



The Australian Rangeland Society

MINUTES PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday 13 September 2017

6.00 pm Eastern Standard Time
By Teleconference

Ron Hacker opened the meeting and welcomed members at 6.04 pm.

1. **Present:** Ron Hacker (Chair), Paul Novelly, Jen Silcock, Wal Whalley, Amber Marshall, Noelene Duckett, Don Burnside, Jocelyn Davies (after 7.00 pm)
2. **Apologies:** Andrew Ash, David Eldridge, Camilla Osborn
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 12 July be accepted as circulated.

Moved: Don Burnside;
Seconded: Paul Novelly
Carried.

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

6. **The Rangeland Journal**

6.1. Report from Editor-in-Chief

Three issues (out of planned 6) published so far in 2017. There are 4-5 papers ready for Issue 4, a further 18 papers are in various stages of progress to acceptance. The number of papers submitted is starting to increase, although some papers are of lower quality than most others in recent times (e.g. issues of replication, lack of logic etc.).

Paul is concerned about the overdue timelines between submission and acceptance, which currently range from 0-104 days overdue. Problem is slow or non-response from referees. This needs to be discussed with Jenny Foster (CSIRO Publishing) with the aim of setting up some thresholds. Result is that while we have plenty of papers potentially available for issue 4 it is not clear when a sufficient number will be accepted.

We need to decided policy for handling book reviews, given that Paul has received requests to review books, and one book review has been submitted. CSIRO Publishing has suggested that an Associate Editor dedicated to book reviews might be useful. Should these be in the Journal or in RMN? Wal indicated that John Milne had previously referred book reviews to RMN when there were plenty of papers for TRJ. Noelene indicated that book reviews in RMN had ceased due to the difficulty of soliciting volunteer reviewers. If we are interested in publishing book reviews, should it be a 'passive' (waiting for submissions) or 'active' (soliciting reviews) process? The Committee agreed that book reviews would in principle be acceptable in TRJ if space is available.

Action: Paul to prepare short paper scoping issues with having book reviews in the Journal for discussion at Port Augusta

6.2. Special Issues

6.2.1 Mongolian Plateau. Jocelyn anticipates having sufficient papers for the issue accepted by the end of October 2017. A further 3-4 papers will not be accepted. Introductory paper and final synthesis paper, to be written by Prof. Gao, are still to be written, and this needs to be progressed. Jocelyn expressed thanks to Ron, Wal and Saumitra Banerjee (CSIRO Publishing) for their assistance with the issue.

6.2.2 Restore, Regenerate, Revegetate (RRR). This will be a good-sized issue even though a couple of papers have been withdrawn. It is likely to be published as issue No 6 (2017) in January 2018. Papers that will not be included in the special issue will be reviewed for their suitability to be published in future 'normal' issues. Wal advised that the video of the presentation by Tom Jones, which was designated as a Rangeland Journal Lecture, is currently being edited and will soon be available for posting on the web site.

6.2.3 Northern Development. A proposal has been prepared by Andrew Ash and has been circulated to the Committee, for consideration either out-of-session, or at Port Augusta.

6.2.4 Port Augusta Biennial Conference: Still need to decide a lead editor for the Special Issue and the Organising Committee needs to submit a proposal to the Publications Committee. Don has offered to provide support.

Action: PC members to identify possible lead editor while at the Port Augusta Conference.

Action: Don to arrange for the videoing of the John Milne Memorial Rangeland Journal Lecture

6.3. Status of Publishing Contract

The completed draft contract has been sent to CSIRO Publishing who have acknowledged receipt but not provided feedback. The draft contract will be discussed at Port Augusta with Jenny Foster. This will need to involve David Phelps, Ron and Don.

6.4 Progress with Volume 39 (2017)

After reviewing progress with the normal and special issues, Ron raised concerns about whether we can deliver 6 issues for 2017, given:

- Issue 4 has only 4-5 papers ready for publication
- Issue 5, the Mongolian Special Issue, has experienced considerable delays
- Issue 6, RRR, is progressing satisfactorily but will probably not be published until January 2018.

Jenny Foster has suggested combining Issues 4 and 5, by including some 'normal' papers with the Mongolian papers. This has been done before, and there are some additional Chinese papers that could be used. This is an option to allow us to deal with the current slow turnaround of manuscripts and our obligation to deliver 6 issues per year to our subscribers.

