

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Australasian Mycological Society**

**Monday 29th September 2014, 12:30pm**

**Room 471 Biochemistry and Microbiology Building, University of Sydney**

Present: Diana Leemon (Chair), John Dearnaley, Sandra Abell-Davis, Peter McGee, Dee Carter, Leona Campbell, Julie Djordjevic, John Pitt, Laszlo Iriny, Megan Trong, Sara Hortal Botifoll, Yu Wen, Adam Brockway

Apologies: Elaine Davison, Peter Solomon, Pam Catcheside, David Catcheside, Melanie Weckert, Eric McKenzie, Bevan Weir, Shaun Pennycook, Peter Buchanan, Peter Johnston,

Diana Leemon welcomed the audience to the meeting

**1. Minutes of the 2013 AGM**

Minutes of the previous AGM accepted with a minor modification replacing “use profits from membership fees to support annual AMS competitive grant” with “use surplus funds to support annual AMS competitive grant”

Moved: Peter McGee

Seconded: Sandra Abell-Davis

**2. President’s report**

Diana Leemon tabled the president’s report to the meeting. Diana indicated that she would not be standing for re-election as president after two years in the role. She thanked the council for their support during her tenure and singled out John Dearnaley for keeping her well organized, Sandra Abell-Davis for her hard work in the treasurer’s role and Dee Carter for creating the new website and keeping it up to date. Over the past year, Diana felt that the AMS had maintained its mission in promoting research and teaching in mycology and raising the profile of mycology in Australasia. The 2014 AMS scientific conference in Brisbane had been well attended and the feedback on the meeting had been good. She was impressed with the many student presentations at the conference and believed this augured well for the future of mycology in Australia. She thanked John for organising the meeting as conference chair. Next year’s meeting was to be combined with the ASM in Canberra. Julie Djordjevic, Leona Campbell, Dee Carter, Celeste Linde and John were on the organising committee. Diana had enjoyed the recent IMC10 in Bangkok and had encouraged a number Australian scientists working in mycology to join the AMS. The meeting was large, with over 1000 attendees (Keith Seifert, incoming president of the IMA had called it the “Olympics of the mycological world”) demonstrating that mycology was alive and prospering internationally. Sandra had been awarded the Daniel McAlpine medal at the conference for her significant contributions in research, publications and student supervision over the past few years. Ceri Pearce, who had help organise the IMC8 in Cairns was retrospectively given her Daniel McAlpine medal. Diana mentioned that Puerto Rico would host IMC11 in 2018 and asked members to put the date in their diaries. Diana asked members to keep the AMS website up to date by regularly supplying new material to Dee Carter. The AMS journal, Australasian Mycologist continued to be a stressor for the society. The journal had been started in a different time but had served the local mycological community well, particularly systematic mycologists. With the continued pressure on scientists to publish in higher ranking journals, material had not been forthcoming as the journal did not have an impact factor (publication in the journal did not

count significantly towards peoples' careers). Diana suggested that AMS members consider the journal of the International Mycological Association journal, IMA fungus, which may even develop a separate section for Australasian mycological research. Diana discussed the AMS small competitive research grant that she had begun with Sandra in 2014. The grant was open to all financial members of the AMS and although modest in size (currently \$2000), could be used for research in any mycological research context. Susan Nuske was the current holder of the grant and was using the funds to support research on ectomycorrhizal fungi in the wet tropics of Queensland. Susan Nuske had also begun a student chapter of the AMS. The group would communicate via a Facebook page and might run workshops and information sessions for students and ECRs at the AMS scientific conferences. Diana again thanked the meeting for their support. John moved a motion thanking Diana for her leadership of the AMS over the past two years. The motion was seconded by John Pitt.

### **3. Nomination/Re-nomination of council positions**

The following re-nominations for council positions had been received by the secretary by the 15<sup>th</sup> of September: President – John Dearnaley, Vice President – Julie Djordjevic, Treasurer - Sandra Abell-Davis (re-election), Secretary – Leona Campbell, Councillor – Jeff Powell, Councillor – Bevan Weir. In the absence of any other nominations, the secretary indicated that the individuals indicated were elected/re-elected to these positions. The meeting congratulated the 2014-2015 council.

