

# **Minutes of meeting of the Publications Committee of the Australian Rangeland Society held Thursday 8 December 2005 at Land and Water Australia, Canberra.**

Meeting commenced at 10 am.

**Present:** Chris Anderson (CSIRO PUBLISHING Production Editor of TRJ)  
Kate Andrews  
Don Burnside  
Doug Campbell (observer from ARS Council)  
Noelene Duckett (joined meeting by phone from USA 2.30 to 3pm)  
David Eldridge  
Ken Hodgkinson (in Chair)  
Peter Johnston  
Ian Oliver  
Wal Whalley

There were no apologies.

## **Opening comments:**

The Chairman welcomed everyone. He noted that Kate Andrews and Ian Oliver were attending their first meeting, that Production Editor Chris Anderson of CSIRO PUBLISHING was meeting with the Publications Committee for the first time, that Doug Campbell, a newly appointed member of ARS Council, was an observer at the meeting, that ARS Council had provided funds for travel and accommodation of members and that Land and Water Australia had generously supported the meeting.

## **Minutes of last meeting:**

The last meeting was held in Alice Springs on 5 July 2004. Minutes were not yet available.

## **Correspondence**

The Chairman tabled 53 items (listed Appendix 1) and drew attention to 9 (see copies in Appendix 1).

## **Business arising from correspondence**

Item 19: David Wilcox to Kenneth Hodgkinson: request to improve information flow between Publications Committee and Council on 8 November 2004  
Action: Request of President noted

Item 24: Kenneth Hodgkinson to David Wilcox: improving information flow between Publications Committee and Council on 29 November 2004.  
Action: Committee agreed the President should be a corresponding member of PC and endorsed exchange of minutes of meetings, copying of relevant emails on important

PC business to the President, and verbal information exchange between President and Chairman of the Publications Committee, as appropriate means of keeping the President informed of the decisions and activities of the Publications Committee.

Item 22: David Wilcox to Kenneth Hodgkinson: overseas members of PC and British Medical Journal system for comment on 19 November 2004

Action: Agreed this system has merit and requested *Wal Whalley investigate the approach.*

Item 28: David Wilcox to Kenneth Hodgkinson: ratification of members of Publications Committee on 4 January 2005

Action: The Committee noted Council had ratified their membership of the Publications Committee to meet ASIC requirements.

Item 30: Kenneth Hodgkinson to David Wilcox: appointment of committee to review ARS Publications on 9 March 2005

Action: The Committee noted the composition of the Review Group for the President to send a letter(s) of appreciation. *Chairman to request President to write to each of the Group.*

Item 48: Kenneth Hodgkinson to Wal Whalley: meeting with ZhiBiao Nan in Beijing on 26 August 2005

Action: Committee noted the Chairman met with Professor ZhiBiao Nan and reached agreement, with the concurrence of the Editor, to publish in 2008 a Special Issue of TRJ on issues related to management of rangelands in China. The issue would be given to all delegates when registering at the 2008 combined meeting of the IRC and IGC in Huhot, China.

Item 50: Kenneth Hodgkinson to ZhiBiao Nan: publication of special issue of TRJ for 2008 IGC/IRC on 13 September 2005

Action: Committee noted CSIRO PUBLISHING would supply extra copies of a Special Issue at cost to the IRC/IGC Organising Committee.

Item 51: Kenneth Hodgkinson to Wal Whalley: resignation of Malcolm Howes from membership of Publications Committee 20 October 2005

Action: Committee noted Malcolm Howes had spoken with the Chairman in October 2005 confirming his resignation from the PC. It was agreed that the *Chairman should prepare a case for recommending to Council that Malcolm be made a Fellow of the Society, if this were not already actioned from the 5 July 2004 meeting in Alice Springs* and circulate the draft case for comment.

Item 52: David Wilcox to Kenneth Hodgkinson: listing, location and number of back issues of TRJ 8 November 2005

Action: Committee noted back issues of TRJ were now redundant with the placement of all issues on TRJ website as electronic files. *Chairman to discuss with President the options for dispersing hard copies of back issues to libraries.*

Item 53: Andrew Stammer to Wal Whalley: author self-archiving of papers in institutional repositories 1 December 2005

Action: Committee endorsed new policy of CSIRO PUBLISHING to permit authors to self-archive their version of a TRJ paper under the following conditions:

- The publisher's final, PDF version may not be used
- A link to the Journal's home page (or abstract level of the published paper) is included
- The publisher's copyright be acknowledged.

. *Wal Whalley to write to Andrew Stammer.*

## **Review Group report**

The report of the Review Group titled "Recommendations for the Publications of the Australian Rangeland Society" dated October 2005 (Appendix 2), was received and tabled.

It was agreed that the report was very thorough, insightful and provided an excellent "platform" on which the three publications of the Society might be lifted to new levels. Changes recommended were seen to be of benefit to existing members and should attract new members. The report was unanimously accepted with gratitude to the Chair, Dionne Walsh and the members of the Review Group, for a job well done.

The recommendations were briefly discussed in the light of written responses circulated before the meeting by the Editor of the Journal (Appendix 3), Ian Oliver (Appendix 4), the Editor of the Newsletter (Appendix 5) and the President (Appendix 6). In the Report and in the four responses to the Report, it was recognised there was much considered comment underpinning the recommendations that needed to be revisited and "used" when each recommendation was being addressed and implemented in the future. The Chairman urged members of the PC to keep their eyes on these "pearls" by revisiting the documents in 2006.

In Recommendation 5 the words "Editorial Board" were used and since there was no discussion in the report on setting up an Editorial Board it was assumed that "Editorial Board" means "Publication Committee". The Editor of the Journal argued that it was not necessary to set up an Editorial Board in addition to the PC as present arrangements were working well and such a move would give the Journal more independence from Council and this was considered not desirable.

In Recommendation 6 the words "and to provide more timely information." (see Appendix 5) should be added to the end of the recommendation.

Recommendation 7 was considered too prescriptive and binding in light of the poor flow of material presently to the Editor of the Newsletter. It was agreed that Recommendation 7 should be deleted.

Action: *Chairman to write to the President informing him that the Recommendations of the Review Group were accepted, except # 7 and wording of #'s 5 and 6 noted above, and asking him to formally thank individuals of the Review Group for their valuable work and insights.*

## **The Rangeland Journal**

### Production Editor's Report

Chris Anderson tabled his report (Appendix 7) and a report on a survey of journal author behaviour (Appendix 8), spoke to the reports, and spoke generally about publishing arrangements and specifically about several issues.

First, the scanning of past issues and electronic placement on the website was at no cost to the Society because of savings in 2005 from publishing only 168 pages (200 pages were budgeted).

Second, increased Institutional subscribers are expected in 2006 from advertising and promotion of TRJ at conferences (16 in 2006).

Third, the Citation Impact Factor (CIF) for TRJ (about 0.65) is at the lower end for journals listed in the ecology category. Chris suggested ways of raising the CIF: TRJ authors should be encouraged to cite recent articles in TRJ, review papers (that might cite recent TRJ papers) should be encouraged, papers on controversial topics should be actively sought by the Editor, and editors of journals in the CSIRO PUBLISHING stable should provide details of other CSIRO Journal papers (including TRJ) relevant to the paper under consideration.

The Chairman thanked Chris for his report and support for the Society.

Action: *Chairman and Editor to write another article for the next Rangeland Management Newsletter calling for more papers for the TRJ and need to cite other recent papers in TRJ.*

*Editor to approach potential authors that might review selected topics and/or present controversial/stimulating views.*

### Content analysis of TRJ, RMN and Website

Recommendation 2 (“content analysis” of TRJ, RMN and website) was considered and although outcomes were not certain it was agreed to identify current overlaps and gaps in coverage and draw conclusions.

Action: *Chairman to initiate by email a content analysis by members of the PC and interested members of Council.*

### Changes to Scope, Notice to Contributors and Call to Authors

The changes to the Scope statement suggested by the Review Group were warmly accepted but further small changes were considered appropriate after discussion. The PC considered the Scope statement should be suitable for both Australia and rangelands internationally. It needed to be more “open” than definitions of rangelands made in Australia 30 to 40 years ago.

Action: *Editor to change the Scope to read “**The Rangeland Journal** publishes original work that makes a significant contribution to understanding the biophysical, social, cultural, economic, and policy influences affecting rangeland use and management. Rangelands are defined broadly and include all those environments where natural ecological processes predominate and where values and benefits are based primarily on natural capital.” and with the Production Editor, alter wording of the Scope in both hard and electronic versions of the journal and the website.*

#### Increased membership of the Publications Committee

Given Recommendation 5 (p. 2) and “Widen the membership of the Editorial Board (read PC) to include a wider range of key stakeholder groups and to include international representation” (p. 4) and the Presidents views (Appendix 1 Item 22), it was agreed membership of the PC should be increased from 8 to 12 and 3 of the additional members should be outside Australia. With electronic communication and cheap international phone access it would be possible for members outside Australia to participate fully.

*Action: Members to nominate suitable/interested people from Australia and overseas and Chairman to conduct an electronic pre-selection for one person residing in Australia and three persons from overseas. The person from Australia will be or become the Web master. The four people will be recommended to the President for appointment to the 12-member PC.*

#### Scanning of national and international conferences and presentations/sessions for Editor

Ian Oliver volunteered to watch conferences etc for material that might be turned into papers suitable for TRJ. Chris Anderson tabled a CSIRO PUBLISHING Conference Schedule where the TRJ would be promoted in the near future.

*Action: Ian to work with the Editor in 2006 to solicit papers using these sources.*

#### Scanning of AANRO website for scientists with potential papers for Editor

Peter Johnston volunteered to keep watch on AANRO, approach potential authors when appropriate and liaise with the Editor and Associate Editors.

*Action: Peter to work with the Editor in 2006 to solicit papers from AANRO information.*

#### Sub-committee to initiate and vet proposals for Special Issues of TRJ

The need to identify “hot topics”, before they mature, for Special Issues was considered very important. Don and Ken agreed to work with the Editor to identify topics and assemble authors (especially those who think systems) and put authors of different disciplines together, and to vet proposals before putting them to the full PC.

*Action: Don and Ken to work with the Editor in 2006 on Special Issues.*

#### Sub-committee of PC to promote TRJ to selected Australian and overseas Agencies

It was agreed that NRM organisations, State and Federal Departments, CRC's, etc should be informed by letter, and personal approach if appropriate, of the benefits to their organisation of staff publishing in and subscribing to TRJ. Chris can supply some material.

*Action: Kate, Peter and David to draft a general letter and list contacts for the Editor (or the Chairman) to send.*

### Appointment of further Associate Editors

The present Associate Editors are resident in Australia, except for one in Holland, and there are knowledge areas not covered by the present people. It was decided that 5 more Associate Editors, with knowledge skills needed and good author trails, be appointed from outside Australia to raise further the international status of the Journal. They would come from the USA, China, Europe, Southern Africa and South America.

*Action: Ken to seek names from members, the PC to agree on order of the names for each region and Ken with the Editor, write/email each in turn.*

### Survey of policy makers, land administrators and regional organisations

It was agreed that a proactive survey of policy makers, land administrators and regional organisations for poor knowledge areas that limit target setting and policy formation, would pay dividends for TRJ. Findings from the survey could be published in TRJ.