Action: Jocelyn to canvass possibility with the Chinese sponsors of combining Issues 4 and 5, to include the Mongolian papers (separately identified) and 3-4 volunteered papers.

7. Range Management Newsletter

The most recent RMN went out in July 2017. PC members commented favorably on the content. The next issue will be in November 2017.

8. ARS web site

8.1. No report available from the Editor. Don reported that the website is supporting conference activities well.

8.2. Range Management Newsletter Index

Noelene is working on an index for the archived RMNs that will allow searching for author and title. This can be done by entering details of articles in an Excel spreadsheet which will also contain a link to the pdf of the article. Noelene expects to complete the index in the next few weeks.

8.4 Biennial Conference Proceedings

This is a work in progress – the aim is to have the more recent conferences uploaded to the website as a priority i.e. gaps will be filled in reverse chronological order. Advice has been sought from Fat Beehive regarding the best way to post papers to ensure that the proceedings are searchable by author and title, given that the way Margaret Friedel loaded the papers for the 2015 Alice Springs conference is different to the way papers for the two previous conferences were loaded by Russell Grant.

9. Social Media

9.1. Social Media Report

Amber spoke to her written report. Good progress is being made, but we need to look at Instagram in particular from a strategic perspective. We need more photos/videos that are ARS-centric rather than just posting photos that are sourced elsewhere. Amber suggested that rangeland NRM groups might be a source of suitable material. This can be discussed with Kate Forrest at the Conference. Jen Silcock volunteered to provide photos and captions from her field work (photos from the Night Parrot project would be particularly interesting).

Action: Amber to provide Jen with advice on what sort of material would be useful.

Amber suggested that our following on Facebook and Twitter might be plateauing and that Council should consider setting aside an amount each year (say \$500) to fund 'paid' posts. This allows posts to be 'boosted' by directing them to a nominated demographic. Amber referred to the Northern Gulf NRM Group that has used paid posts to grow their membership.

Action: Amber to send details to Ron on how boosting our social media might occur.

9.2. Appointment of a new Social Media Editor

Amber has indicated her wish to resign as soon as possible after the conference due to work and family commitments. An advertisement for the role is on the website but no response has so far been received. Need to promote this opportunity/ at the conference.

(Note: Since the meeting an expression of interest in this role has been received from Ms. Jodie Ward who will submit a formal expression of interest and CV)

9.3. Social Media services at the Port Augusta Conference

Cherie Gerlach (Senior Communications Officer, SAAL) has been asked by Lisa Pearson (PCO) to do social media (i.e. make posts on behalf of ARS) during the Port Augusta Conference. It was agreed that she be given editorial rights to the ARS social media accounts during the conference, but not full administrative rights. Amber will provide oversight.

Motion: That the PC approves the provision of editorial rights to the ARS social media accounts to Cherie Gerlach for the purpose of making social media posts during the Port Augusta Conference.

Moved: Amber Marshall

Seconded: Wal Whalley

Carried.

Action: Amber to arrange for Cherie to have editorial rights to ARS social media during the conference

10. General Business

10.1. Vacancy on the Publications Committee

Not an urgent matter, but Ron asked PC members to give some thought to who might be able to join the Committee.

10.2. Issues to be discussed in the face-to-face meeting at Port Augusta

- Timeframes for the processing of manuscripts submitted to the Journal (i.e. between submission and final acceptance)

- How to handle solicited or volunteered requests for book reviews (paper to be prepared by Paul Novelly)
- Progress with the CSIRO Publishing contract
- Recruiting a secretary for the PC
- Copyright issues related to people posting papers on Research Gate and similar sites
- Northern Development Special issue (see 6.2.3 above)
- Topics for future special issues

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

September 25 – 8.00 pm, SAAL Meeting room, Port Augusta Railway Station (note this is the same venue as the Mayoral Reception). Any Associate or Advisory Editors in Port Augusta for the conference will be welcome to attend. Jenny Foster, CSIRO Publishing, will attend.

Action: Paul to invite Associate and Advisory Editors to attend the PC meeting.

September 27 (Joint meeting with Council at Port Augusta conference)

November 22.

The meeting closed at 7.20 pm.