



*The Australian Rangeland Society*

## **MINUTES PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING**

Wednesday 15 March 2017

6.00 pm Australian Eastern Daylight Time  
By Teleconference

Ron Hacker opened the meeting and welcomed members at 6.00 pm.

1. **Present:** Ron Hacker (Chair), Jocelyn Davies, Paul Novelly, Andrew Ash, Wal Whalley, Noelene Duckett (left at 6.30 pm), Camilla Osborn (joined at 6.10 pm)
2. **Apologies:** David Eldridge, Amber Marshall, Don Burnside, Carol Ireland (Minutes Secretary)
3. **Additional items for general business:**  
Nil

4. **Minutes of the previous meeting:**

Motion: That the minutes of the Publications Committee meeting held by teleconference on 11 January 2017 be accepted as circulated.

Moved: Paul Novelly;  
Seconded: Andrew Ash  
Carried.

5. **Matters arising from previous minutes** (not listed as separate agenda items):  
No matters arising.

6. **Range Management Newsletter**

Noelene Duckett advised that the March 2017 issue was activated online today. It is a large issue containing matters of ARS business, a number of research articles, profiles of ARS student prize winners from the IRC, and a challenging article from the President.

The RMN archives are now all online, including all issues of the RMN's predecessor the Range Assessment Newsletter dating from 1974. Noelene will construct a master list of articles so that specific articles can be readily discovered and accessed. There is still an issue with the presentation of the chronological sequence on the right hand panel of the website page. Noelene will talk to Paul Beaton (Fat Beehive) to resolve this issue.

**Action:** Noelene Duckett to liaise with Paul Beaton to resolve side-panel formatting issues with the RMN archive.

7. **The Rangeland Journal**

7.1. Report from Editor-in-Chief

Six issues were distributed for 2016. The first issue of 2017 has been posted out. It ran to 101 pages. Six papers have so far been accepted and posted 'on-line early' for issue two,

amounting to about 72 pages. A further three are 'just accepted' so issue 2 is now complete.

Papers still come in batches from CSIRO Publishing which leads to peaks in the workflow. CSIRO Publishing (particularly Leanne Hamilton) has been very helpful recently in resolving a couple of important issues. These related to (a) permission to publish the data included in a manuscript and (b) a persistent author who has ignored the Editor-in-Chief's advice. The Production Editor (Dr Saumitra Banerjee) has indicated that he would prefer the Special Issues planned for 2017 to be published as numbers 4 and 6, and not as consecutive issues.

## 7.2. Special Issues

Mongolian Plateau. Jocelyn Davies reported that the editorial process is proving slow and difficult. Most papers will probably require 3-4 rounds of revision. While first round reviews, mostly by Chinese reviewers, have been reasonable the second round reviews have been superficial and many science issues remain which are being picked up during the English editing by both Jocelyn and Ron Hacker. A couple of papers are close to acceptance but others have a long way to go. Prof. Gao has offered to pay for the English editing given the amount of time that this is requiring. The synthesis paper will be important in drawing out the management and social implications of the results presented. Jocelyn will be travelling in April and will only be able to get back to the papers in May-June.

After some discussion of the dates at which publication of the 2017 special issues could be achieved it was agreed that Jocelyn would aim to have this issue finalised by the end of August, for publication as Issue 4. However this may not prove feasible and CSIRO Publishing need to be advised that while this is the intention the timing may slip.

**Action:** Paul Novelly to advise Saumitra Banerjee that the aim is to publish the Mongolian Plateau Special Issue as number 4 of 2017 but the timing may slip given the editorial difficulties, in which case it may not be possible to avoid publishing two consecutive Special Issues.

Restore, Regenerate, Revegetate. Wal Whalley advised that 14 papers have been chosen from the plenary and keynote presentations and that the authors concerned have agreed to develop their presentations for publication. Publication in lieu of the Mongolian Plateau Special Issue as number 4 of 2017 is not feasible. The plan is to publish as number 5 or number 6.

Northern Development. Andrew Ash advised that plans for this issue are progressing steadily with 14 topics and 10 potential authors identified. Seven authors have been approached with five positive responses to date. Andrew will follow up with Mark Coffey, Director of the Office of Northern Australia, re. funding.

Port Augusta Biennial Conference. Ron Hacker has advised Don Burnside that the conference Organising Committee should put a proposal to the Publications Committee to produce this volume, indicating the proposed Guest Editor(s). Don and Ron developed a short list of potential Guest Editors from a number already identified by the Committee. Don will approach the first of these to determine their interest, and desire for a co-editor(s), before proceeding to others on the list.

## 7.3. Publishers Annual Report for 2016

The annual report had been circulated to members. The report is generally optimistic showing a small increase in the Impact Factor (from 1.096 to 1.194) but with prospects for increasing the IF to >2. The two Special Issue published in 2016, particularly the feral camel project issue, are being widely cited. Three papers from this issue have received Highly Cited Paper awards from Web of Science. This should increase the Impact Factor for 2017 and 2018. Papers included in the journals first 'virtual issue' were downloaded at

five times the rate of other papers. The importance for the journal's profile of high quality Special Issues and virtual Issues on particular themes was emphasized.