*Action: Don and Kate to develop a survey proposal and letter requesting funding (over Chairman's signature) to put to Council.*

### Key Performance Indicators

Chris spoke about suitable indicators for TRJ eg. timeliness, number of pages, CIF, and agreed to report on these annually in consultation with the Editor.

### Editor's Report

The Editor tabled his report (Appendix 9) and spoke about it. The high number (10) of papers rejected in 2005 was queried and the Editor replied that rejected papers were either of poor quality or unsound. The Chairman thanked Wal for his hard work and for maintaining the high standard of papers appearing in each issue.

### Papers from the next Biennial Conference (Renmark)

The Biennial Conference was seen to be an important source of papers for TRJ, particularly critical reviews of contemporary issues.

*Action: Editor to communicate with the Organising Committee and request that keynote speakers be asked to prepare hardcopies of their papers before the conference for consideration by the Editor for publishing in TRJ.*

### **ARS Website**

The Chairman drew attention to Recommendations 2 and 3 of the Review Group (Appendix 2) and comments made by the President on the website (Appendix 6). The Chairman's vision for the website is that it will become of high appeal and of a standard that rangeland people will first go to the website for information. His view is that overseeing development and management of the website must be a high priority for the PC. The website is now "the means by which most potential readers and members will have contact with us," and it needs to be both professional (emphasised by the President) and desirable to the public. Development of the website will therefore require a high degree of creativity and intuition. To attract people to it one or more special services may be required such as a current "news board" or a platform

for pastoralists to find agistment for stock. All members agreed with the Chairman's vision and that careful preparation was critical because of high costs.

The issue of how the website might be developed and managed was considered. It was agreed that the website was a publication and that material on the website could be formally referenced. Furthermore the website would publish in the future the RMN and provide links with TRJ site. Given that electronic access to the Society's publications would be predominantly through the website then it was appropriate for the PC to be responsible to Council for its development and management. The view of the President was noted but in light of the Review Group's report and the "checks and balance" provided by Council's approval of all initiatives of the PC that require expenditure there was unanimous agreement by the PC that the website should be the responsibility of the PC.

Recommendation 2 is that "ARS should commission an analysis of the design and content of the website for the future." It was decided that a scoping group should initially be set up, costs of options obtained and recommendations prepared for the PC and later consideration by Council. Kate and Chris indicated they have experience in website development and they agreed to be part of the initial group. Ken and Doug also have an interest (but no experience) and were prepared to join. Doug would provide a direct link to Council. Given that three members were resident in Canberra and that Chris visits Canberra, it was thought that this would be a workable arrangement. The President would be an *ex officio* member as well.

*Action: Chairman to arrange a meeting of Kate, Chris, Doug, himself, and the President if possible, in Canberra.*

### **Range Management Newsletter**

Noelene joined the meeting at 2.30 pm by phone from Texas USA and was warmly welcomed by Members. She tabled the RMN Editors report (Appendix 10) and spoke to the report. Printing of the RMN was still being managed by Malcolm Howes. Noelene expressed concern about continuing difficulty in obtaining information from Council for the Newsletter and in a form that was attractive to readers.

*Action: Don to discuss informally with the President how better information on Council activities and plans might be developed for the RMN and for the Chairman to formally raise this matter with the President by letter.*

Noelene informed the meeting that she would be returning to live in Australia in the second half of 2006. It was therefore agreed that engagement of a professional newsletter designer considered necessary for Recommendation 6 should wait until Noelene settles back in Australia.

Appointment of State representatives, a book reviewer agent, and greater involvement in PC members seeking out material for the Editor was discussed and agreed to. The terms for State representatives were to be 2 years. The success of this procedure in the Ecological Society of Australia was noted.

*Action: Chairman to draft tasks with the Editor, seek names of State representatives and others from PC members then approach nominated individuals*

The Chairman and members congratulated Noelene for her outstanding contribution to the Society in preparing the RMN from Texas and looked forward to welcoming her back to Australia soon.

**Any other business**

Members asked that Minutes of Council be available.

*Action: Chairman to request permission from President to circulate minutes of Council amongst the PC.*

Ian asked whether there were affiliate subscription arrangements for The Rangeland Journal. This is where similar societies offer multiple subscriptions in reciprocal arrangements. For example the ESA and SERI societies offer their own journals as well as the Ecological Management and Restoration journal.

*Action: Peter Johnston to scan previous Council minutes for this matter and Chairman to write to President if there is an opportunity to set up this procedure with other related societies.*

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 3.15pm.



## APPENDIX 1:

### Correspondence including Minutes, Agenda's and Annual Reports

Item (Items in bold were identified by the Chairman for Matter Arising)

1. Minutes Publications Committee in Kalgoorlie 2 September 2002
2. Kenneth Hodgkinson to Andrew Stammer: expressing interest in joint-venture with CSIRO PUBLISHING on 27 September 2002
3. Record of meeting between Paul Reekie and Andrew Stammer of CSIRO PUBLISHING, Margaret Hindley (CSIRO librarian) and Kenneth Hodgkinson (member Publications Committee) on 10 December 2002
4. Proposal for Publishing and Marketing TRJ from CSIRO PUBLISHING: revised 5 January 2004
5. Report to Publications Committee from Kenneth Hodgkinson: recommendation to Council for accepting TRJ be published by CSIRO PUBLISHING on 30 January 2004
6. Questions by Hodgkinson and Andrew Stammer response: 20 February 2004
7. Leigh Hunt to ARS Council: proposed Publishing Agreement with CSIRO PUBLISHING on 20 February 2004
8. Leigh Hunt to Publications Committee: submission of proposed agreement for CSIRO PUBLISHING to produce and manage TRJ on 22 February 2004
9. Annual Report of the Publications Committee 31 May 2004
10. Subscription Manager's Annual Report 16 May 2004
11. RMN Editor's report 3 July 2004
12. Agenda Publications Committee meeting in Alice Springs 5 July 2004
13. Leigh Hunt to David Wilcox: publication matters on 18 August 2004
14. David Wilcox to Kenneth Hodgkinson: invitation to Chair Publications Committee on 11 September 2004
15. David Wilcox to Leigh Hunt: accepting Leigh's resignation from Chair and membership of the Publications Committee on 11 September 2004
16. David Wilcox to Andrew Stammer: return of signed agreement between CSIRO PUBLISHING and The Australian Rangeland Society on 13 September 2004
17. Kenneth Hodgkinson to David Wilcox: Accepting Chair of Publications Committee until end of 2007 on 21 September 2004
18. David Wilcox to Kenneth Hodgkinson: need for review of ARS publications on 22 September 2004
19. **David Wilcox to Kenneth Hodgkinson: request to improve information flow between Publications Committee and Council on 8 November 2004**
20. Ian Oliver to David Wilcox: accepting membership of the Publications Committee on 17 November 2004
21. David Wilcox to Kenneth Hodgkinson: appointment of Ian Oliver on 17 November 2004
22. **David Wilcox to Kenneth Hodgkinson: overseas members of PC and British Medical Journal system for comment on 19 November 2004**
23. Kenneth Hodgkinson to David Wilcox: appointment of Ian Oliver on 19 November 2004

24. **Kenneth Hodgkinson to David Wilcox: improving information flow between Publications Committee and Council on 29 November 2004**
25. Agenda Editorial Meeting of TRJ in Melbourne 7 December 2004
26. Discussion items with CSIRO on 7 December 2004
27. Kenneth Hodgkinson to David Wilcox: recommendation Kate Andrews be appointed to Publications Committee on 15 December 2004
28. **David Wilcox to Kenneth Hodgkinson: ratification of members of Publications Committee on 4 January 2005**
29. Minutes meeting #178 of ARS Council by teleconference 8 March 2005
30. **Kenneth Hodgkinson to David Wilcox: appointment of committee to review ARS Publications on 9 March 2005**
31. Kenneth Hodgkinson to David Wilcox: TOR, TRJ statement and RMN statement on 11 March 2005
32. Terms of Reference for review of ARS Publications; 11 March 2005
33. Background information-TRJ: prepared Wal Whalley 11 March 2005
34. Background information-RMN: prepared Noelene Duckett 11 March 2005
35. David Wilcox to Kenneth Hodgkinson: update on Review Group of ARS Publications 13 March 2005
36. David Wilcox to Kenneth Hodgkinson and reply: web site on 17 March 2005
37. Kenneth Hodgkinson to Chris Anderson: changes to TRJ pages on CSIRO PUBLISHING website 18 March 2005
38. Kenneth Hodgkinson to Chris Anderson: changes to TRJ pages on CSIRO PUBLISHING website 1 April 2005
39. Kenneth Hodgkinson to Tim Ferraro: reimbursement of travel expenses for meeting with CSIRO PUBLISHING on 4 April 2005
40. David Wilcox to Kenneth Hodgkinson with reply by Wal Whalley: expanded scope of TRJ on 26 and 27 May 2005
41. Emails between David Wilcox, Chris Anderson, Van Vreeswyk, Ian Watson and Cate Batchelor: sharing TRJ recipients with REM recipients 25 March to 6 June 2005
42. Minutes meeting # 180 of ARS Council in Adelaide 16-17 June 2005
43. Chris Anderson to Kenneth Hodgkinson and reply: TRJ Strategic Plan-a framework on 27 July 2005
44. TRJ-Strategic plan and Business Plan Structure on 27 July 2005
45. David Wilcox to Kenneth Hodgkinson: comments on first electronic issue of TRJ on 15 August 2005
46. David Wilcox to Kenneth Hodgkinson: publishing papers arising from presentations at 2004 Alice Springs biennial conference on 16 August 2005
47. David Wilcox to Chris Anderson with reply from Anderson: link between TRJ and ARS websites on 16 August 2005
48. **Kenneth Hodgkinson to Wal Whalley: meeting with Zhibiao Nan in Beijing on 26 August 2005**
49. David Wilcox to Kenneth Hodgkinson and reply: surplus journals on 6 September 2005
50. **Kenneth Hodgkinson to Zhibiao Nan: publication of special issue of TRJ for 2008 IGC/IRC on 13 September 2005**
51. **Kenneth Hodgkinson to Wal Whalley: resignation of Malcolm Howes from membership of Publications Committee 20 October 2005**

- 52. David Wilcox to Kenneth Hodgkinson: listing, location and number of back issues of TRJ 8 November 2005**
- 53. Andrew Stammer to Wal Whalley: author self-archiving of papers in institutional repositories 1 December 2005**

**Item 30**

9 March 2005

6 Spain Place  
EVATT ACT 2617

D G Wilcox  
President  
The Australian Rangeland Society  
54 Broome Street  
COTTESLOE WA 6011

Dear David

**APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE TO REVIEW ARS PUBLICATIONS**

The Publications Committee recommend to you and Council that Dionne Walsh be appointed Chairman and Ron Hacker, John Childs, Jocelyn Davies and John Taylor as members, of the committee to review ARS publications. Draft Terms of Reference and Statements from the Editors of The Rangeland Journal and Range Management Newsletter are attached.

Contact details for each are as follows:

**Dr John Childs**

Bush Business Consulting  
Phone: (H) 07 5496 5002  
Mobile: 0438 083 074

Note: Cannot locate John's address. Have left phone message and will email information when obtained.

