

THE AUSTRALIAN RANGELAND SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

**Meeting on Wednesday, 22 November, 2017
By teleconference
6.00 pm Australian Eastern Daylight Time (NSW time)**

MINUTES

Ron Hacker opened the meeting and welcomed members at 6.01 pm. A particular welcome was extended to Jodie Ward, attending her first Publications Committee meeting as newly-appointed Social Media Editor.

1. **Present:** Ron Hacker (Chair), Andrew Ash (until 7.50 pm), Don Burnside, Paul Novelly, Wal Whalley, Jodie Ward, Jocelyn Davies, Noelene Duckett (until 7.00 pm), Amber Marshall, David Eldridge

2. **Apologies:** Jen Silcock

3. **Additional items for general business:**
Potential for production of a book sponsored by the Society

4. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

Motion: That the minutes of the Publications Committee meeting held by teleconference on 13 September 2017 be accepted as circulated

Moved: Wal Whalley
Seconded Don Burnside
Carried

5. **Matters arising from previous minutes** (not listed as separate agenda items)
Item 6.1. Paul Novelly raised the issue of slow responses by some Associate Editors (AEs) of *The Rangeland Journal* leading to some unacceptable delays between submission and acceptance. It was agreed that Paul should approach three individuals to determine if they wished to continue as AEs. In the case of two of these individuals an offer could be made for them to continue as Advisory Editors if they wished to terminate their role as AEs.

Action: Paul Novelly to contact Associate Editors to resolve issues of slow turnaround and offer the opportunity to continue as Advisory Editors as appropriate

6. **The Rangeland Journal**

6.1. Report from Editor in Chief

Issue 4 is now out. Ten manuscripts have been received so far in November, representing an increase in the recent rate of submissions. So far in 2017 92 manuscripts have been received, independent of Special Issues. With several weeks still to go the total number of manuscripts received, including special issues, should be close to the expected figure of about 125 for the year. The global distribution of the 92 manuscripts received to date is: 32% from China; 30% Middle East; 4% Africa; 15% Americas; 2% US; 2% Europe, 15% Australia. No Australian manuscript has been received since mid-September.

6.2. *Special issues*

6.2.1. Mongolian plateau

Status of papers: 4 accepted, 6 close to acceptance, 2 struggling, 1 recommended to be withdrawn. The Introduction and synthesis papers have not yet been written. Date of publication is uncertain.

6.2.2. Restore, Regenerate, Revegetate

The issue will comprise 12 papers plus an editorial. Status of papers: 10 accepted, 1 minor revision, 1 due back from the reviewers. Four papers are already appearing as highly read. On track for publication in January, possibly before the Mongolian issue.

6.2.3. Northern development

Andrew had circulated a written report on progress before the meeting. Ian Watson will be co-editor. The issue could comprise 13 papers; 10 appear to be on track albeit a few will be slow, three are struggling. Publication is still expected in mid-2018. Andrew is able to receive a draft contract.

Action: Ron Hacker to prepare draft contract and forward to Andrew.

6.2.4. 2017 biennial conference proposal

The proposal circulated by Don Burnside for a Special Issue on the conference theme 'Transition to Transformation' was considered. All agreed that it was a good proposal and should be supported. Dr Russell Sinclair and Dr Martin Andrew will be co-editors with assistance as required from the Program Sub-Committee. Anticipated publication date is October 2018. To achieve this timeframe, invitations to authors need to be issued as soon as possible. All papers need to be submitted through ScholarOne.

Motion: That the Publications Committee accepts the proposal for the 2017 Biennial Conference special issue.

Moved: Don Burnside;

Seconded: Wal Whalley.

Carried.

6.2.5. Topics for future special issues

Ron Hacker suggested that a special issue on the Wambiana project might be timely and likely to attract funding. Paul Novelly indicated that many papers had already been published from this project. Andrew Ash thought any such Special Issue could include a couple of papers on the broader implications of the findings. The Publications Committee supported the concept in principle.

Action: Ron Hacker to contact Peter O'Reagain and determine if there is interest in pursuing this concept. .

