

President's report – Dee Carter
November 2011

Compared to the period leading up to our last AGM, where we initiated changes to the constitution, created a new website for AMS and organized a scientific meeting, the current reporting period has been relatively quiet. However, the council has been working to implement some of the changes proposed at the last AGM, along with some other activities, and we can report the following progress:

Changes to the constitution:

At our last AGM there was general support for changes to the constitution that would make the organization and running of some aspects of the society easier to manage. However, members noted that they needed to see the redrafted changes to the constitution so that these could be voted on specifically. Tom May kindly volunteered to help re-draft the constitution, incorporating the changes that the membership had agreed to. These were:

- i) That the **Notice of AGM** and other meetings be reduced from 4 months to 1 month (*Constitution 24.1*)
- ii) The **Nomination of council bearers** be changed from 4 months to 2 weeks before an AGM (*Constitution 13.1a*)
- iii) **The need for ballot papers** for nominations to council (should these exceed the places available) to be sent prior to the AGM be removed. Instead these would be decided by vote at the AGM (*Constitution 13.1 g and h*).

A special meeting of the AMS was organized to coincide with FungiMap, which was held in Denmark, WA, on July 15 2011. There were 12 attendees, including Vice President Diana Leemon and Councilor Sandra Abell-Davis, and 8 proxy votes were received. All of the above changes were passed by a 19:1 majority vote, and were therefore carried. The new constitution was then drafted and the changes were lodged with the office of Regulatory Services in the ACT. On October 17 we were officially notified that the changes had been accepted, and the AMS now has a new constitution. The new constitution is posted on the AMS website.

Website:

Nai Tran-Dinh has worked hard to keep the site up to date, and all appears to be functioning reasonably well. One result of the new site is I now get quite frequent requests to identify unusual fungi and we plan to put a "What the fungus?" page on the site where some of these can be shown. The site also hosts our journal, which is freely available to members and the public. Another new initiative to be added to the site is the ability to pay membership fees by PayPal. Councilor Sandra Abell-Davis (who has been nominated to become our next treasurer) is currently looking into implementing this. This will make be a significant improvement to the payment process, as receipts will be automatically generated upon payment and we will be able to accept payment from overseas without any conversion fees. We welcome comments and ideas for any further improvements to the site.

IMA award

The International Mycological Association recently initiated new, early career awards to coincide with the International Mycology Congress meetings. Although the IMC9 meeting has already taken place the IMA decided to retrospectively align awards with this meeting. Dr Ceri Pearce was the selected nominee from Australasia for the Daniel McAlpine Medal, based on her research and her contributions to the local mycological community, most notably through her help with organizing IMC8 in Cairns. We congratulate Ceri on receiving this prestigious award.

A call for nominations for the IMC10 award is likely to be made soon, and when this happens we will inform members and ask for nominations, so please bear this in mind as a wonderful reward to some of our outstanding younger scientists. The requirement for nomination is that nominees must have received their PhD within the 10 year period immediately preceding January 1st of the year in which the award is given. As the next award will be given at IMC10 in 2014 the PhD must have been awarded no earlier than 2004.

Changes to council and other positions

Council positions -

The following council members have either resigned from their position or reached the end of their term limit:

Eric McKenzie – finished term limit as secretary

Anthony Francis – resigned as treasurer

Sandra Abell-Davis – resigned as councilor

Anna Hopkins – resigned as councilor

I wish to thank them for their service that they provided to our Society in their council roles. Particular thanks go to Anthony, who worked very hard to bring the Society finances back in line, and to Sandra, who is currently working to organize our next scientific meeting (and will hopefully rejoin us on the council in a new role as treasurer).

Non-council positions -

Membership secretary: David Ratkowsky has been membership secretary for a number of years and has been very efficient in sending our messages to the membership when required, as well as the occasional reminder to members to renew their membership. David wishes to resign from this position and we thank him for the excellent job that he has done. After discussion at our last council meeting it was decided that with better communication between the treasurer the secretary we could eliminate the need for a membership secretary. Instead, all general messages to the membership will be sent by the secretary, and any messages regarding financial matters will be handled by the treasurer.

Journal Editor: David Orlovich has resigned as editor of the AMS journal, Australasian Mycologist. David has been an outstanding editor and has worked very hard to produce very high quality issues of our journal. However, it must also be recognized that this is a very demanding role and the future of the journal depends on finding another motivated editor to take his place. Unfortunately, while the membership expressed a strong desire to keep the journal in its current format in a recent survey, support in the form of submitting or reviewing articles has not been strong. I would like to appeal to members who feel strongly about keeping the journal in its current format to consider taking on the role of editor, and also to submit quality papers and help with the reviewing process. Without this we may need to radically rethink how to best produce the journal, or even whether the journal is still viable. This is an item for discussion at the AGM, and I am sure will provoke plenty of lively debate!

I wish to thank the council for their very helpful meetings and discussions, particularly vice-president Diana Leemon who has been very supportive and has helped to keep things on track over the past year, while retaining her great sense of humour. Thanks also to Tom May and to our public officer, Ken Thomas, for help with changing the constitution.

And finally, thank you all for your continued support of AMS.

Dee Carter
10 November 2011