**Dr Jocelyn Davies**

CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems  
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**Dr Dionne Walsh**

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Yours sincerely

**Kenneth Hodgkinson**

*Chairman, Publications Committee*

Attachments: Draft Terms of Reference  
Background Information – Range Management Newsletter  
Background Information – The Rangeland Journal

**REVIEW OF AUSTRALIAN RANGELAND SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

2.0 Review the focus, scope, format and target audience of The Rangeland Journal with special reference to growing society membership and submissions of manuscripts, both nationally and overseas.

Issues to be addressed include:

- 1.1 whether manuscripts on the widest range of environments, polar to tropical and arid to humid, where pastoralism is a dominant activity in local and regional communities, should be sought;
- 1.2 whether manuscripts on use of rangeland resources for tourism, niche industries, mining of minerals and industries other than pastoralism, should be sought;
- 1.3 whether manuscripts on sustainable and resilient systems (of growing interest to Government agencies and regional communities) should be sought;
- 1.4 whether reviews of knowledge should be sought for the benefit of policy makers, government agency staff and managers of various industries;
- 1.5 whether an international authorship and reading of the journal should be promoted; and
- 1.6 any other matters related to the future development of the journal.

3.0 Review the focus, scope, format and target audience of the Range Management Newsletter with special reference to growing Society membership and submissions of news and articles, both nationally and overseas.

Issues to be addressed include:

- 3.1 frequency of publication;
- 3.2 electronic publication of the Newsletter on the website of the Australian Rangeland Society, in addition to hard copies, with the view to extending the audience;
- 3.3 use of material from sources other than members to increase the news content;
- 3.4 material of interest to non-pastoral members of the Society; and
- 3.5 format and cover design consistent with these four issues and any others.

4.0 Evaluate the desirability of the Society initiating and managing the production of books and other published material for tertiary level students and interest groups amongst members.

5.0 Evaluate the focus, scope and format of the ARS website with special reference to growing Society membership.

6.0 Report to the Council of the Society by 31 December 2005.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION – THE RANGELAND JOURNAL**

**Dr R.D.B. (Wal) Whalley, Editor**

### **Frequency of Publication**

The Rangeland Journal is published twice a year – in June and December. We usually publish a Special Issue (often with a Guest Editor) every year or two, depending on the availability of regular papers and the suggestions we receive, or make, for Special Issues. The ARS has recently signed a contract with CSIRO Publishing for them to publish the Journal for the Australian Rangeland Society and the hope is to grow the Journal to more issues each year and to develop it into a truly international publication. Electronic publishing is also part of this contract. This new arrangement will commence with Issue 1 of Volume 27 to appear in June, 2005.

### **Usual Content**

The Rangeland Journal follows the format of a scientific journal. We have no limitation on the length of articles and accept both long and short, but have no special category for either. We also include reviews of books of interest to rangeland scientists and managers and occasionally PhD Thesis summaries. The first two paragraphs in the 'Notice to Contributors' define the types of articles we accept and are varied from time to time, depending on the trends in rangeland science as indicated by the ARS Biennial

Conferences and the International Rangeland Congresses. These two paragraphs have recently been modified and the latest versions are reproduced below:

“The Rangeland Journal publishes papers of merit for a readership of scientists, educators, managers and users of rangelands within Australia and internationally. Contributions may be on any aspect of the ecology, use, management or conservation of rangelands, including wider rangeland issues such as land tenure and tourism.

Papers may present the results of original research, contributions to theory or management, or new conclusions reached from the review of a topic. Their structure need not conform to that of standard scientific articles but writing style must be clear and concise. Papers describing management practice are acceptable where that practice is well documented, critically analysed and objectively presented.”

The emphasis is on merit and the paper making a contribution of value to our readership of “scientists, educators, managers and users of rangelands within Australia and internationally”. Most of the papers published follow the standard format of scientific research papers but other formats are common. The important characteristics for acceptance are for a paper to present new data or reach new conclusions, be well documented, and contain a critical analysis, the results of which are objectively presented.

### **Target Audience**

I would like to believe that the Journal targets the entire ARS population including those interested in rangelands world-wide and provides technical information for those interested in rangeland science and/or the theoretical aspects behind the day to day activities of rangeland managers and members of regulatory agencies. Therefore, it is perhaps of more interest to researchers, bureaucrats, educators and students than practical ‘on the ground’ rangeland managers many of whom would relate more to the Newsletter.

### **Forms of Presentation Used**

The Rangeland Journal is currently prepared using Microsoft Word in black and white. Colour can be provided for special pages (e.g. maps) but a page charge of the extra cost of printing the colour pages is levied on the author(s). Figures can be prepared by authors in any form which allows them to be imported into a MS Word document as a ‘Picture’ or ‘Object’ – thus they can be prepared in MS Powerpoint or other drawing programs such as MS Excel. Because of the large variety of drawing software available, we request good quality hard copies of Figures in case we have difficulty opening the files. All Figures are requested in separate files instead of, or as well as versions imported into the document. Tables must be prepared using the MS Word ‘Tables’ facility rather than using tabs. Original digital copies of photographs (usually as JPEGs) (or good quality prints) must be supplied and they are then imported directly into the document (after scanning if necessary) either in black and white, or in colour if the author is prepared to pay the extra cost. Electronic submission for papers will be encouraged in future issues if prospective authors have the appropriate facilities and this will place more constraints on the formats that are acceptable. However, hard copy submission will still be an option.

Under the new contract, electronic copies will be available to ARS members plus people associated with participating libraries. CSIRO Publishing is committed to increasing sales to institutional libraries around the world and so have electronic copies of the Journal available for their members. Australian Rangeland society members will receive a paper version of each issue as well as having access to the electronic version. A further advantage resulting from the new arrangement is that for regular issues (not Special Issues) papers will be available in electronic format within a few days of papers being accepted in their final form by the Editor, often well before the paper version of the Journal appears.

### **Size of Each Issue**

The Journal has been produced to date in B5 size with of the order of 125 pages per issue, or 250 pages per volume. We have agreed that under the present contract, the size will be increased to cropped A4 in two column format for the contract price. The advantage of this format is that the number of words per line is reduced making for easier reading and more words can be published in a 100 page issue. There will be a financial advantage in keeping the page numbers to 100 per issue under the present contract. The present contract includes a fee of \$21,000 for 200 pages per volume.

### **Comments on Format**

Up until 1990, the Journal was published in cropped A4 format under the name The Australian Rangeland Journal. In 1991, the name was changed to The Rangeland Journal to try to encourage international participation, the size was reduced to B5 (because most scientific journals were produced in that size at that time) and the cover changes to a more conservative design. The aim was to make the Journal more “scientific” and to raise the standard of the papers. At the time, the Journal was not listed among the international scientific journals in publications such as Current Contents and Science Citation Index. Both of the above aims have now been achieved and The Rangeland Journal is now included in the international listings. Fashions have also changed and CSIRO Publishing is keen to update the cover design and format. The Publications Committee is intent on ‘evolution’ rather than ‘revolution’ because of the importance of the Journal to ARS. Accordingly, we have agreed to the increased size mentioned above, to some colour changes to the cover, the inclusion of the CSIRO and ARS logos and a small photograph illustrating one or more of the articles on the rear cover, some additional words and some dot points encapsulating the scope of the Journal will be on the front cover. The details are still being negotiated.

### **Editor Credentials**

I have been the Editor of The Rangeland Journal since taking over from Dr. Allan Wilson in 1999. Previous to that, I was Chairman of the Editorial Committee of The Australian Rangeland Journal from 1977 to 1979 and an Associate Editor from 1990 to 1999. I have a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture degree with Honours from the University of Sydney (1956) and a Ph D in Plant Sciences from The University of California, USA (1965). I worked as a research agronomist for the NSW Department of Agriculture at Trangie, NSW from 1956 to 1962 and commenced as a Lecturer in Botany at UNE in 1965. I retired as an Associate Professor at the end of 1998 and have been an Honorary Fellow in Botany since then.

### **Role of the Editor**

The role of the Editor is, in consultation with the Publications Committee, to be responsible for the content of The Rangeland Journal both with respect to the sorts of articles accepted and to their quality. The Editor is assisted in this task by several Associate Editors selected on the basis of their areas of expertise and willingness to be involved in the production side of



scientific publication. Articles accepted for publication must be consistent with the aims of the Journal as described in the first two paragraphs of the Notice to Contributors. The Editor, in consultation with the Publications Committee, is responsible for ensuring that these two paragraphs accurately reflect the trends that are occurring in the rangelands of Australia and the world and therefore the articles that are accepted for publication. These two paragraphs have recently been amended, as described above. The Editor, in consultation with the Publications Committee, is also responsible for soliciting articles in various ways to ensure a satisfactory flow of papers and for the production of Special Issues of interest to members of the Society.

Upon receiving articles, the Editor is responsible for assessing their general suitability for publication and for arranging for them to be refereed to international standards. This involves either assigning each paper to an Associate Editor to handle or handling the paper himself. The Editor is also responsible for ensuring that the procedures used by the Associate Editors are all consistent and that authors find dealing with The Rangeland Journal a pleasurable experience so that they will be happy to submit further papers in the future.

Once a paper is accepted, the Editor is responsible for transmitting the completed manuscripts to the Business Manager so that the two issues can be published on time each year. The deadline for Issue 1 is 31<sup>st</sup> March and for Issue 2 is 30<sup>th</sup> September, each year. The Business Manager then arranges for the formatting of each issue, checking of the page proofs by the corresponding author of each paper and for the printing and distribution of each issue.

Some modification of these procedures will be necessary because of the new arrangements with CSIRO Publishing. The deadlines will remain the same in the short term and there will be some changes in the Associate Editors to add to the international flavour of the Journal.

### **Final comments**

Over the last six years, I have endeavoured to maintain the same high standards of publication instituted by Dr. Allan Wilson and also be responsive to the changes that are occurring in the rangelands of Australia and the world. I believe that the arrangement with CSIRO Publishing will raise the status of the Journal and the visibility of the Australian Rangeland Society in Australia and internationally. I look forward to the future of The Rangeland Journal with optimism.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION – RANGE MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER**

**Dr Noelene Duckett, Editor**

### **Frequency of Publication**

*RMN* is published three times a year – in March, July and November. The July edition usually includes yearly reports from Council (President, Finance and Auditing, Subscription Report etc)

### **Usual Content**

The newsletter follows a fairly standard format. Each issue usually has 2 or 3 major articles (anything from 3-8 pages in length) and then several shorter articles. Shorter articles include the Council communications report, new members list, membership form and information snippets section (includes website, publication and conference information) and possibly conference reports, thesis abstracts, letters to the editor, book reviews or other information of interest to members. I also try to include ‘newsy’ items in an attempt to keep members

informed of issues in the rangelands however this can be difficult given the infrequency of publication. This latter issue also has ramifications for including articles promoting funding opportunities and positions available – often these have already closed by the time the newsletter would be posted.

Longer articles are included on a wide variety of rangeland topics of interest to readers. Because the newsletter is considered to be ‘less technical’ than The Rangeland Journal, articles by younger researchers and land managers are particularly encouraged. However, we do receive a number of articles from well-respected scientists including people from the CSIRO, universities and government departments.

Over the last few years there has been a reasonable supply of major articles. Around a half of these articles are volunteered; others were obtained following contact from the Editor. Several people, particularly Ian Watson, Leigh Hunt and Gary Bastin have helped with ideas for major articles – their support is very much appreciated.

### **Target Audience**

I would like to believe that the newsletter targets the entire ARS population. It is ‘less technical’ than the journal should be of more interest to land managers and general interest groups (cf. researchers). I would hope that the newsletter is the publication that members would consider to be the primarily source of information about the Society and what it is up to – if they don’t we are in trouble!