6.3. *Status of CSIRO Publishing contract*

The draft contract has been returned from CSIRO and will be considered by Ron Hacker, Don Burnside and David Phelps.

6.4. *Appointment of Associate Editors*

The Publications Committee has agreed by an out-of-session vote to recommend the appointment of Prof. G. Metternicht as an Associate Editor.

A proposal to appoint Dr Steven Bray had been circulated by Paul Novelly before the meeting and received general support.

Motion: That the Publications Committee recommends to Council the appointment of Dr Steven Bray as an Associate Editor of *The Rangeland Journal*.

Moved: Paul Novelly;

Seconded: Wal Whalley.

Carried.

Action: Ron Hacker to recommend to Council that Prof. Metternicht and Dr Bray are appointed Associate Editors of *The Rangeland Journal*.

6.5. Policy on book reviews for TRJ

A discussion paper on the publication of book reviews in TRJ, and comments on that paper by Ron Hacker, had been circulated before the meeting. Ron Hacker advised that Jenny Foster of CSIRO Publishing had confirmed that book reviews do not count towards the journals Impact Factor and TRJ would not be disadvantaged in this respect by publishing them. Given this assurance the Committee accepted the policy on publication of book reviews proposed in Ron Hacker's comments, and resolved that this policy be recommended to Council. The policy is:

- Book reviews will be accepted for publication as a moral obligation to our readership.
- Reviews will be limited to two pages, and preferably less, with a maximum of two per issue.
- Publishers will be invited to submit potential books for review to the Editor-in-Chief who will determine if a book is acceptable for review in light of content, and the current volume of material available for publication. If acceptable the book will be forwarded to an appropriate Associate Editor who will arrange the review and act as the 'peer reviewer' of the submitted manuscript (i.e. no other 'review of the review' will be undertaken). The publisher may nominate potential reviewers. The final decision to publish will remain with the Editor-in-Chief.
- Reviews will be published at the Society's expense.
- Reviewers should be recompensed by being provided with two copies of the book by the publisher (one for annotation and a clean copy), and being given complimentary membership of the Society for one year. If already members their membership fee for the year should be refunded.
- The reviewer will be required to sign a Licence to Publish.
- A template or guidelines for assessment of reviews will be developed and provided to Associate Editors.
- Volunteered reviews will generally not be accepted but discretion may be exercised by the Editor-in-Chief in consultation with the Chair of PC.

Action:

- Ron Hacker to recommend the proposed policy on publication of book reviews to Council.
- Paul Novelly to develop guidelines for Associate Editors

6.6. Discussion papers in TRJ

Paul Novelly had circulated an email from (Associate and Advisory Editor) Ann Waters-Bayer raising the possibility of publishing discussion papers on topical issues in TRJ. Wal Whalley and Jen Silcock had circulated comment on this matter before the meeting, primarily in relation to the specific discussion issue proposed rather than the general issue of using TRJ as a discussion forum.

The committee considered that TRJ was not an appropriate venue for publication of pieces contributed as part of an ongoing discussion. Such discussions should occur

either in the RMN, which is probably not appropriate at this stage of its development for discussions that would attract international interest, or via the Society's Facebook page.

Paul Novelly will advise Ann Waters-Bayer that the Committee does not consider that publication of discussion pieces is appropriate for TRJ but would welcome such material for posting on the ARS Facebook page (where the ongoing discussion would be moderated by the Social Media Editor). As the specific topic proposed was the discrepancy between modern ecological theory and much rangeland development practice Ron Hacker suggested that a Special Issue addressing this topic might be appropriate in 2019 on the 30th anniversary of the State & Transition (S&T) model. Paul will advise Anne Waters-Bayer and her correspondent of the Committee's interest in this.

Action: Paul Novelly to advise Ann Waters-Bayer that (1) material suitable for a discussion forum will not be accepted in TRJ (2) such material could be posted on the ARS web site if submitted to the Social Media Editor and (3) a Special Issue to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the S&T model, dealing with the implications of and appropriate responses to discrepancies between rangeland theory and practice, would be of interest to the Committee.