### **4. Financial Report from Treasurer, Sandra Abell Davis**

Sandra indicated that the AMS presently had 115 financial members. There was currently 1 sustaining member, 1 international sustaining member, 4 lab groups (with 28 members), 46 full members, 35 concessional members and 53 new or returning members. The spike in increased memberships she attributed to the 2013 and 2014 conferences which had been successful and well attended. The total cash assets of the society was \$23,702.58, as at June 2014. Income had been \$16, 917.91 over the past financial year while expenses had totalled \$14,119.21. The profit from 2013-2014 was \$2,798.70. Sandra highlighted that most AMS memberships were now being paid with the PayPal option. The 2013 conference had cost the society \$1469.49 but it had been convenient having the ASM handle the registrations for the meeting. The 2014 Brisbane scientific meeting had provided a surplus of \$2890.26 for the society. The audit of the society's finances had been recently completed by Jim Alexander but she needed Diana to sign off on the documents. Given the state of the society's finances, the AMS competitive research grant might potentially be increased in value over the next year. She felt the AMS could also look for means to raise funds for the grant outside of holding conferences (eg. printing and selling t-shirts).

As there were no questions on the Treasurer's report it was moved that the report be accepted by the meeting.

Moved: Leona Campbell

Seconded: Julie Djordjevic

### **5. Future of Australasian Mycologist**

Diana once again mentioned that Australasian Mycologist continued to be a stressor on the AMS as very few articles had been received for publication over a long period of time. She advocated discontinuing publication of the journal. Julie suggested that AMS activities could easily added to the AMS website and Dee Carter suggested that the conference abstracts similarly could be linked to the website rather than be published in the journal (a main source

of materials for the journal, currently). Peter McGee indicated that he had recently been asked to review articles for three different online mycological journals recently so there were plenty of publication choices out there for AMS members. He said there was no point in continuing publication of the journal. Sandra agreed with this statement while John Pitt said he was sorry to see the journal go but agreed it had no future. Diana said the journal had served the local mycological community well and then moved a motion “that the Australasian Mycologist be discontinued after the next edition”. The motion was seconded by John Pitt. Peter McGee stated that any non-peer reviewed mycological material should subsequently be available on the AMS website.

#### **6. AMS 2015 scientific meeting**

Julie Djordjevic mentioned that planning for next year’s scientific meeting was underway. One teleconference meeting of the organizing committee had taken place and a promotional flyer had been produced (this had been put up at IMC10 at the end of Wieland Meyer’s talk). Dee (part of the ASM conference organising committee) was meeting with the ASM this week to confirm that the suggested AMS symposia and speakers were not conflicting. Plenary speakers at the conference would include Judith Berman and Adrienne Hardham. John Pitt was concerned that there was no financial advantage for the AMS in holding joint meetings with the ASM. Dee suggested she might follow up that AMS members pay less for registration. John Dearnaley wondered whether the AMS actually needed to contribute financially to support joint plenary speakers. Julie would ask Celeste Linde whether the AMS could use an ANU lecture theatre for the second day of the conference (July 16<sup>th</sup>).

#### **7. AMS small competitive research grant**

Diana brought up the AMS small competitive research grant for discussion. The meeting was happy to continue supporting the initiative, depending on the state of the AMS finances. Diana suggested it would be good if we did not just rely on conference surpluses to keep the grant going and suggested T-shirt sales or silent auctions as ways of raising funds for the AMS. Peter suggested that the grant should be kept going even if the AMS had a “bad year” and thought \$2,000 was too little for meaningful research and suggested sums of \$5-10,000 would be more valuable for researchers. He suggested that the AMS develop a mechanism to accept bequests and develop a separate bank account for the research grant. Diana agreed that a separated account would be useful in this regard and stated that \$2,000 is useful for some types of mycological research such as small ecological studies. John Pitt said from his past experience of issues of similar ilk it was essential that we set up an individual bank account for the research grant and have a separate income stream to support it. He moved a motion “that the AMS sustains the small competitive research grant into the future” The motion was seconded by Peter McGee. The new council was asked to report back on the recommendations made on the small competitive research grant at the 2015 AGM.

#### **8. AMS student chapter**

Diana mentioned that Susan Nuske has a set up a Facebook page for the new student chapter of the AMS. Susan had contacted a number of students and ECRs who were AMS members or who had recently attended AMS conferences and invited them to get involved in using the Facebook page (linked to the AMS website) and in helping organizing a workshop or student orientated talk at the 2015 scientific conference.

#### **9. Other business**

There was “no other business” and the meeting concluded at approximately 1:40pm.