#### 7.4. Associate and Advisory Editors

The CV of Ann Waters-Beyer had been distributed to members. Ann has indicated that she would accept an appointment as an Associate Editor. At its last meeting the PC agreed that this need not affect her current appointment as an Advisory Editor.

**Motion:** That the Publications Committee recommend to Council the appointment of Dr Ann Waters-Beyer as an Associate Editor

Moved: Wal Whalley

Seconded: Jocelyn Davies

Carried.

**Action:** Ron Hacker to forward this recommendation to Council and request that the President advise Dr Waters-Beyer of her appointment for the usual three year term and on the usual conditions.

A number of other individuals had been suggested by Advisory Editors as potential Advisory or Associate Editors. After discussion the PC decided not to proceed with any of these suggestions.

#### 7.5. New publishing contract

The three tenders received, and summaries of them prepared by Ron Hacker, had been circulated to members. Don Burnside will undertake some sensitivity analysis of the financial proposals. Ron Hacker requested comment from PC members by Friday 24 March after which the evaluation process will move into the sub-committee stage. A decision should be feasible by the end of April although detailed negotiations with the successful tenderer will be required after that.

**Action:** Members of PC wishing to comment on the publishing tenders (including items that require clarification with the tenderers) to return comments to Ron Hacker by COB Friday 24 March.

### 8. ARS web site

Camilla Osborn reported that the Bee Keeper content management system is easy to use and that the staff of FatBeehive are very helpful when needed. The site is currently serving as the web portal for the 19<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference, the first conference for which this capacity has been used.

So far only basic information on the conference has been posted but it is expected that more detailed information and registration facilities will be posted soon. The conference page of the overall site is being managed by the conference organisers. News stories are posted as available and several advertisements have been run. The site is currently, up to date in terms of Abstracts from the current issue of TRJ, and Council and PC minutes.

The Resources page is currently being updated and is on the way to becoming a one stop shop for links to rangeland-related websites. A short description of each organisation is being added to assist navigation. There are still many websites missing, particularly in Queensland, WA and NSW, so links to these sites and brief information about the organisations would be welcome.

**Action:** All PC members to provide Camilla with links to rangeland organisations, and brief descriptive material, as and when possible.

The next major project for web development will be to complete the Biennial Conference archives. Most of the conference proceedings and/or individual papers are already available either from the ARS site or the Global Rangelands site but there are some gaps. Ideally we

would like to have both the full conference proceedings (single file) and the individual papers all on the ARS site. We are currently seeking advice from Ken Hodgkinson to determine if the gaps have been covered by the material scanned at University of Arizona (by the Global Rangelands project) and returned prior to the closure of the old web site.

## 9. Social Media

Amber Marshall was an apology for the meeting but had submitted a detailed written report for the quarter to the end of February 2017. The Society's reach on social media is continuing to grow steadily with 683 Facebook likes and 749 followers on Twitter. (Instagram does not provide similar statistics). The tone of all feedback reflects a positive sentiment. On average three Facebook posts have been made each week. A total of 30 tweets was posted over the December-February period. Our social media presence extends well beyond Society membership, as the above figures indicate. The top post on Facebook during the period (Notice of ARS study and travel grants) reached 1,466 individuals; the second most popular post (Appointment of Margaret Friedel as a Fellow) reached 1,444 individuals. The arrangement with Wright Social to provide one topical Facebook post per week (providing a basis for at least one Twitter post per week) is working well and is partially responsible for the favorable position reported.

It was noted that the material posted on social media tends to be biased towards conservation/biodiversity topics and that a better balance of material would be desirable (e.g. more posts with a pastoral, mining or tourism theme).

**Action:** Ron Hacker to discuss the balance of social media content with Amber Marshall.

## 10. General Business

- 10.1. Vacancies on the Publications Committee (*vice* Steve Blake and Ken Hodgkinson)  
Dr Jennifer Silcock has indicated to Ron Hacker that she would be willing to accept an appointment to the PC. Her CV had been circulated to members. Both Robyn Cowley and Dionne Walsh were also approach but declined, at least at the present time.

**Motion:** That the Publications Committee recommend to Council the appointment of Dr Jennifer Silcock to the Publications Committee.

Moved: Wal Whalley

Seconded: Paul Novelly

Carried

**Action:** Ron Hacker to forward this recommendation to Council and request that the President advise Dr Silcock of her appointment for the usual three year term and on the usual conditions.

Ron Hacker noted that the appointment of Dr Silcock would still leave one vacancy on the PC.

- 10.2. Annual report

Ron Hacker noted that Don Burnside has requested that the PC's contribution to the annual report be received by the end of March. Noelene has provided a section for RMN; Camilla will add some statistics from Fat Beehive to her report (above) and submit; Amber will need to provide a paragraph for social media. All need to be with Ron Hacker by 22 March.

## 11. Date of future meetings if required (two weeks before Council Meetings)

May 3 (if required prior to AGM);

July 12 (TBC);

September 13 (TBC);

November 15 (TBC).

The May meeting will be cancelled if not required as the AGM will not deal with a report from the PC. Later meetings will be confirmed when the dates of future Council meetings are known.

The meeting closed at 7.15 pm.