6.7. Input from CSIRO Publishing following Port Augusta discussions

Ron Hacker had circulated an email from Jenny Foster containing responses to a number of matters discussed with her in Port Augusta. Ron indicated that an earlier response from Jenny, in relation to the issue of poor copyediting of TRJ, indicated that CSIRO Publishing was seeking a new copyeditor and that the standard in TRJ would be given priority consideration.

The Committee's responses to the various points raised in Jenny's email were:

- Add a sentence to TRJ scope indicating that studies of local significance will be published if they have broader significance (which the authors should draw out). **Agreed. Paul Novelly to follow up with CSIRO Publishing.**
- Instructions to authors to include a statement that non-English speaking authors should consult native English-speaking colleagues before submitting manuscripts and encouraging the use of professional scientific editing services. **Agreed. Paul Novelly to follow up with CSIRO Publishing.**
- Example letter to Guest Editors. **Paul Novelly to consider usefulness in light of current protocols.**
- TRJ is currently abstracted by 19 databases. Are there any others that should be included? **PC members to advise Ron Hacker as appropriate.**
- Production of dedication-type special issues. **An opportunity has already been identified in 6.6 above.**
- Inclusion of images in the on-line Table of Contents to attract readers' attention. **Paul Novelly to follow up with authors of accepted papers.**
- Update TRJ cover, particularly moving the ARS logo to the front cover. **Agreed. Ron Hacker to request Jenny Foster to provide a mock-up.**

Actions: As above.

7. Range Management Newsletter

7.1. Report from Editor

Noelene is currently preparing the final issue for this year. It includes contributions from the ARS conference on lightning presentations and student presentations. Will be ready last week of November or first week of December.

7.2. Discussion paper on RMN development

A discussion paper on development options for RMN, written by Ron Hacker and Noelene Duckett, had been circulated. This paper arose from the strategic planning meeting held after the Port Augusta conference. Ron Hacker asked for comments/questions of clarification before considering the options outlined in the various section of the paper. Comments and questions were:

- Do we know how the RMN is being viewed by members – is it appealing? (Jocelyn Davies)
- How many people are accessing the RMN? Need to get statistics from Fat Beehive (Paul Novelly).
- A survey from the Alice Springs conference indicated that 29 out of 36 members said the RMN was moderately or very important (Don Burnside)
- RMN is short on interesting content about rangelands management; weighted towards administrative content. (Ron Hacker; with general agreement)
- The administrative content could go separately on the web rather than in the newsletter. (Paul Novelly; not universally supported but general agreement that more relevant content is needed).

The committees conclusions on the specific options outlined were

- (a) Presentation/look of RMN – leave as is i.e. name, look etc. **Agreed.**
- (b) Content of newsletter
 - Inclusion of titles and/or abstracts from the biennial conferences. **Agreed**
 - Publication of lay summaries from journal and conference articles. Noelene Duckett, Jodie Ward and Paul Novelly to cooperate in identifying suitable articles and soliciting lay summaries. **Agreed in principle.**
 - Increasing integration with other newsletters. Reciprocal access to newsletters by a formal arrangement. Would require providing complementary membership to other newsletter producers so they can access current issue of RMN. **Agreed.**
 - Interesting bits of information from around the jurisdictions. **Agreed**
- (c) Access to the RMN.
 - Introduce pay-per-view for the current issue. However, if people wait for 4 months they can access RMN free of charge. **Not agreed.**
 - Maintain the current access policy (i.e. current issue is embargoed until the next issue is published) and monitor the access and readership of articles over the next 12 to 18 months (before and after new content is introduced) to see if in the future the embargo might be removed. Noelene to follow-up with Fat Beehive about access statistics.
- (d) Support
 - Editorial assistant may eventually be needed to scan partner newsletters and solicit lay summaries. For the moment Noelene Duckett can handle this. State correspondents will be required to identify relevant issues and solicit opinion pieces; Advisory Editors can perform a similar role at the international level. New or revised role statements will be required. None of the new appointees will receive an Honorarium. **Agreed.**
 - Paul Novelly noted that lay summaries from non-English speakers may need additional editorial work.

