

Australasian Mycological Society President's Report

John Dearnaley

September 2015

My first year as AMS President has been a busy one. 2015 was the 20th anniversary of the society and we celebrated the occasion with the design and launch of a new logo, re-institution of society patrons, establishment of a monthly newsletter and an excellent conference in conjunction with the Australian Society for Microbiology in Canberra, in July. Over the past 12 months I have been ably assisted by a hardworking council in Julie Djordjevic, Leona Campbell, Sandra Abell, Bevan Weir and Jeff Powell. Dee Carter (as webmaster and journal editor) and Susan Nuske (AMS student representative) also provided strong support to the council. The following is a report on the activities of the society since the AGM of September 2014.

Finance and membership

The finances of the society are healthy with the only major expenditure in the 2014-2015 period, allocation of the 2015 Research Award, payment for design of the new society logo and running the Canberra scientific conference. We currently have 74 financial members of the society, although with a number of new memberships following the July conference, this number is likely to be over 80. A full outline of the society's finances has been prepared by Treasurer, Sandra Abell.

Scientific meetings

The 2015 scientific meeting of the AMS was held in Canberra over 14-16th July. The pre-conference foray to the Li-Sun Mushroom farm at Bowral was a most enjoyable way to begin the meeting. The combined conference day with the Australian Society for Microbiology at the QT Hotel worked particularly well with an impressive plenary talk by Judith Berman on genome dynamics and drug resistance in *Candida* and many exceptional mycology-focussed talks and posters in evidence. The convivial AMS conference dinner at University House was a wonderful finale to the second day of the conference. Day three at the Australian National University began with a plenary session by Adrienne Hardham on the cell and molecular pathogenicity of *Phytophthora* and then delegates enjoyed some excellent sessions ranging from plant pathogen interactions, fungal ecology and molecular mycology to systematics and applied mycology. The fungal skills workshop organised by AMS student representative, Susan Nuske was well attended and was of great value to the students and early career researchers present. I would like to thank the organising committee of Julie Djordejevic (conference chair), Celeste Linde, Ana Traven, Leona Campbell and Dee Carter for their outstanding efforts in ensuring the conference ran smoothly.

Next year's scientific meeting will be held in Queenstown New Zealand in conjunction with the Fungal Network of New Zealand from May 4-5th. It will be preceded by a workshop in fungal conservation and followed by a fungal foray at Glenorchy from 6-9th May.

New AMS logo

The new AMS logo was launched at the AMS Canberra conference. The society has been spoilt for years in being able to use two wonderful logos created by mycological illustrator, Katie Syme. In honour of the society's 20th Birthday, a new logo design was called for. The winning logo (see below) was based on an original design by AMS member Heino Lepp and adapted by Bevan Weir and a graphic designer from LandCare New Zealand. The logo depicts a mycelium emanating from a central spore and enveloping the

initials of the society. A mycelium was considered to be the unifying structure in all of the sub disciplines of our diverse society; from field mycology, ecology and systematics to plant pathology, medical mycology and applied mycology.



New AMS patrons

In the twenty year history of the AMS we have had two patrons: Jack Warcup from 1997-1998 and Gretna Weste from 1999-2006. This year, the AMS council invited Pam and David Catchside to become joint patrons of the society which they have graciously agreed to. Pam and David are long-time members of the society and research-wise represent the field mycology/systematics and cell and molecular mycology, respectively, areas of the society. They are regular attendees at AMS scientific conferences and will continue to provide advice and mentorship to society members.

AMS Research Award

This year's winner of the AMS Research Award was Sarah Sapsford of the School of Veterinary and Life Sciences, Murdoch University. Sarah will use the research funds to investigate the biotic and abiotic factors predisposing marri (*Corymbia calophylla*) to canker disease (*Quambalaria coyrecup*). Susan Nuske gave an address at the Canberra conference on her research into ectomycorrhizal spore dispersal by marsupials that had been supported by the (inaugural) 2014 research award.

AMS monthly newsletter, website, student Facebook page and journal

A monthly AMS e-mail newsletter was begun in 2015 and provides members with the latest news in Australasian Mycology as well as reminders about the current AMS scientific meeting, membership renewals and the AMS Research award. The newsletter has a popular "fungus of the month" section with a photograph of a recently observed fungal species provided by AMS members.

The AMS website has been very capably run by Dee Carter in 2014-2015. It has been great to see it giving an overview of the mission of the society, providing details about AMS membership, outlining current and previous council members, listing upcoming and completed conferences (including student prize winners) and providing details about the AMS research grant and recent mycological publications.

Susan Nuske continues to run the AMS student Facebook page with wonderful fungal photographs and mycological news items. It would be good to see more input to this page from other student and ECR members of the society.

The final volume of Australasian Mycologist was released on the society's website in September. The volume contained a farewell editorial by Dee Carter, three scientific articles and listed the abstracts of the 2015 conference. Although it is sad to see the demise of the journal, the reality is it was not well supported by the society in recent years, largely due to its absence of an impact factor and struggled to obtain publishable material.

Changes to council

The 2015-2016 council is largely unaltered from 2014-2015. One significant change is the stepping down of Sandra Abell from the treasurer's position. Sandra has worked tirelessly over the last few years to keep the society's accounts in order and in maintaining lists of current members and conference attendees. She also successfully organised the Cairns scientific meeting in 2012 and created an excellent new initiative with Diana Leemon in the AMS Research Award. Celeste Linde from the ANU will be replacing Sandra as AMS Treasurer in 2015-2016.

In summary, it has been an exciting year for the society and I would like to once again thank the AMS council, Dee Carter and Susan Nuske and many other AMS members for their support.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J.D.W. Dearnaley'.

John Dearnaley

28th September, 2015