### **Forms of Presentation Used**

The newsletter is currently prepared using Microsoft Word in black and white only (no colour). Figures can be prepared by authors in any form which allows them to be imported into a MS Word document as a ‘Picture’ or ‘Object’ – thus they can be prepared in MS Powerpoint or other drawing programs. Tables are prepared using MS Word and graphs are usually prepared by authors in MS Excel and pasted into the newsletter document. Original digital copies of photographs (usually as JPEGs) are supplied to the printer who then imports them directly into the document - this process has much improved the quality of the photos.

### **Size of Each Issue**

Each issue varies in size from 16-28 pages depending on the number and length of articles received. Issues are most commonly 20 or 24 pages in length.

### **Comments on Format**

The newsletter has ‘looked the same’ for a number of years. In recent times there have been several suggestions of changes from both the Editor and others - these have not come about for a number of reasons.

*Changing format and including colour* – Print costs are likely to increase from \$1200 to around \$5000 per issue. A graphic designer may be required – cost of \$150/hour.

*Changing existing cover* – A new cover design has been sought on a number of occasions. Several years ago a number of people forwarded new designs but none were approved by the Publications Committee.

*Update of format but remaining black and white* – I would be keen to update the look of the newsletter but realise that this would likely require the use of more specialised publishing software (eg Adobe InDesign, Microsoft Publisher etc). If the Society is supportive of this I would be very enthusiastic about learning how to use new software to improve the newsletter. Of course, we would need to check what formats the printing firms prefer (especially the current printers as they seem to be doing a great job at low cost) and how much the software

would cost (I think the Adobe programs run at around \$1500 but I may be able to organise academic pricing).

### **Editor Credentials**

I have been the Editor of the newsletter since taking over from Mr Gary Bastin in 2001. I have a Bachelor of Science degree with Honours (Botany/Zoology) and a Ph D in Rangeland Ecology, all from The University of Adelaide (1994). I worked as a rangeland ecologist for the Western Australian Department of Agriculture from 1994-2001 and as a Natural Resource Management Consultant for URS in Melbourne for a short time in 2001. During this time I authored and co-authored a number of technical publications and conference papers. I moved to Houston, Texas in mid-2001 when my husband received an intra-company transfer with ExxonMobil. We expect to return to Australia in mid-2006.

### **Role of the Editor**

The role of the Editor is to source research and general interest articles (both long and short) from as wide a variety of fields as possible. This involves contacting a number of 'people in the know' and also visiting various websites etc to find out about current projects, conferences etc. Sometimes lots of things seem to be going on so articles are easily come by; at other times this is not the case!

After receiving articles, the Editor is responsible for assessing their suitability for publication. In some cases, articles are received in excellent condition for publishing; in other instances articles require considerable work to get them up to standard. This latter situation usually involves work by both the Editor and the author(s). Only on very few occasions have I referred an article to another person (usually Leigh Hunt, the former Publications Committee Chair) to assess suitability or help with getting a paper into an acceptable form.

The Editor also ensures that the standard reports due for the appropriate issue, such as the Council communications report, new member list and AGM reports are prepared and submitted in a timely manner, as far as is possible.

Additionally, the Editor is responsible for formatting of the newsletter to the current standard. I also do the proof-reading of the final draft before it is emailed to Malcolm Howes who has taken over the printing and posting of the newsletter since I moved overseas. Malcolm usually does just a quick check of each issue (just to check that the emailed copy prints out OK with page numbers, footers etc in the right place) before he sends it to the printers.

### **Resources provided by ARS**

The Editor of the newsletter receives a taxable Honorarium of \$1266.40 per year. The Society also pays the costs associated with the printing and posting of each issue. As I work on the newsletter from home (I am not doing paid work here in the US) all other costs incurred by the Editor are self-funded (including software purchases, internet access, sundry postage, stationary items etc.)

## **APPENDIX 2:**

# **Recommendations for the Publications of the Australian Rangeland Society October 2005**

### **Background**

In March 2005, the Council of the ARS invited Mr John Childs, Dr Jocelyn Davies, Dr Ron Hacker, Prof John Taylor and Dr Dionne Walsh to form a committee to conduct a review of the Society's publications. The Terms of Reference provided to the committee are summarised below. The committee conducted the review via telephone conferences and email. The committee invited Dr Ken Hodgkinson (Publications Committee) and Mr David Wilcox (ARS President) to each participate in a telephone conference in order to provide contextual information. The committee also drew on resources such as reports from the Editors of the Journal and the Newsletter, the ARS Business Plan 2001-5 and recent ARS Council meeting minutes.

### **Terms of Reference (see body of report for sub-headings)**

1. To review the focus, scope, format and target audience of The Rangeland Journal with special reference to growing society membership and submissions of manuscripts, both nationally and overseas.
2. Review the focus, scope, format and target audience of the Range Management Newsletter with special reference to growing Society membership and submissions of news and articles, both nationally and overseas.
3. Evaluate the desirability of the Society initiating and managing the production of books and other published material for tertiary level students and interest groups amongst members.
4. Evaluate the focus, scope and format of the ARS website with special reference to growing Society membership.

### **Major Recommendations**

This report consists of a series of major recommendations and strategies for achieving them. These are outlined under each of the Terms of Reference in the body of the report. In summary, the major recommendations of the review committee are as follows:

1. The committee recommends that a "content analysis" be undertaken for the Journal, the RMN and the website to identify current overlaps and gaps in coverage.
2. Given that the web site will be the means by which most potential readers and members will have contact with us; the ARS should commission an analysis of the design and content of the website for the future.
3. Given the power of the internet in attracting members, Council should seriously consider formalising the position of website manager (designated or contracted).

4. The Scope and Editorial Policy of the Society's Journal should be changed to more appropriately reflect the broad range of issues and interests in the rangelands, both in Australia and internationally.
5. The composition of the Editorial Board of the Journal should reflect the emerging international focus.
6. The Range Management Newsletter (RMN) should be revised in presentation, content and layout to make it enticing to a wider spectrum of readers.
7. The RMN should be published quarterly.
8. The RMN should be published and distributed electronically (while maintaining an option for hard copy delivery) and linked to the web site.
9. Attention to the existing publications, and growth of membership, should take clear priority over the publication of books. While book publication should be considered a legitimate aspiration for the Society any such venture should be based on sound market research and individual publications should be subject to a business plan approved by Council, with formally contracted writing, editing, publishing and marketing commitments.
10. The Society must commit to periodically evaluating the effectiveness of all its publications in order to ensure that they are valuable and pertinent to members and remain contemporary with trends in rangeland management and publishing.
11. Adoption of any strategy recommended by this review must either acknowledge that we rely on volunteers and limit the work-load accordingly or alternatively have an approach to develop an income stream to employ people for defined tasks.

### **The Society & Its Publications – A View from the Committee**

The Society has to decide and get agreement on what it wants to be, before the nature of its communications can be determined. Trying to be a ‘holistic’ organisation will be difficult. We could end up being too “simple” or general for the technocrats and discipline specialists (who will go elsewhere) and too narrow and hypothetical for the practitioners.

If the Society is to be a leader in communicating on the sustainable management and protection of rangeland landscapes and ecosystems, then the Journal must have a wider focus on the social, economic and biophysical processes of, and the policy influences on, the rangelands. The Editorial Board must be prepared to have a much more relaxed approach to the type of papers it encourages and accepts, whilst maintaining high production and editorial standards. The Newsletter must support innovation and new ideas and fearlessly foster informed discussion of diverse and controversial issues. It needs to become a ‘must read’ for anyone interested and influential in rangeland management. The web site needs to become the first point of reference for anyone interested in rangeland landscapes in Australia.

**TOR 1: Review the focus, scope, format and target audience of The Rangeland Journal with special reference to growing society membership and submissions of manuscripts, both nationally and overseas.**

During the review process, the committee became aware that Council had already made significant plans for the future of the Journal. The Journal is now being published electronically by CSIRO Publishing, which should increase its international

reach. The committee has thus endeavoured to identify strategies to augment the plans, as we understand them, already in train for the Journal.

#### Major Recommendations:

- The Scope and Editorial Policy of the Society's Journal should be changed to more appropriately reflect the broad range of interests in the rangelands, both in Australia and internationally.
- The composition of the Editorial Board of the Journal should reflect the emerging international focus.

### **1.7 Should manuscripts on the widest range of environments, polar to tropical and arid to humid, where pastoralism is a dominant activity in local and regional communities, be sought?**

The committee felt that the implied definition of rangelands as areas 'where pastoralism is a dominant activity' is outmoded. If we are to define the scope of environments to be covered after first applying this filter, then we are omitting more than half Australia's arid regions (and significant potential membership interests). We felt that manuscripts from polar and tropical environments (i.e. other extensive environments) should be accepted if they fit within the scope outlined below. This would not exclude these areas, but would put the focus clearly on arid and semi-arid environments and would indicate some of the defining features that shape the scope of 'rangeland issues'.

Several of the definitions of rangelands in current use (eg. NLWRA 2001) make no mention of land use, referring rather to grasslands, shrublands, woodlands and open forests. Importantly, these definitions recognise the simple existence value in some areas, that rangelands are multi-functional, and that use is changing in other areas (diversification and multiple-use).

Suggested Scope: Arid, semi-arid and other extensive environments where human populations are sparse and where natural ecological processes continue to shape vegetation, wildlife, landforms, productivity levels and land use.

In terms of marketing, the Editorial Policy of our Journal must distinguish us from our competitors. The committee reviewed the editorial policies of a substantial number of competing journals and found that for the most part they are poorly defined, particularly in emphasis given to socio-economic and policy issues. This presents an opportunity for the Society. By being more explicit about our scope, and promoting this, we will have a better chance of attracting authors and new members.

Suggested Editorial Policy: The Rangeland Journal publishes original work that makes a significant contribution to understanding the biophysical, social, economic, and policy influences affecting rangeland use and management. Rangelands are defined broadly and include all those environments where natural ecological processes continue to shape vegetation, wildlife and landforms and where economic utilisation is based primarily on natural capital.

## Recommended Strategies

- Modify the CSIRO Publishing “Call to Authors” to reflect the scope outlined above.
- Ensure that the “Notice to Contributors” reflects the “Call to Authors” – both of these need updating.
- The “Call to Authors” should make it clear that papers may deal with relevant aspects of land administration and policy. Otherwise, potential authors might assume that ‘management’ means only hands-on resource management.
- Widen the membership of the Editorial Board to include a wider range of key stakeholder groups and to include international representation.
- Delegate Editorial Board members to keep a watching brief on national and international conferences, UN agency programs etc and identify topics and potential authors for special issues or individual invited papers (coordinated through the Editor).
- Delegate Editorial Board members to keep a watching brief on AANRO to know what research is going on in Australian rangelands.
- Consider increasing the frequency of publication to 4 issues per year.
- Actively solicit a few papers on emerging issues from non-traditional environments.
- Address issues of interest more aggressively through invited contribution to forums and reviews.
- Consider the preferential inclusion of high standard international papers in the next few issues to increase the perception that it is a truly international journal.
- Send out annual “invitations” to selected international authors to submit manuscripts.
- Identify topics that are of international importance (e.g. pastoral systems research, disequilibrium systems etc) and seek both Australian and international contributors to Special Issues on these topics.

