.

Background and considerations

The introduction of a new membership category provides the opportunity for an overhaul of the current membership categories and subscription rates. The following points are relevant.

Over the last year:

- ARS has increased yearly TRJ issues from 4 to 6, resulting in increased costs to the Society, and increased services to members.
- The Range Management Newsletter (RMN) is now only available in electronic form, but all back issues are available as a resource via the website.
- The website has been substantially upgraded, a Facebook Page has been established, a Social Media Editor appointed, and 20 per cent savings on CSIRO books negotiated.
- The biennial income from conferences is reducing, mainly due to the difficulty in attracting large sponsorships. This situation is likely to continue.
- There has been no significant increase in membership fees for some years. The standard fee in 2012-13 was \$100, which is the same as the current membership cost.
- ARS does not offer a concessional membership – others do (see ESA <https://www.ecolsoc.org.au/member-services/member-benefits>)
- ESA offers five year, fifteen year and life memberships. ARS should consider these options as a means of achieving a degree of future financial security.
- ESA fees are GST incl. There is no statement on the ARS website about whether the fees are incl or excl of GST (it is GST incl).

Suggestions

Given recent developments in the ARS' offerings, increased costs for normal operations and reduced income from conferences, an increase in membership fees is justified. An introduction of a concessional category aligns ARS with other professional societies. The suggested new fee structure is shown on the next page. The new fees are based on an approximate 25 per cent increase, rounded to the nearest \$5.

Some comments ..

- The existing standard fee will be retained, but will allow access to TRJ electronically only. Consideration was given to reducing this fee, but 'going backwards' may not be in the best interest of society finances.
- The cost of producing TRJ is approximately \$40 per year per member. However, it may be too much to increase standard membership with hard copy to \$140 in one year – this can be done over two to three years, with the projected increase communicated to the membership.
- For concessional members (i.e. fully retired and over 65 years) the new fees are about the same as existing fees. It is hoped this will encourage members in this category to continue their membership.
- For the sake of simplicity, concessional rates are set at the same rate as student rates.
- For companies/ institutional members, the new category of electronic access to TRJ and RMN replaces the existing RMN only.

- For international subscribers, membership costs for electronic access only can be the same as for Australian members (actually it is slightly larger given that there is no GST attached to international subscribers).
- If Council agrees, a proposal for multiple-year, and life-memberships can be prepared for rolling out in 2017.
- The 2016 Subscription Renewal Notice will need to be accompanied by a letter from the Council explaining the rationale for the changes to 2016 subscriptions and projected future changes.

Subscription rates for 2016

Category	Australian (incl GST)*			International (no GST)*		
	Current	2016	Percentage increase	Current	2016	Percentage increase
Standard						
Standard with hard-copy TRJ and e-RMN	\$100	\$125	25%	\$125	\$155	24%
Standard with e-TRJ and e-RMN	Not offered	\$100	-	Not offered	\$100	-
Standard with e-RMN only	\$60	\$75	25%	\$70	\$75	7%
Concessional**						
Concessional with hard-copy TRJ and e-RMN**	Not offered	\$110	-	Not offered	\$135	-
Concessional with e-TRJ and e-RMN**	Not offered	\$90	-	Not offered	\$90	-
Concessional with e-RMN only	Not offered	\$65	-	Not offered	\$65	-
Student						
Student with hard copy TRJ and e-RMN	\$80	\$100	25%	\$100	\$125	25%
Student with e-TRJ and e-RMN	Not offered	\$80	-	Not offered	\$80	-
Student: e-RMN only	\$45	\$55	22%	\$50	\$55	10%
Company						
Company with hard copy TRJ and e-RMN	\$135	\$165	22%	\$165	\$205	24%
Company with e-TRJ and e-RMN (not offered in membership category but shown in publisher's report for institutions)	Not offered, but provided by publisher at institutional rate	\$120	-	Not offered	\$120	-
Company with e-RMN only	\$75	Not offered	-	\$90	Not offered	-

* Note – these rates are for payment before 1 April 2016. Payments made after that date will need to add \$15 for all categories.

** - a concessional rate can apply to a person who is 65 yo or more and who is not employed.