8. ARS web site

8.1. Report from Editor

No report

8.2. Range Management Newsletter index

Noelene Duckett reported that the index of all past RMN issues is now completed (a table of over 2,000 lines) and will be uploaded on to the website by Fat Beehive on November 23rd. (Note: This upload has been delayed and had not occurred by the time of writing – 27 November 2017)

8.3. Biennial Conference Proceedings

No progress to report.

Jocelyn Davies indicated she would like to see absolute numbers for downloads from TRJ rather than just relative numbers as shown in the 'most read' tab in the web site.

Action: Ron Hacker to seek advice from Jenny Foster on the availability of absolute data on number of downloads.

8.4. DOI's for conference papers on the web

A query had been raised with Don Burnside as to whether papers from the Port Augusta conference were to be provided with DOIs (Digital Object Identifiers). The committee agreed that DOIs should be provided for papers from future conferences but it appeared too difficult to add them now to papers from the Port Augusta conference which are already loaded on the web site.

Action: Ron Hacker to bring this matter to the attention of Council and through Council, the Organising Committee for the Canberra conference

8.5. Video of John Milne Memorial Rangeland Journal Lecture

Action: Don Burnside to follow up the production of the video and its posting on the web site

9. Social Media

9.1. Report from outgoing Social Media Editor

The outgoing Social Media Editor, Amber Marshall, spoke to her report circulated before the meeting. Generally the Society's social media presence had steadily increased over the last two years and feedback has been almost universally positive. Sourcing content from ARS members is always difficult. One of the most popular postings was the series 'Journey to Saskatoon' provided by the President, David Phelps.

Action: Ron Hacker to recommend to Council that all recipients of ARS travelling Scholarships be required to provide a series of posts for Facebook/Twitter.

Ron Hacker thanked Amber on behalf of the Publications Committee for all her efforts which have established a good basis on which Jodie Wright can further build the Society's social media presence.

9.2. Arrangement with Wright Social

The current arrangement with Wright Social is due to expire soon and Council will need a recommendation whether it should continue. (Note: This item was not discussed at the meeting but Jodie Ward has advised since that she would welcome a continuation of the current arrangement).

9.3. Reversion of temporary editorial rights for Port Augusta conference

The temporary administrative rights to ARS social media accounts granted to Cherie Gerlach for posting of material from the Port Augusta conference have been revoked.

9.4. Discussion paper on strategic role of social media

A discussion paper on the strategic role of social media was requested by the planning meeting after the Port Augusta conference. This paper was originally scheduled to be available for PC consideration at this meeting but has been

postponed due to the need to prepare the RMN discussion paper and to allow Jodie Ward time to settle into the role before contributing to such a paper.

Action: Ron Hacker and Jodie Ward to develop a discussion paper on the strategic role of social media for the first meeting of 2018.

10. General business

10.1. *Vacancy on the Publications Committee*

No discussion. Members to bring any potential appointee to Ron Hacker's attention.

10.2. *Potential for production of a book sponsored by the Society*

This possibility was discussed at the strategic planning meeting in Port Augusta. It was suggested that ARS might undertake to update the 1984 publication of *Management of Australia's Rangelands*. Ron Hacker had agreed to obtain information from CSIRO Publishing about the process for publishing a book and had been provided with a proposal form that would need to be completed for consideration by CSIRO Publishing.

Action: Ron Hacker to distribute the proposal form to PC members for information.

A suggestion had also been made in Port Augusta that it may be possible to undertake a revision of *Plants of Western New South Wales*. Ron Hacker has contacted Geoff Cunningham (who manages the authors' copyright to the book) about this possibility and the ball is currently in his court.

11. **Date of future meetings** (generally two weeks before Council meetings)
To be advised. Dates for Council meetings in 2018 have not yet been announced.

Meeting closed at 8.15 pm.