

THE AUSTRALIAN RANGELAND SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

Meeting on Wednesday, 16 May, 2018 by teleconference

MINUTES

Ron Hacker opened the meeting and welcomed members at 6.05 pm (EST).

1. **Present:** Ron Hacker (Chair), Don Burnside, David Eldridge, Paul Novelly, Wal Whalley, Noelene Duckett.
2. **Apologies:** Jen Silcock, Jocelyn Davies, Daryl Green, Jodie Ward, Andrew Ash.
3. **Additional items for general business:**

Passing of Dr David Goodall

4. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

Motion: That the minutes of the Publications Committee meeting held by teleconference on 28 March 2018 be accepted as circulated.

Moved: Don Burnside; Seconded: Paul Novelly; Carried

5. **Matters arising from previous minutes (not listed as specific agenda items)**

- 5.1. As a quorum was not present at the meeting on 28 March the actions of that meeting, as recorded in the minutes, need to be ratified.

Motion: That the actions of the meeting of 28 March be ratified.

Moved: Don Burnside; Seconded: Wal Whalley; Carried.

6. **The Rangeland Journal**

- 6.1. *Report from Editor-in-Chief*

Paul Novelly tabled a report. Issue 1 of Volume 40, 2018 (a standard issue) has been published, the Mongolian Special Issue (Vol 40, Issue 2) was published this week, and there are currently 7 papers plus a book review accepted for Issue 3 which will be a standard issue. A total of 206 pages has been published to date for 2018. Other matters considered under 10.0 below.

- 6.2. *Special issues (SIs)*

- 6.2.1. *Northern Development*

Advice from Andrew Ash: 10 papers submitted, with a small and diminishing chance of an 11th paper. Nine of the ten papers have now been through peer review, with seven requiring minor to moderate revision. The other two papers require major revision and Andrew is working with the authors of those two papers. One paper has been accepted.

- 6.2.2. *2017 Biennial Conference*

Don Burnside tabled minutes from the Program Committee, chaired by Russ Sinclair and Martin Andrew (guest editors). Steady progress being made, with target for 'publication-ready' being October 2018.

Given that the Mongolian SI has just been published and the Northern Australia SI will be available in 2018 it may be desirable to hold over the conference SI until January 2019 as there is no other SI yet contracted for 2019. This will depend on the availability of papers to fill the remaining two standard issues for 2018. However, the Program Committee should still aim to maintain the current schedule.

Action: Ron Hacker to advise Russ Sinclair and Martin Andrew that the publication date for the 2017 Biennial Conference SI may be deferred to January 2019.

6.2.3. Potential Commemorative Issue in 2019

Advice from Paul Novelly and David Eldridge. Paul is waiting to hear back from Ann Waters-Bayer about the response from potential guest editors/contributors to the suggestion for a SI dealing with the impact of disequilibrium/state-and-transition theory on rangeland development policy and practice. Paul will follow up with Ann towards the end of the month if no advice has been received. David Eldridge has met with Mark Westoby (lead author of 1989 seminal paper), who responded positively to the idea of producing a paper to commemorate the 30th anniversary but has not committed to doing so.

Action: David Eldridge to discuss further with Mark the opportunity for a commemorative paper. Brian Walker might be interested to co-author and that option could be left to Mark to explore.

Range Management Newsletter

7.1 Report from Editor

Noelene Duckett tabled a report: First RMN published for 2018 with good contact. Next issue will be available in mid to late July. No major articles for the next issue received as yet so she will be chasing some previous suggestions during the next few weeks. Still no progress with loading the RMN index onto the website

8 ARS web site

8.1 Report from Acting Editor (Noelene Duckett)

Noelene tabled a report: Since the last meeting, Noelene has carried out a number of routine updates for the website including:

- updating the news items including the notice of the upcoming AGM;
- providing a link to the 2017 conference papers;
- uploading the video of the 2017 John Milne Memorial Rangeland Journal Lecture to the ARS YouTube account (after finally finding the login details) and then placing a link to this video in the Rangeland Journal Lectures section of the website;
- updating the abstracts for the most recent issues of *The Rangeland Journal*.

Our web provider ZymZen (which has taken over the Australian operations of our former provider Fat Beehive) recently suffered web outages caused by cyber terrorists in Pakistan. This resulted in ZymZen having to re-establish some websites from backups. All systems except Instagram are now working again but please let Noelene know if you find any issues such as broken links etc. on the Society's web pages so we can have these fixed.

8.2 Range Management Newsletter Index.

After the last meeting Don followed up with ZimZen regarding installation of the library function that is apparently required to provide best access to the index. No progress has resulted. This function may also be required for best access to the archival conference papers that are currently sitting in the administrative area of the site. We need a response from ZymZen indicating what this function does, how it is managed, if it can be used for both the RMN index and past conference papers, and what it will cost to install. Noelene is also keen to get page visit statistics for individual newsletters.