### **1.8 Should manuscripts on use of rangeland resources for tourism, niche industries, mining of minerals and industries other than pastoralism be sought?**

The committee felt that this would be highly desirable given the growing interest in diversification from our current membership and the significance of these industries in many rangeland regions. In terms of growing the membership, it would be prudent to include these uses.

## Recommended Strategies

- See 1.1.
- Increase effort in commissioning papers by inviting relevant authors to submit to the Journal.
- Schedule Special Issues covering these topics.
- Undertake a publicity campaign targeting peak organisations or professional associations to publicise the new editorial policy of the Journal (inviting suggestions for Special Issues and perhaps even offering co-editorship).
- Delegate individual members of the Publications Committee to liaise with particular disciplinary/industry bodies.

### **1.9 Should manuscripts on sustainable and resilient systems (of growing interest to Government agencies and regional communities) be sought?**

The committee felt that this would be highly desirable in order to retain and grow the membership. It is important to keep the science relevant to policy thinking and the policy thinking accountable to science. The process of developing regional plans (NHT, Salinity, Water Quality) has highlighted a host of issues that all stakeholders will have to grapple with to achieve their management and aspirational targets. Fifty-two groups in Australia are now thinking seriously about these issues, and are being hampered by the lack of relevant information.

#### Recommended Strategies

- See 1.2.
- Commission a survey of policy makers, land administrators and regional organisations to identify areas where knowledge is most limiting for target setting and policy formation – publish results and encourage submissions or development of research projects.
- Call for papers on current and emerging issues.
- Encourage systems-oriented papers which are joint-authored by authors of different disciplines.
- Actively encourage the reporting of ‘case study’ based research, particularly material from resource managers.

### **1.10 Should reviews of knowledge be sought for the benefit of policy makers, government agency staff and managers of various industries?**

The committee felt that this would be desirable given that much basic research is not easily accessible or integrated in a form useful to policy makers. Such material would also assist graduates entering the workforce.

#### Recommended Strategies

- As for 1.3.
- Include a section on the website for these “position” papers.
- Seek announcements/explanations of new and relevant policy initiatives in various jurisdictions.
- Ensure that any material sourced from recent books is clearly identified so that the book can be promoted.
- Actively foster threads on new policy through on-line discussions on the web-site. (Note: This will require someone to moderate the discussions).

### **1.11 Should an international authorship and reading of the Journal be promoted?**

The committee is aware that Council and CSIRO Publishing are already committed to this path and we support this. CSIRO publishing has a number of strategies in mind such as full text coding (not pdf) so that papers are easier to access through searches which increases citations and use. The committee felt that this aim would be achieved to the extent that recommendations made in this report and other initiatives being considered by Council are successfully implemented.



## Recommended Strategies

- See 1.1.
- Focus on current and emerging rangeland issues, rather than disciplines, that are of national and international interest.
- Modify CSIRO Publishing's "Call to Authors". The current version is still Australian-centric (i.e. "Contributions may be on any aspect.....either within Australia or internationally"). If we want to be an international journal, we should just say internationally.
- The Call to Authors should state that the Journal offers **international recognition** (not just global circulation).
- Target international editors with author trails to join our Editorial Board.
- Engage influential people for reviews/as reviewers.
- Consider a Special Issue containing reviews of what is relevant internationally from what we have learned of rangeland management in the Australian environment.

### 1.12 Other matters related to the future development of the Journal.

The committee concurs with the recommendations from CSIRO Publishing that:

- Special Issues are essential (they are more highly cited and accessed).
- The ARS should team up with/link to related conferences and publish their keynote papers (not just our conference).
- The ARS should foster closer links with CRCs (Tropical Savannas, Desert Knowledge, Weeds, etc.) and key regional bodies (e.g. Lake Eyre Basin) to preferentially publish their papers, reports and/or workshop proceedings.
- The ARS should develop key performance indicators for the Journal (e.g. timeliness, no. pages, impact factor, no. submissions, etc.).
- Promotion and marketing be made more professional (e.g. a simple call to authors that includes the scope and contacts) and a more detailed fact sheet (scope, Editorial Board, impact factor, ranking, how it's published, distribution, number of copies, contacts, etc.).
- The Editorial Board must be truly international and have 2-3 year terms to cycle members and attract younger members.

### Other Recommended Strategies

- Invite reviews.
- Invite 'viewpoint' papers (i.e. personal views supported by the literature) from leading individuals.
- Invite 'perspectives' papers (i.e. two or more differing viewpoints, followed by an agreed way forward).
- Include an opinion section for well reasoned but non-experimental papers, or novel ideas.
- Include short communications (some of which now sit in the RMN).
- Drop book reviews from the Journal (place in the RMN or on the website).
- Promote the Journal and Society at national and international meetings.
- In the Instructions to Contributors, remove the need to have manuscripts peer

reviewed before submission. This requirement is inconsistent with other international journals. It should be easy to determine at a glance whether a manuscript is fit for forwarding to sub-editors and reviewers.

**TOR 2: Review the focus, scope, format and target audience of the Range Management Newsletter with special reference to growing Society membership and submissions of news and articles, both nationally and overseas.**

The committee felt that the RMN is often seen as the "B-grade" publication of the Society compared to the Journal despite the fact that it contains very different material and should be complementary rather than competitive. With the Journal going to electronic publication, it will be more widely accessible to non-members and will be accessed casually by many more people. This highlights the role of the RMN as the flagship publication of the Society for its members. The RMN should be about short, timely communications; directed at and easily accessible by members, and should promote engagement of others and increase membership.

The committee recommends that a "content analysis" be undertaken for the Journal, the RMN and the website to identify current overlaps and gaps in coverage. The analysis should also compile a list of all material published in RMN and determine what should go into the Journal and what can be attached to the website. For example, the committee was made aware of CSIRO Publishing's view that the current research articles in the RMN should probably be published as Short Communiqués in the Journal. A contents analysis should help to determine the scope and focus of the RMN which will clarify which of the suggested strategies should be implemented.

Major Recommendations:

- The Range Management Newsletter (RMN) should be revised in presentation, content and layout to make it more current and enticing to a wider spectrum of readers.
- The RMN should be published quarterly.
- The RMN should be published and distributed electronically (while retaining an option for hard copy distribution) and accessible via the web site.

### **6.1 Frequency of publication.**

The committee felt that to increase the "timeliness" and enhance contact with members, the RMN should be published quarterly. However, the committee also recognised that it may be difficult for the Editor alone to gather enough material for this to occur. It is suggested that members of Council and the Publications Committee might have a role in identifying relevant material and forwarding it to the Editor of the RMN. Furthermore, quarterly publication would probably increase the burden on the volunteer editor, thus requiring some modification of the current arrangement.

### **6.2 Electronic publication of the Newsletter on the website of the Australian Rangeland Society, in addition to hard copies, with the view to extending the audience.**

The committee felt that it was highly desirable to publish and distribute the RMN electronically and also link it to the website. Email is going to be increasingly important for communicating with members, but keeping a reasonably up-to-date address list will be a major task, and will probably require some resources. We can't escape the fact that the internet will be the major tool for showcasing the Society to potential members.

### Recommended Strategies

- Move to electronic publication with hard copies forwarded to libraries and to members who are not e-accessible. Have a hard-copy subscription rate (which might be at a higher rate for libraries).
- Establish an email membership list well in advance of the first electronic issue (subject to the provisos above).
- Deliver the RMN in the form of a "notification email". This notification email should consist of the headings and a few words/sentences for each article. Readers can then click on a link to access the full article/more information. This allows people to browse and find the content of interest easily. For people requiring a full formatted copy, the e-version should have a link to a file on the website (see the format of the Conservation Council of SA as an example of a good e-newsletter).
- The RMN should be available to anyone on the website, though to give a membership incentive it might be decided to embargo non-member access for say 3 months (or give non-members access to old issues once a new one is released). Two examples from other societies illustrate different and potentially useful newsletter strategies:
  - The International Association for Study of Common Property had a 6 month time lag before the newsletter went on the website, but has recently scrapped this, such that the newsletter is now published on the web at the same time as it is emailed to members. They reasoned that people are members for reasons of sharing in a common endeavour and that the incentive of immediate access to the newsletter was trivial compared to the common shared purpose. That Society is interdisciplinary, active (conferences, regional meetings, regionalisation efforts, bibliographic efforts) and growing, and the newsletter has significant bibliographic content and thematic and think-pieces which are shorter and less research focused than one would expect from journal papers.
  - The Australian Consumers Association publishes its 'Choice' magazine on their website and makes it available by subscription only. People can purchase individual articles via the web site, or join for several months only. Their website also includes other material of a general nature.

### **6.3 Use of material from sources other than members to increase the news content.**

The committee did not have a problem with reproducing articles from other sources (with permission) so long as it was done sparingly. The continued production of the RMN is dependent on the dedication of a few people (the contributors and the editor). Unless greater energy can be mustered to contribute, all the best ideas can't be put into practice. Putting the following ideas into place requires existing members to

make significant effort to contribute and solicit contributions from non-traditional ARS sectors/stakeholders.

#### Recommended Strategies

- Include more topical material including ‘hot issues’, new resources (books and major reports), new policy and notification of major new research.
- Publish links to other publications or things happening (usually via web addresses).
- Solicit ‘think pieces’ from non-members targeting topical (or sleeper) issues.
- Consider removing the longish technical articles from RMN. The committee recognises that there is a need for a space for research and management communications that are in progress or otherwise not substantial enough for journal publication. Perhaps this could be provided via web-based publication of updates, working papers, unrefereed papers and communications regarding research and management practices.

#### **6.4 Material of interest to non-pastoral members of the Society.**

The committee felt that this is highly desirable but must be done in a way that does not lose the interest of pastoral members. The future of the Society is dependent on broadening the membership base and material in the RMN should shift to target **all** people working in rangeland livelihoods that rely on natural and cultural resources. Such a scope allows us to remain cognisant of the roots of the Society and acknowledge that the majority of our long-term members do have a pastoral focus.

#### Recommended Strategies

- See 2.3.
- Invite articles from a wide range of potential authors, including youth.
- Increase effort in commissioning articles.
- Get leading individuals in these non-pastoral disciplines to write ‘controversial’ lead articles to establish our credentials and interest in these fields.
- Explicitly include issues that appeal to both pastoral and non-pastoral interests (e.g. public access, native title, climate change, water management, kangaroo management, on- and off- reserve conservation, tourism).
- Consider publication of thematic issues of the RMN to target new membership sectors (and engage people by soliciting the articles in the first place). Thematic issues could deal with such topics as climate change, tourism, public access to pastoral leases, changing patterns of lease ownership, adaptive management, social impact of mining etc, water management, comparing experiences with NHT2 and integrated NRM planning from various regions.
- Include forthcoming conferences and conference reports from international conferences and other conferences with relevance to rangelands (not just the ARS conference).
- Include articles on policy direction, reviews and changes – including legislation reviews regarding pastoral leases, significant native title happenings (a source for the latter is the AIATSIS monthly Native Title newsletter) and debates on issues related to rangeland management (e.g. drought relief).
- Include profiles of people working in the rangelands (increase popular interest).

