

**THE AUSTRALIAN RANGELAND SOCIETY
PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE (PC)**

**Meeting on Wednesday, 8 May 2019
by teleconference**

MINUTES

Ron Hacker opened the meeting and welcomed members at 6.02 pm (EST).

1. **Present:** Ron Hacker (Chair), Don Burnside, Wal Whalley, Russell Grant, Paul Novelly, Noelene Duckett, Daryl Green
2. **Apologies:** Jen Silcock, Sarah Moles, David Eldridge, Andrew Ash
3. **Additional items for general business:**
Nil
4. **Minutes of the previous meeting – 27 March, 2019**
Motion: That the minutes of the Publications Committee meeting held by teleconference on 6 February, 2019 be accepted as circulated.
Moved: Wal Whalley; Seconded: Don Burnside. Carried.
5. **Matters arising from previous minutes (not listed as specific agenda items)**
Don Burnside thanked members of the PC who contributed to the ARS Annual Report for 2018.
6. **The Rangeland Journal**
 - 6.1. *Report from Editor-in-Chief*
Paul Novelly reported by email and verbally.

TRJ Issue 2

So far we have about 61 typeset pages for Issue 2, which is due out now. No other papers are likely to be available for publication for at least another month. Pages for Issue 2 include the 'Comment' by McLean & Holmes about the article by Russell-Smith & Sangha in the Northern Australian Special Issue. McLean & Holmes question the use of some of their data by Russell-Smith & Sangha. The comment by McLean and Holmes is 4 pages long.

Russell-Smith & Sangha are preparing a 'Response', which should arrive in several weeks, but which will require review to ensure that the McLean & Holmes points are addressed. It is unlikely the 'Response' will be available for publication prior to the end of June.

If we hold over the McLean & Holmes paper so that both the 'Comment' and the 'Response' are published in the same Issue (a situation supported by CSIRO Publishing, although they also emphasise the importance of regular publication), we have 57 pages for Issue 2 now.

After some discussion, the following Motion was moved

Motion: That Issue 2 be published now, including the 'Comment' by McLean and Holmes (61 pages in total). The 'response' from Russell-Smith & Sangha will be published in Issue 3 or 4.

Moved: Don Burnside, seconded Wal Whalley. Carried with Paul Novelly abstaining.

Ron Hacker noted that an Editor's note will be required in Issue 2 and in either Issue 3 or 4 to allow readers to link the 'comment' and 'response'. Further, it was agreed that Paul will ask CSIRO Publishing if the McLean and Holmes 'comment' can be published as 'open access'.

Submission of manuscripts to date in 2019

The number of manuscripts submitted to date in 2019 is well down on what has been submitted by this time of the year in previous years (see below). By May of each year ...

2017 – 40 submitted

2018 – 44 submitted

2019 – 28 submitted

Further, Paul reported that the quality of submitted manuscripts to date in 2019 is poor.

6.2. *Special issues (SIs)*

6.2.1. 2017 Biennial Conference (Paul Novelly)

Completion of papers is proceeding more slowly than is desirable. The cut-off date of 30 June for acceptance of completed papers for the special issue was reiterated. Those papers completed after that time will go into normal issues.

6.2.2. Management of Total Grazing Pressure (Ron Hacker)

The contract is still with Legal in NSW DPI. One manuscript has been submitted and is with a Guest Editor, Eight further manuscripts are in preparation, and two are yet to be commenced. The objective is for the SI to be published in 2019.

6.2.3. Drought Management and Policy

Andrew Ash has advised that a proposal for this special issue is being taken by Neil Cliffe to his managers in QDAF.

6.2.4 Other possibilities

Paul Novelly advised of a very recent approach made by Prof. Huilong Lin for a Special Issue based on presentations at a conference to be held in China in September 2019 dealing with the classification of China's grasslands. The conference is building on a seminal paper on the topic published in *The Rangeland Journal* by Prof Jizhou Ren some years ago. The proposal includes the costs for Paul Novelly to attend the conference.

Paul was advised to notify Prof. Lin that we accept in principle the offer of a SI and to accept the offer of travel to the Conference in September 2019.

Don Burnside noted there are a number of Chinese scientists who have registered to attend the ARS Canberra Conference in September 2019

6.2.4. Process for identifying Special Issues

Paul tabled a brief paper on a process for identifying opportunities for SIs (see attached). After discussion, the PC members present resolved to accept the recommendations in Paul's paper, and support their implementation by the sub-committee of Paul Novelly, Ron Hacker and Wal Whalley. Follow-up actions are:

Action: Recruit to the sub-committee a person from CSIRO Publishing, seek someone who is in the workforce and who may be more aware

of current programs and projects that are being funded, and involve an overseas Advisory Editor who can provide information in international programs.

6.3 Possible commissioned papers

6.3.1 Grazing management of southern Australian rangelands (Don Burnside). No action yet.

6.4 Citation of Australian literature in non-Australian papers (Paul Novelly)

Paul Novelly advised that some additional words will be inserted into the email that is sent by the EiC to Associate Editors when asking them to arrange the review of a submitted manuscript. The key additional words (in italics) in the relevant paragraph are:

Please note that the Rangeland Journal's Guidelines for Reviewers request consideration of "awareness (cogent discussion) of related international research". In reviewing this manuscript, I would be grateful if, apart from assessing its technical merit, *you could judge whether the authors have adequately met this criterion, particularly in relation to literature originating outside their home country.*

This additional wording was endorsed by the meeting.