Action: Don to follow up with Janine Howard and Toast O'Neill at ZymZen in relation to the library function, page statistics, and the Instagram malfunction.

8.3 *New Website Editor*

Ron advised that Stephani Grove has formally been offered the role by President David Phelps, but she is yet to respond.

9 **Social Media**

9.1 *Report from the Social Media Editor*

No report from Jodie Ward, who is understood to be assisting with mustering on a property in Queensland.

Action: Jodie to present a written report on social media usage and impact at the next PC meeting, and at subsequent meetings.

Action: Ron to review the performance of the Social Media Editor role with Jodie Ward at the end of May 2018 (i.e. after six months in the role, as foreshadowed in the President's letter of appointment) and circulate the results to the PC.

10 **General business**

10.1 *Discussion of TRJ Publishers Report*

10.1.1 *Rejection rate*

Rejection rate was high at 64% in 2017, currently running at 41% in 2018. Paul Novelly seeks advice from Associate Editors if doubtful about a 'reject' or 'reject and resubmit' decision. No definitive guidelines on these decisions can be given by the PC but where feasible a 'major revision' decision might be preferable to a rejection even though many authors do resubmit papers that are initially rejected. Paul often offers extensive advice to authors on how to revise their manuscripts if the decision is 'reject and resubmit'. We are committed to publishing 6 issues per year with a total of about 600 pages (since this is what we sell to institutional subscribers) and need also to progressively increase the IF so quality and quantity cannot be simply traded off.

10.1.2 *Immediacy factor.*

The high immediacy factor for 2017 was noted with approval, although this may have been due to citations 'within' Issues 5&6.

10.1.3 *Distribution of received and published manuscripts.*

Although the geographical distribution of received manuscripts is reasonable, the poor quality of many from the Middle East and Europe means that most published manuscripts are from Australia and China. Agreed that further effort be given to obtaining manuscripts from other regions (especially South America) via Advisory Editors and others.

Action: Ron Hacker to contact all Advisory Editors and ask them to utilise their networks to promote TRJ as a venue for publication.

Action: PC members provide names of people who can assist in widening the source of published papers.

10.1.4. Processing time – submission to publication

Paul Novelly advised the principal reasons for lengthy time between submission and publication are (i) the difficulty in locating referees who agree to review, and (ii) the time taken by many referees to submit their reviews. David Eldridge noted the correlation between short publication time and high impact factor, and that the performance of TRJ is probably comparable with *Journal of Arid Environments* with which he is also associated. CSIRO maintains a list of all reviewers used by TRJ and could be a source of suitable contacts if Associate Editors are having difficulty finding a reviewer.

Agreed that referees need more acknowledgement for their contribution to TRJ, with membership of Publons being a means for reviewers to obtain recognition for their work.

Action: Paul Novelly to ask all Associate Editors to advise their referees to join Publons (see <https://publons.com/home/>), and also to 'share' their referees to increase the total pool of people available to Associate Editors.

Action: Ron Hacker to ask CSIRO to advise all past reviewers to join Publons.

10.1.5 Topic for Virtual Issue in 2018

The 2015 virtual issue was very successful, with papers downloaded at five times the normal rate. Another virtual issue is required.

Action: PC members to review recent (3 years?) TRJ volumes and identify suggested topics for a virtual issue that could be supported by a sufficient number of papers, and report before or at the next meeting.

10.2. Discussion Paper on Strategic Role of Social Media

Ron Hacker will obtain input to the paper from Jodie Ward, who has not yet been able to comment, and then circulate a final draft to the PC. Regarding Recommendation 10, PC agreed that the privacy issues related to compilation of email lists for social media campaigns need to be clarified. Both Janine Howard and Maaïke van der Loon may be able to provide advice.

Action: PC members to provide feedback on the final draft of the social media discussion paper ASAP.

Action: Ron Hacker to contact Maaïke van der Loon for her legal advice re. email mailing lists and Don Burnside to discuss with Janine Howard.

10.3 Passing of David Goodall

David Goodall was a distinguished rangeland ecologist who made a significant contribution to the profession during his time at Utah State University, CSIRO and elsewhere. He recently elected to end his life via voluntary euthanasia at the age of 104. PC agreed that a brief obituary be included in the next RMN.

Action: David Eldridge and Wal Whalley to chase up biographical details and David's literature and prepare a brief obituary.

10.4 Identifying highly cited papers in TRJ

PC agreed that additional information is required to that provided in the CSIRO Publishers Report about the most cited papers, with a suggestion that the last five

years would be a suitable time for surveying the papers. This will provide information about the topics of most interest to readers.

Action: Paul Novelly to email PC members with his suggestions about the information we would like from CSIRO about highly cited papers, and the half-life of papers, and forward this request to CSIRO when finalised.

11 Date of future meetings

27 June

29 August

7 November

Meeting closed at 7.20 pm.