- Advertise NRM events (regional, national) that are related to rangelands. The Society could charge for this.
- Consider issues and policy reviews for non-pastoral uses of rangelands – e.g. tourism strategy development, public access/recreation and tourism use on pastoral leases, enterprise based conservation, indigenous protected areas, threatened species management, land management in mining regions.
- Increase coverage of social issues in rangelands and get “bush voices” perspectives on these (e.g. HREOC report “Bush Talks” which is now a few years old).
- Consider a section for listing recent publications/reports.

### **6.5 Format and cover design consistent with these four issues and any others.**

The committee felt that the RMN is in need of a major revision including a redesign of the cover and magazine layout, to make it enticing to readers. It needs to be a heterogeneous mix of articles and styles, just like our membership. The Society for Range Management appears to have done a good job of this with their publication "Rangelands". However, we are an organisation of volunteers with no/little capacity to employ staff. This will influence what we can do and the services we can support.

#### Recommended Strategies

- Determine what members would like to see in it. What would make it more enticing?
- Place a greater focus on people – innovators, rangeland people in the news, profiles of Council members, profiles of long standing members, scientists working in rangelands, pastoral administrators, politicians with a policy interest in rangelands, ARS award winners.
- Investigate the costs of hiring marketing experts to determine a new image.
- Change the focus to include more “current affairs” and hot topics.
- Consider dividing it into sections for each of the major member sectors.
- Consider including 3-month rainfall and pasture growth outlooks with a brief commentary and reference to web sites.
- Remove the mandatory reports from Council/executive from the RMN and place them on the web site - they are boring!
- Get professional assistance with the web format design as the main considerations are a distinctive masthead (logo and title).
- Consider a prize draw for contributors.

**TOR 3: Evaluate the desirability of the Society initiating and managing the production of books and other published material for tertiary level students and interest groups amongst members.**

The committee felt that the ARS has a role in initiating books etc., but not the resources to manage the production of them. Book production is a daunting task and is not usually a profitable business for small operators. However, the Society could investigate particular instances where books on rangeland topics might be in demand. The Society could enter into joint arrangements for the publication of appropriate books in order to share the workload and the risk.

#### Major Recommendation:

- Attention to the existing publications, and growth of membership, should take clear priority over the publication of books. While book publication should be considered a legitimate aspiration for the Society any such venture should be based on sound market research and individual publications should be subject to a business plan approved by Council, with formally contracted writing, editing, publishing and marketing commitments.

#### Recommended Strategies (should the ARS pursue this avenue)

- Carefully assess the need, business case and risk involved in any publishing activity without being influenced by a publisher who wants our business, even when they are prepared to carry the risk.
- Develop a process for undertaking market research before committing to production (determine whether publishing houses do this for a fee).
- Investigate the management of such productions with CSIRO Publishing or some other scientific publisher.
- Determine whether the publisher would print on contract to the Society or contract the Society to coordinate production of a volume for them.

<b>TOR 4: Evaluate the focus, scope and format of the ARS website with special reference to growing Society membership.</b>
---

The committee felt that the website should be the Society's most dynamic "publication". The "look" of the website is attractive as it is but more needs to be done to increase its dynamism, current content and interaction with members and potential members. There will need to be a balance between elaborating content and the ongoing work of keeping it up to date.

#### Major Recommendations:

- Given that the web site will be the means by which most potential readers and members will have contact with us, the ARS should commission the analysis and design of an appropriate website for the future.
- Given the power of the internet in attracting members, Council should seriously consider formalising the position of website manager (designated or contracted).

#### Recommended Strategies

- Allow members to join and pay on-line.
- Increase dynamism through fortnightly (or monthly) updating with current affairs, coming events and announcements.
- Use the website to house "briefing papers", ARS policies, ("both sides of the issue" briefs).
- Conduct "live" debates/forums on a monthly or quarterly basis on a hot topic.
- Maintain and highlight links with other rangeland-related societies.
- Improve the user-friendliness of the newsletter article links. Currently these are not very accessible to browsers, as you need to open each newsletter link and download to see what the articles are about.

- Include information on past ARS award winners.
- When we last looked, the current content was out of date in at least some respects (e.g. Journal Table of Contents and abstracts, newsletters).
- Ensure that the most current Rangeland Journal “Notice to Contributors” is also on the website.
- Focus the content and therefore the updates into a few products and ensure that there is responsibility taken by designated people for these (with a web site manager keeping the whole thing operational) to ensure that the website does not become too unwieldy to manage.
- Publish the newsletter on the website (e.g. in html so it can have live links and be readily browseable). As noted previously, there could be delayed access for non-members. Avoid pdf versions as these are not browseable using keywords.
- Consider a working paper series carrying the kinds of articles that are now lead articles in the RMN. The newsletter could also carry them when first published, or highlight new ones that have been published on the website. Web publication would make these articles more accessible to browsers (both human and robotic ones). This would be more likely to attract new members. Implementation of this recommendation would need a coordinator to seek out, coordinate and edit/publish such articles.
- Initiate the web publication of the conference papers and posters. This would make a major contribution to showing the diversity of the Society’s interests and capitalise on the interest that the conferences clearly attract. Web publication should include pdfs of posters, rather than just text summaries.
- Host issues briefs (e.g. one page each on the pros and cons of positions on various topical issues). These could be published periodically and their existence advertised to members via the RMN. A coordinator would need to put effort into commissioning, coordinating and editing/publishing these issues briefs, and identifying links to past and forthcoming research/ review papers on these issues.
- Ensure that all information important to attracting members is on the website (e.g. aims of the ARS, purpose, how Council is selected, annual reports, advantages of being a member, dues etc.). At present the latter requires downloading of application form – an extra step which is a disincentive to those that are not sure about joining.

---

Dr Dionne Walsh  
Chair

On behalf of the Publications Review Committee - Mr John Childs, Dr Jocelyn Davies, Dr Ron Hacker and Prof John Taylor

21st October 2005

## **APPENDIX 3:**

### **THE RANGELAND JOURNAL EDITOR'S COMMENTS**

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE REVIEW COMMITTEE ON ARS PUBLICATIONS**

**NOVEMBER, 2005**

##### **General comments**

I am delighted with the report from the Review Committee. I believe they have reinforced the direction for the Journal that the Publications Committee has been attempting to achieve over a number of years and have made some very positive suggestions about how progress in these directions can be enhanced. Their recommendations also have implications for the day to day activities involved in the production of the Journal and I believe we will have to call on more input from members of the Publications Committee in order to accommodate these changes.

The Review Committee refers to the 'Editorial Board' a number of times in their report. I presume they refer to the Editor and Associate Editors who, in an earlier version of the CSIRO Publications website, were referred to as the 'Editorial Board'. Under our present arrangements, the Associate Editors have little input into policy decisions and I do not believe we should change their duties. Therefore, we should interpret 'Editorial Board' as 'Publications Committee' when discussing the Report of the Review Committee.

##### **Specific comments**

1. P. 2, under "View from the Committee". I find it hard to see how we could be more relaxed than we are in the types of papers that we accept, while still maintaining quality. I can't remember when I last rejected a paper because it did not fit the "type" of paper we accept. All our rejections that I can recall are because of poor quality.
2. P. 3, Suggested Scope. I agree with the emphasis on broadening the scope of the Journal. However, I believe the Suggested Scope as outlined here is too narrow and is in conflict with the sentiments expressed in other parts of the report. If we accept this wording for the Scope, it would discourage submission of many excellent papers that have been published in the Journal in the past. I believe that "Arid, semi-arid and other" and "where human populations are sparse" should be omitted so that the Suggested Scope should read: "Environments where natural ecological processes continue to shape vegetation, wildlife, landforms, productivity levels and land use".
3. P. 3, Suggested Editorial Policy. I like the wording of this section a lot and believe we should replace the present first paragraph in the present "Notice to Contributors" with this statement. As suggested in the Report, this statement should also replace the present ones in appropriate places on the CSIRO Publishing web site.



4. Pp. 3-4, Recommended strategies. The Report lists 12 individual strategies to widen the scope and the number of issues of the Journal each year. Some of these strategies are easy to apply, some are already in train and have been for some time. Others are more difficult and we will have to develop an operational plan in order to achieve these. Where the Report recommends Editorial Board action, we will have to call on members of the Publications Committee to be more active than in the past. Ken and I cannot do all that is necessary to achieve these strategies. I would like to comment on some of the individual strategies.
5. Strategy No. 4 – widen membership. We have recently widened the membership of the Publications Committee and we would be delighted to include some international members. We need to answer the question of how big do we make it? The present Committee has eight members and I do not believe it should go over 12 or it would become too unwieldy. Suggestions for new members would be most welcome.
6. Strategy No. 5 – delegate Committee members to keep a watching brief on conferences etc.... Any volunteers? I have done this and invited submission of papers from a number of people but the response rate is low. Perhaps I'm not very good at arm-twisting.
7. Strategy No. 6 – delegate Committee members on research... etc. This means spending some time on the internet searching the AANRO (Australian Agricultural and Natural Resources Online) database for relevant research from where we might elicit good papers. Do we have any volunteers to do this on regular basis and to contact the Editor so the appropriate people can be approached??
8. Strategy No. 8 – emerging issues. I actively did this at the Alice Springs Conference and received some papers but not one of them has as yet made it through the refereeing process.
9. Strategy No. 10 – international papers. How can we get hold of high quality international papers? I have received nine manuscripts from overseas in the last year or so; one is appearing in Vol. 27(2), three are still under consideration and five have been rejected.
10. Strategy No. 11 – invitations to international authors. If members of the Committee can give me suggestions, I can write the invitations, or better still, if you have active colleagues overseas and can do the appropriate arm-twisting, then I can handle it from when I receive an ms.
11. Strategy No. 12 – Special Issues. Of the last four Special Issues and the next one, two came from selected papers at the ARS Biennial Conference, one was initiated by me and two were from people outside the Publications Committee who contacted me offering to be Guest Editors of a Special Issue. We need to keep these going at about one a year.
12. P. 4. Seeking papers dealing with a wider range of topics. I entirely agree with the Report with respect to widening the scope of the papers published in the Journal. However, it is easier said than done and I would welcome any

assistance from the members of the Committee in implementing these strategies.

13. P. 4, Seeking papers on sustainable and resilient systems. I likewise agree with the aims and strategies described in this section and would be delighted with any help from the Committee in implementing these strategies.
14. P. 5, Reviews of knowledge. I agree and some of our most successful papers have been reviews of knowledge. I like the idea of using the web site for discussion of issues but this must be set up through Council because they are responsible for maintaining the web site. We will need to work out how to put the suggested strategies into practice.
15. P. 5, Promotion of international authorship and readership. We have been trying to promote an international image for the Journal for some years now with limited success (see comment 9 above). The Review Committee has made some excellent suggestions about strategies to achieve this aim but it will need a lot of work and results will be slow. We need a volunteer from the Publications Committee to put the suggested strategies into practice.
16. P. 6, Other related matters. Again, I agree entirely with the proposals in the Review Committee's report. However, putting the individual strategies into place will require time and effort and there will be a need for members of the Publications Committee (either new or old) to contribute time towards specific strategies. I would like to comment specifically on several of the suggested strategies.
17. Attracting younger members. We have recently appointed two younger members and certainly need more. I like the theory of having 2-3 years terms to cycle members, but perhaps that time scale is too short. I think experience is an essential ingredient of effective members of the Publications Committee and if members leave too early, then the search for new people to take on the job becomes never-ending.
18. Include short communications. At present, I never say a paper is too short. In other words, we do include short communications in the Journal at present, but they are not labelled as such. If they are of high quality and short, we are happy to accept them. I suggest this policy should continue.
19. Drop Book Reviews. We have already done this and suggest that future reviews appear in the Newsletter.
20. Delete the need to have manuscripts peer reviewed from the Notice to Contributors. I agree and there seems to be no relationship between manuscript quality and whether or not it has been peer reviewed before it comes to us. I think I understand why.