6.5. Engagement of Advisory Editors

Ron Hacker advised that he had sent three papers to Advisory Editors for them to comment on the quality of the presentation. Three of them have returned comments to Ron, and he will send out further papers.

7. Range Management Newsletter (RMN)

7.1. Report from Editor

Noelene Duckett reported verbally.

The March issue of the RMN was published in early April. The high quality of the issue was noted by some PC members present, with recognition that there is some sharing of material with other publications.

Submissions for the next issue are few to date, and more are required.

7.2. Implementation of the Council resolution regarding the Newsletter

Progress is being made with implementing the recommendations endorsed by Council as follows:

- (i) Council identified 65 possible sources (newsletters, websites etc.) from like-minded organisations that could be involved in sharing material with ARS through the RMN. These are being sorted into a spreadsheet ranking these in order of their likely suitability for sharing material;
- (ii) After completion, the spreadsheet will be circulated to the PC for comment.

Noelene will consider if assistance is required to produce the RMN (as envisaged in the discussion paper provided to Council) when the list of collaborating organisations is finalised.

8. Social Media

8.1. Report from Social Media Editor

Sarah provided a brief written report prior to the meeting. There has been a jump in numbers following our Twitter account and following us on Facebook.

This follows invitations having been sent, mostly to friends (and friends of friends) in rural and regional areas. Instagram remains static.

Recent postings and retweets have been done to encourage submission of more abstracts for the ARS Conference in Canberra in September 2019.

Ron Hacker asked that the review of the use of social media, prepared in conjunction with Wright Social, be considered at Council's next meeting.

Action: Don Burnside to ensure that the review is on the Agenda for the next Council Meeting.

9. ARS web site

9.1. Report from Editor

Russell Grant provided a verbal report, supported by advice from the new service provider, Blue Platypus (BP). They are proceeding to build the new site, although it is not clear when it will go 'live'. Actions to date as reported by BP are:

- 'The header has been developed 99%. We just had to improve a little bit some CSS.
- We have completed the branding of the website at 95%. All pages will have the same format.
- We have created all necessary layout template for you to use, so all new pages will have the same format.
- Menu has been created 100% (desktop & mobile)
- Website has been tested on mobile and is 100% mobile friendly
- We have created about 10 main pages for us to be able to build the layout and branding'.

The existing facility is still operational, but there is no input by, or contact with, ZymZen. The Beekeeper facility and social media links are still working satisfactorily. Some issues are:

- Problems have been experienced with logging into the ARS members' area;
- The link to the 2015 conference papers has crashed;
- None of the recent minutes of Council meetings have been posted on the site;
- The lists of Associate and Advisory Editors for TRJ needs to be updated.

Action: Don to ask Bob Shepherd to forward all outstanding Council Minutes to Russell Grant for posting in the Members' area.

Action: Paul Novelly to send a list of current Associate and Advisory Editors for TRJ to Russell Grant for updating of the site.

As soon as Blue Platypus completes setup, the association with Zymzen will be terminated.

10. General Business

Nil.

11. Date of future meetings

3 July; 2-5 September (Biennial conference); 13 November

Meeting closed at 7.40 pm.

Attachment – Special Issues and *The Rangeland Journal*

Contractually, two Special Issues (SIs) of the Rangeland Journal are to be produced each year. Developing and publishing SIs is becoming increasingly difficult. At the 27 March 2019 PC meeting, a group consisting of Novelly, Whalley and Hacker (NWH) was formed to identify a process or processes to better manage SI publication.

Discussion within this group has led to the following considerations.

- There are two SIs currently in train (the 2017 Conference SI and the Grazing Pressure SI). A further SI (Drought Management) is planned, as is an SI from the 2019 Conference. Beyond these, there is little on the horizon until the 2021 Conference and, potentially, an SI on the Wambiaba Grazing Trial and associated sub-projects.
- The PC (and the ARS Council) must become far more proactive in identifying opportunities for SIs and in bringing them to fruition. Without such an approach it is unlikely that the SI requirement will be met in the medium term.
- An SI group needs to take carriage of this initiative. This group should possibly include someone “still in the workforce” (and hence better situated to be aware of opportunities), and perhaps an individual from CSIRO Publishing and an ‘international perspective’. One or several of this group should come from the PC.
- Through this group, ground rules and boundary conditions for a proactive SI process need to be developed. For example, NWH discussed possible conflict and potential adoption of a ‘political position’ in the choice of SI topics. What, exactly, constitutes suitable topics for an SI?
- Once protocols are determined, individuals (including selected Advisory and Associate Editors) should be approached regarding support for SI development. This would also require consideration of the tasks such individuals would have. Are they merely to identify opportunities, or are they expected to do more?
- An SI has a \$10k cost, borne by the entity around which the SI is developed, yet the \$10k is often a stumbling block to SI development. This \$10k is of significance to the ARS budget. NWH discussed the role of potentially brokering ‘deals’ between those with a concept for an SI, and those with the available \$10k required for an SI. How would this work?
- Basic protocols and processes should be developed to provide consistency. This would include pro-forma correspondence to ‘supporters’, a standard ‘approach letter’ to an identified group around which an SI could be developed, correspondence with potential sponsors etc.

Next steps:

1. Define the small group make up, and who on the PC wishes to be involved.
2. Develop an outline of the ground rules and boundary conditions for SI development, and the roles of those from whom information will be sought.
3. Contact CSIRO Publishing and request their opinion and a potential ‘small group’ member.
4. Develop the pro-forma correspondence to be sent to Advisory and Associate Editors and others concerning this proactive approach to SIs.

Paul Novelly
EiC, *The Rangeland Journal*
7 May 2019