

Minutes of meeting of the Publications Committee of the Australian Rangeland Society held on 16 November 2011 by Teleconference

Meeting commenced at 1 pm EST.

1. Present

Ken Hodgkinson (in Chair)
Ron Hacker
Russell Grant
John Milne
Peter Johnston
Noelene Duckett
Jocelyn Davies
Mark Stafford Smith
Andrew Ash
Wal Whalley
Tony Pressland
Carolyn Ireland (Minute Secretary)

2. Apologies

Brian Cooke
Don Burnside
David Eldridge
Murray MacGregor
Neil MacLeod

3. Minutes of teleconference meeting on 25 August 2011

Minutes circulated before the meeting were accepted as a true record; Moved Peter/Seconded Russell/Carried.

4. Matters arising from minutes of 30 Sept 2008, 30 June and 25 August 2011 meetings

4.1 Increase membership of Publications Committee (30 September 2008)

John Milne and Ken suggested that the Publications Committee (PC) increase membership from 9 to 12 and that these new members come from overseas. Approved by the PC.

4.2 Letter to NRM's etc (30 September 2008)

Carried over to a future meeting.

4.3 Associate Editor Appointments (30 September 2008)

We have 13 Associate Editors (AE). John Milne proposed that this be built to 20 over time. John has done an analysis of current situation – AE's cover about 17 different areas. We are short of plant ecologists and also specialists in plant soil relationships; also geographically we need people in South America and Southern Africa. Suggest we leave 2-3 vacancies to allow for new disciplines to develop and make other appointments at that stage. Current situation is 70 papers per year and with 16 AE's each would cover 4-5 papers each per year. Likely candidates are to be approached, CV's obtained, examined by PC and then submitted to Council for approval. Any names to be forwarded to Ken for sending to John. PC approved process.

4.4 Appointment of Chair for Publications Committee (30 June 2011)

Replacing Ken Hodgkinson as Chair of PC. Ken would like to be distant from the process. John and Ken suggest that PC appoints a search group. Membership up to 2 Council

members and up to 3 PC members – write a job description, bring names and CV's of members of the Society to PC. Consider and make a recommendation to Council. This would be a way forward – has not been used before. Everyone to suggest people to Search Group. Peter: this is a good way forward. Ken asked for volunteers: Don Burnside suggested. Carolyn to email council for volunteers and Ken will approach members of PC. **Motion:** Search Group (SG) of up to 3 PC and up to 2 Council Members to be found, they are to prepare a job description by the end January 2012. Seek expressions of interest in the role by May 2012 and finalise appointment by end of July 2012. Moved: Mark/ Seconded Noelene/Carried

4.5 Changes to Range Management Newsletter (25 August 2011)

CSIRO publishing willing to send RMN out with Journal at no cost provided that publication date is the same as for issue date of the journal. May need to find a printer. Carried over rest of item to a future meeting.

5. Contract with CSIRO Publishing.

John and Ken had a meeting with Chris Anderson and Andrew Stammer of CSIRO Publishing (CP) for 3 hours earlier this week. John reported that CP is being taken back into CSIRO who say that it will have no effect on how CP works. John's concerns: a) less subscriptions for paper copies and more on-line publishing – in 5-10 years time it is likely that there will be no paper copies, b) value per Journal without on-line publishing is less and this needs more on-line subscriptions to grow income. How is CP going to do this? c) CP is a small publishing house – not much strength in market. Larger publishing houses bundle journals in packages and grow journal subscription that way. CP does not have a clear idea how this will develop at the moment. Their publishing is however, very good but there are issues and we may not wish to use them at some point in the future. There is a “get out” clause with 12 months notice in our contract. We should go ahead, but put in place a timetable for us to consider in a couple of years time. John and Ken gave them a pretty strong message that they need to think about this problem. Ken: good discussion, but concerned we were not getting the best deal when we discussed this last year. Peter: Council has been grappling with growing Journal for number of years within CP. Andrew: questions re subscription statistics – performance plateau in last couple of years, need to explore other publishers. Ken: suggest that John look at this and report back to PC on this when he gets back to Scotland. John: happy to do this and write a paper with suggestions for all these matters including a way forward. **Motion:** PC recommends to Council that the contract is proceeded with for the next five years (John Taylor and Ken to discuss) and that we begin the exploration of costs and benefits of other publishers and deliver this to Council in two years time. Moved: Jocelyn/Seconded Mark/Carried.

6. Advisory Editors

On John's and Chris Anderson's advice the concept of Commissioning Editors has been revised to Advisory Editors. John: It would be a way that very senior scientists be encouraged to get associated with Journal – helps scientists consider which Journal to use – Journal also would have greater impact in certain countries. Also once a year send a questionnaire to them to seek their opinions for consideration by the PC. One of the ways we can improve the Journal is seeking out quality papers. Maybe 12 Advisory Editors. Mark: agrees it is a good idea – however would be good to identify Advisory Editors first and they might suggest young and keen Associate Editors. Andrew Ash: supports this. Ken: Need a job description and suggests we use a draft that John has. PC Members to forward names to Ken. Jocelyn: Should some of the Associate Editors be moved into Advisory Editor roles? **Motion:** that up to 12 high profile Advisory Editors be appointed from differing disciplines and diverse countries with good conduits into finding Associate Editors and papers for the Journal. Moved: Peter/Seconded Mark/Carried.

7. Future developments of the Journal

John reported to PC: Wal has left the journal in good heart – John sees his role as taking it to next

level. Wants to consult with Associate Editors first before making firm recommendations. Also there are good links with CSIRO Publishing staff. Use of Website – going in right direction.

Other aspects of developing TRJ. There are about six other rangeland journals around and it would not take a great leap to become the premier Rangeland Journal – very achievable. Benefits are that it improves income and profile of Australian Rangelands and TRJ. Threats are possible future reductions of research \$\$, and Open Access. Impact Factor improvement to 2.0 is possible. Way forward is to identify good papers and try to get them into TRJ, this would have a big effect on impact factor. There is an increasing need to have review articles in developing areas (state of the art). Also identify early trends in rangeland research and get in early. Make journal website more useable– possibly include one paper with free access for each issue of TRJ which will raise the profile of TRJ and the ARS. Also when papers written they need a title and abstract that rings bells with an international audience. Identify countries where there will be a growth of papers e.g. China, Southern Africa and South America – even if these countries also need a lot of work to get a good paper. If impact factor of 2 then we are in top 40 of journals in the ecology area. Also depends upon what publisher can deliver. Wal: agrees entirely with John, particularly the impact factor. Ken: thanked John for his report

8. Any other business

No other business.

9. Next meeting

To focus on website development: **Thursday 1 March 2012 at 4.45 pm EST.**

The meeting closed at 2 pm.