## **Specific proposals**

### **1. CSIRO Publishing**

I have made appropriate changes to the Notice to Contributors and to material that goes out from CSIRO Publications consistent with the Report. These are only drafts and once they are finalised, we will ask CSIRO Publications to make the appropriate changes to their material. Drafts are included in this report.

## 2. Publications Committee

1. Accept the report “Recommendations for the Publications of the Australian Rangeland Society October 2005” and recommend to Council that the 12 listed Major Recommendations be fully accepted.
2. Conduct a “content analysis” by email for the Journal, the RMN and the Website to identify current overlaps and gaps in coverage
3. Approve change of words for the Scope, Notice to Contributors and Call to Authors of The Rangeland Journal. Replace “**The Rangeland Journal.....** tourism.” with “**The Rangeland Journal** publishes original work that makes a significant contribution to understanding the biophysical, social, economic, and policy influences affecting rangeland use and management. Rangelands are defined broadly and include all those environments where natural ecological processes continue to shape vegetation, wildlife and landforms and where economic utilisation is based primarily on natural capital.”
4. Seek approval from and provide names to Council to increase membership of the Publications Committee from the present 8 members to 12 members. Of the four additional members, one would come from Australia and the other three from overseas. The Australian person should be the WebMaster. The names suggested should be people that can add new perspectives to publishing in ways not provided by present members.
5. Appoint a volunteer from PC to keep a watching brief on both national and international conferences and to keep the Editor informed of these. Wal has a poster for such occasions and can print off more copies. Publicity material can be obtained from CSIRO Publishing.
6. Appoint a volunteer from PC to keep a watch on AANRO so the Editor and Associate Editors can contact appropriate people to solicit papers for TRJ.
7. Appoint a small sub-committee from PC (Editor plus 2 others) to routinely initiate and vet proposals for Special Issues before putting them to the full Publications Committee. The challenge here is to assemble authors and topics that will address a national issue just when it becomes a “hot spot”.
8. Appoint a small group from PC to bring TRJ before relevant Australian and overseas Agencies as a journal to publish papers arising from their institutions. Appointments 4 to 7 should rotate each year.
9. Appoint 4 more Associate Editors from overseas to raise the international status of the journal. Since Prof. ‘t Mannetje is in Europe the additional editors should come from the USA, South America, Southern Africa and China.

10. Prepare a case to put to Council for funding a survey of policy makers, land administrators and regional organisations to identify areas where knowledge is most lacking for target setting and policy formation. Results to be published in TRJ.

I can't think of any more at the moment.

R.D.D. Whalley  
Editor, The Rangeland Journal  
1<sup>st</sup> December, 2005

NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS  
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*The Rangeland Journal* publishes original work that makes a significant contribution to understanding the biophysical, social, economic, and policy influences affecting rangeland use and management. Rangelands are defined broadly and include all those environments where natural ecological processes continue to shape vegetation, wildlife and landforms, and where economic utilisation is based primarily on natural capital.

Papers may present the results of original research, contributions to theory, practice or policy, or new conclusions reached from the review of a topic. Their structure need not conform to that of standard scientific articles but writing style must be clear and concise. All material presented must be well documented, critically analysed and objectively presented.

All authors are expected to ensure that their papers meet these requirements before submission, both for content and for correctness in presentation of text, references and illustrations. Submitted papers that do not conform to these requirements may be returned without consideration.

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The Journal requires electronic copies of all accepted manuscripts with all figures in separate files from the text and in EPS, XLS, WMF, BMP or TIF format. Authors will be expected to sign a Licence to Publish form before accepted manuscripts are published.

**Title.** The title should be short and informative and should contain the key words used in the text; a short running title should also be provided.

**Abstract.** A brief and informative abstract should be provided. It should not exceed 300 words and should be suitable for direct use by abstracting agencies.

**Additional keywords.** Up to six keywords that do not already occur in the title should be listed at the end of the Abstract.

**Scientific names.** Authorities should be quoted at first mention of each name. Alternatively, a reference can be given to the nomenclature being followed.

**Animal experimentation ethics.** Where an experiment has involved the use of captive animals, the animal experimentation ethics committee approval number should be given in the acknowledgments.

**Headings.** The hierarchy of headings is: upper and lower case bold left flush; upper and lower case italic left flush; upper and lower case italic indented; and upper and lower case italic on the same line as the text. It would be helpful if authors could indicate the weight of heading by use of ringed capital letters in the margin; that is, A for first order, B for second order, and so on.

**Abbreviations.** SI units should be used throughout; Imperial equivalents are not required. Numbers referring to units of measurement (e.g. 10 mm) are never spelt out; if it does not refer to a unit of measurement then numbers under ten are spelt out. Figure is abbreviated to Fig. both in the text and figure captions, except when it is the first word of a sentence.

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## APPENDIX 4:

### Some questions and opinions in response to the report:

#### *Recommendations for the publications of the Australian Rangeland Society – October 2005.*

by Ian Oliver

*For discussion at the meeting of the Publications Committee, December 8 Canberra.*

The RC (review committee) provides a thorough and wide ranging report and recommendations on the Rangeland Society publications and web-site. However, there are some critical issues that I think need discussion at Thursday's meeting as they have a direct bearing on the RC recommendations and whether or not we adopt them in totality.

- **Arresting the decline in member numbers.** Although I feel some of the RC strategies may arrest the decline in member numbers I am not convinced. To realistically appreciate the likelihood of success of various strategies for arresting decline I feel we first need a bit of a “market analysis”, in other words who are our members, current and past, and why have members left the society. To answer these questions we need the following analysis:
  - a breakdown of current members by sector, e.g. scientist, educator, policy maker, landholder and institutional,
  - the rate of decline in membership for each sector over the years,
  - a needs analysis of members, both past and present (phone-call based survey).

I would be happy to contribute to this “market analysis” upon which the

recommendations and strategies might be more usefully appraised.

- **The Rangeland Journal format.** The RC makes little comment on the format or content of The Rangeland Journal which I think is an important oversight. Although I agree the new arrangements with CSIRO publishing should increase membership, the Society needs to ask itself, is a purely scientific, largely research science, based journal meeting the needs of members. Obviously the “market analysis” would help answer this question. I feel that in its present format the journal caters well for only one sector, the scientist (although I know this is not the intention). If the society really wants a publication that is of interest to scientists, educators, policy makers and landholders then it may be worth considering a change to the journal format and articles. I think this may be what the RC were getting at with their view that the “editorial board needs to take a

more relaxed approach to the type of papers it encourages". The format used by *Ecological Management and Restoration* appears to be catering well for a mix of readers (and contributors) and has increased membership from 325 in 2000 to more than 650 in 2005 (but see below). The US Society for Range Management has a similar format to EMR for their *Rangelands* journal but maintain the peer-reviewed science focus in their *Rangeland Ecology and Management*.

Interestingly, members receive the former as part of their membership and then can elect to pay an extra \$US30 to receive the later. Any rethought of the journal format would obviously have to consider the implications for the newsletter. (Maybe resources could be combined into one publication).

- **The role of affiliate subscribers.** With respect to the increase in numbers of subscribers to EMR, the editor, Tein McDonald, acknowledges that increases are largely due to an increase in affiliate subscriptions through other related societies. Has the Rangeland Society previously explored this avenue?
- **Implementation of recommendations and strategies.** The RC recognises the gap between what might be desirable and what might be possible in their major recommendation #11. The society is small, the resources are similarly so. Careful consideration by the PC needs to be given to identifying a small number of activities that are best likely to grow membership and submissions. We cannot do everything suggested in the RC's report; I would suggest we can only do a few things well.

Just some thoughts.

Ian

## **APPENDIX 5:**

### **RANGE MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER EDITOR'S COMMENTS**

#### **RECCOMENDATIONS OF THE REVIEW COMMITTEE ON ARS PUBLICATIONS**

**NOVEMBER, 2005**

#### **General comments**

I was very pleased to read the report from the Publications Review Committee, and was encouraged to see that many of the ideas discussed in the report pertaining to the Newsletter are similar to those that have been bandied about over the time I have been Editor. I am positive that some exciting changes for the ARS publications, particularly for the Newsletter, may be coming up in the near future.

#### **Specific comments regarding the newsletter:**

1. Frequency of publication (page 7)

- a. With the newsletter published 3 times a year it can be difficult to include timely information about conferences, courses, funding rounds etc. Increasing the newsletter to 4 times a year may ease this, but it will still be a problem. Perhaps we should look more to the website as a source of time-dependant information.
  - b. I am all for Council and Publications Committee members forwarding relevant material to the Editor for publication. I regularly scan websites etc for this kind of information but freely admit that I do not catch everything. We need to encourage members who are actually organising functions to think more about promoting their event in the newsletter – I don't think that many members see the newsletter as a source of this kind of information dissemination.
2. Electronic Publication of the Newsletter (page 7)
- a. I fully support the view of the Review Committee that the Newsletter be published electronically with links to the website. I think this is crucial in maintaining the relevance of time-specific information particularly if there is a requirement for a more 'newsy' newsletter.
  - b. I think that the newsletter should be made available to non-members but can see both advantages and disadvantages to restricting access to current issues. Perhaps we should think of allowing access to latest issues as a positive way of spotlighting hot rangeland discussions/happenings to potential new members.
3. Use of material from other sources to increase the news content (page 8)
- a. The newsletter clearly relies heavily on contributions from ARS members. Significant effort is often required to solicit articles and make sure that they actually are written – fortunately there is a small core of dedicated members who are great at both suggesting articles and also contributing themselves.
  - b. I would like to see members of the Publication Committee (and also possibly Council) become more involved in the publication of the newsletter, particularly when it comes to sourcing articles from a wider audience. Perhaps we could follow the lead of other organisations who have delegated members to be in charge of book reviews, state updates, topical issues etc.
  - c. I have tried to include more topical information in the newsletter by introducing the Information Snippets section of the newsletter a few years ago. I am always eager to include details of recent publications and new research related broadly to rangeland topics but scoping these items can be time-consuming.
4. Materials of Interest to Non-pastoral members
- a. Commissioning of articles – this definitely needs to be done if the scope of the newsletter is to be broadened. Currently about half of the longer articles are solicited by me (often at the suggestion of others) but it is often difficult to get non-members to contribute less mainstream articles to the newsletter (major reasons are that they don't have time, have moved on to other things or are publishing somewhere else). I also try hard to encourage articles from younger researchers –

obviously the promise of a short lead time until publication is not a big enough incentive!

- b. Thematic issues – While there have been a couple of newsletters with themes over recent years (I remember an issue with a pastoral monitoring theme and one about Aussie rangelanders working overseas) I believe there is scope for more of these issues.
  - c. Conference reports etc – I do like to include conference reports but the major stumbling block is finding out who has been to a conference and also getting them to complete a report in a timely manner. I think reports from ARS travel grant recipients should also be included but Council currently has no clear process for advising when projects have been completed.
  - d. Policy articles, personal profiles, social issues, recent publications – all terrific ideas but again these require a commitment from a number of people to assist with sourcing of the information. If people tell me where I can get information from I am more than happy to chase it up.
5. Format and design of the newsletter (page 7, 9-10)
- a. I would definitely support a revision in the presentation of a printed version of the newsletter to a more contemporary style. This has been discussed many times in recent years. There have been suggestions for printing in colour and with a snazzier layout however these ideas have generally not been followed up because of the increased cost of printing (once estimated to be at least triple the cost of the current publication) and because more complex desktop publishing software would need to be purchased (the newsletter is currently formatted in MS Word).
  - b. What would members like to see? We have asked this question in the newsletter several times over the last 5 years and have received extremely little feedback. Perhaps we need to try another tack such as surveying members by phone or written questionnaire?
  - c. I support obtaining professional assistance to redesign the format of both an electronic and printed version of the newsletter. While I don't currently have the skills to produce an electronic version of the newsletter I would be more than happy to learn if that is what is decided.
  - d. Pasture growth summaries – are these not supplied in state publications?
  - e. Council reports – I would like to see some communication from Council remaining in the newsletter. Perhaps these reports need to be re-written to be more interesting?

**In conclusion:**

As I said at the start, I believe that the Review Committee made many relevant comments and observations regarding the newsletter. It certainly does need a facelift, and perhaps significant changes to the content. There is also considerable scope for electronic dissemination. Many of these changes, however, can only be carried out with the direct support of the Society's members and particularly the Publication Committee. If the newsletter is to become the primary source of information about

rangeland issues then it has to be recognised as the first place that people need to contribute their learning's, opinions and ideas.

### **Specific proposals for Publications Committee**

1. Engage a professional newsletter designer to work with the RMN Editor to revise presentation, content and layout of the newsletter for hardcopy and electronic publication on the ARS website (using "notification email"). Note that this will probably require the allocation of extra funds for the consultant and for new software.
2. Request Council to prepare a readable summary of their Council minutes for publication in the RMN.
3. Appoint State representatives, book reviewer agent, etc and PC members to prepare and seek out material ("hot issues", new resources, new policy, major new research, "think pieces", youth orientated articles, "controversial" lead articles, thematic issues, conference details, recent publications, reports on conferences, innovators comments, current affairs, etc) for the RMN using the highly successful ESA model.
4. Authorise the Editor to publish the RMN quarterly and allocate extra funds to publish and distribute another issue per year.

Noelene Duckett  
Editor, Range Management Newsletter  
21st November, 2005

## **APPENDIX 6:**

**From:** David Wilcox [dgwilcox@cygnus.uwa.edu.au]

**Sent:** Monday, 28 November 2005 23:07

**To:** Hodgkinson, Kenneth (CSE, Gungahlin)

**Subject:** web site

Dear Ken,

I am setting down a few points relevant to the Web Site. These have not been cleared by Council so that they should be taken as from the President.

1. It has to be recognised that we are in an age of instant communication. For many younger members and for those working in remote areas it is important that the Society maintains a communication medium that is readily accessible and, particularly, one that is current and which provides for interaction between members.
2. The Society to be relevant both to members and to the community has to provide professional information on a range of subjects that are of current interest. Members are unique in Australia, as from their collective competence they can provide unbiased and disinterested comment on a very wide range of rangeland issues.
3. The competition for members between societies will continue to be fierce and unremitting. Unless we can show that we are able to embrace the new communication technologies efficiently younger members and potential members upon whom we depend for persistence will either desert us or regard us as anachronisms from another age.
4. Council is keen to develop a Website which will appeal to all users and which will carry information for all members and for the public. The Web Site should be capable of providing for interaction between members (though probably not between members and the public).
5. The Web Site must contain links with other interest groups and of special concern to me is the link between the Society Web Site and the CS Pun web site which contains all the past Journal articles.
6. Council is not in favour of Chat Rooms where long running commentaries are available to, and accessible by, the public.
7. The Web Site must have content that is relevant to the disciplines that are newly associated with the rangelands as we understand them.

The above points suggest to me that the Society must elevate the status of the Web Site from that of a basically static and historic state to that which is capable of being interactive and reflective of the high levels of professionalism the Society. It must appeal to those who open it for information and must become the site of choice for those who are searching the Web for information about the rangelands.

To further the ends of the Society and of Web Site there are a number of steps which must be made and a number of strategies defined so that we might gain the objectives

set out in points 1-7. from my point of view these are, not in any order of priority,

1. The appointment of a Web Master with overall responsibility for the Web Site either to Council or to the Publications Committee. I rather favour the former at this stage since there are a number of financial consequences associated with the development of the Web Site.

2. The recommendation that there should be an analysis of the Web site is a good one, though I do not think that I would favour letting out a contract at this stage. I would rather canvass the ideas of a number of our younger members so that we might collectively arrive at some agreed directions for the site. Perhaps the PC could contrive a TOR for advice in respect of the Web Site.

3. We should consider having a list of authorities on the web site who would be the contacts for a range of matters e.g. fire and kangaroo grass. These authorities would be members of the Society of course and their addresses would be printed on the pages of the site.

4. Council will budget for the development of the web site. Not being sure of the relationship that could be between the Web Master and the person on Council (or on the PC) I am not sure how we would work the funding of the position which is likely to be quite onerous . One thing is certain the person who received an honorarium or other is not able to be a member of the Council as the Articles expressly forbid of such payments.

5. Tim Ferraro would have to comment upon the pay-on-line proposal. I think that it might be too expensive for us; merchants fees charged by banks are quite high.

6. I am in favour of statements being on the Web Site but not as the positions of the Society. This proposal is fraught with too many difficulties associated with the agreement on positions throughout the membership. I am in favour of statements on any number of issues being pasted as the views of eminent persons, but not necessarily that of the Society. Inviting comment on the statements is important. I would support some sort of feed back mechanism to the authors provided that we can get them to reply through the web site.

7.. I believe that there is a place for putting the RMN papers etc on the Web Site in other than as linked Word docs. We used that format for cheapness at the time and it is certainly clumsy.

7..Council should consider appointing State Reps who would report briefly on issues say every quarter or more regularly if desired.

There is obviously more to say. In conclusion I think that the first step should be that outlined in point 2 of this section. In a general sense I support those recommended strategies on page 11 of the report of the Working Group dealing with the operation of the site e.g. dot points 7 and 8.

I hope that gives you some feel for my views at least.

I wish you well for your meeting.

Yours sincerely,

David



**APPENDIX 7:**

**CSIRO PUBLISHING**

**Report to the Australian Rangeland Society on the publication of  
The Rangeland Journal - Volume 27, 2005**

**Commercial in Confidence**

2 December 2005

## APPENDIX8

### *Report on a survey of journal author behaviour*

by Dr Ian Rowlands

(City University, London).

Summary: 5513 senior journal authors surveyed, all geographic regions and disciplines.

Key factors in choosing a journal to submit to:

1. **Reputation of the journal (prestige)**
2. Readership
3. Impact Factor
4. Speed of publication
5. Reputation of advisory board
6. Online submission system
7. Print & electronic versions
8. Permission to post post-print
9. Permission to post pre-print
10. Permission to retain copyright

*“Authors are driven by brand. Their careers depend on where they publish, not necessarily on who reads the work.”*

*“Authors do not choose to publish in affordable journals. Price is not an issue in their decision process for submission.”*

Dependency on various methods for article discovery:

1. Following up references
2. General abstract services
3. Publisher's websites
4. Google
5. Other web search engine
6. Electronic ToC's
7. Subject specific abstract services
8. Recommendations from a colleague
9. Current Contents
10. Google Scholar
11. Library
12. Personal sub

[www.slais.ucl.ac.uk/papers/dni-20050925.pdf](http://www.slais.ucl.ac.uk/papers/dni-20050925.pdf)

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## APPENDIX 9:

### EDITOR'S REPORT

December, 2005

#### Overview

There has been an upturn in the flow of papers in 2005 following the publication of the first Issue by CSIRO Publications (Table 1). Members will have seen the two issues of Vol. 27 produced under the new regime and also the availability of all back issues electronically from the CSIRO Publications web site. Vol. 27(1) was a Special Issue and Vol. 28(1) will be a Special Issue on Weeds in Rangelands with Tony Grice as Guest Editor. If the current upturn in papers continues, then we will be in a position to publish more than two issues per year which will involve shorter times between submission and publication for many authors.

#### Current status

Publication during 2005 included Vol. 27(1) in June with an editorial and five papers (71 pages) which was a Special Issue entitled "Native and Introduced Grasses for Low-input Pastures in Temperate Australia". Vol. 27(2), which has just appeared, is a regular issue and includes nine papers and contains 95 pages in the new cropped A4 format. We are entitled to 200 pages per year under the new arrangements without incurring extra costs, and so I would have liked to have had several more papers to include. The smaller number relates to the downturn in paper submissions we had in 2003 and 2004

**Table 1.** Record of papers and the results for 2003 to 2005 to date.

Year	Received	Accepted	Rejected	Pending
2003	20	10	6	4
2004	20	11	7	2
2005 (to date)	27	6	10	11

#### The future

The report of the Review Committee on the publications of The Australian Rangeland Society suggests that The Rangeland Journal continue to move in the directions that the Publications Committee has been advocating for some time. I am very pleased with this confirmation of our ideas. Furthermore, the Review Committee has made some excellent suggestions about how we might achieve the aims encapsulated in their Report. This will mean extra work for many of us, but if we are successful, I believe The Rangeland Journal has an exciting future.

CSIRO Publishing has suggested that we follow the leads taken by a number of other scientific journals and be a bit more adventurous with our cover. This would be at no extra cost to the Society. My view was that we should move slowly and you have now all seen the first two issues in the new cropped A4 format. I would welcome some feedback with respect to a new format for the front and back covers and would like some alternatives explored at our meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2005.

R D B Whalley

Editor

1<sup>st</sup> December, 2005

## **APPENDIX 10:**

### **NEWSLETTER EDITOR'S REPORT**

**December, 2005**

#### **Overview**

Three issues of the newsletter were published again this year in May, July and November.

This year there was a slight decrease in the number of major articles received. As has been the case in recent years, more than half of these articles published were volunteered; others were obtained following contact from the Editor. I seem to have had slightly more difficulty in getting people to write longer articles this year, and on a couple of occasions the contributions received were much shorter than originally promised. I was happy with the standard of the articles that were received and was particularly impressed with the quality of the figures, tables and photos. This has made my job much easier.

I have had some difficulty receiving Council and other Society information this year. While no report from Council was received for this last issue (the Communications Officer resigned in October 2005), in general it has taken numerous reminder emails to get information about Council, the Biennial Conference etc. I also did not receive any information about State-based ARS activities during the year.

Malcolm Howes has continued to do a great job with the printing and posting side of the Newsletter production. The high quality of last year's issues has been maintained again for this year. I would like to personally thank Malcolm for his continued assistance and congratulate him on the excellent job he has done.

#### **Current status**

The last issue was to be posted late last week. According to Malcolm Howes, postage was delayed slightly for this issue because CSIRO had additional names which needed to be added at the last minute. The next issue is usually published in March.

#### **The future**

The report of the Review Committee on the publications of The Australian Rangeland Society suggests a significant number of changes for Range Management Newsletter. Many of the ideas discussed in the report are similar to those that have been suggested over recent years, and I am excited about the opportunities that lay ahead.

Noelene Duckett  
Editor  
3rd December, 2005