



ANNUAL REPORT OF COUNCIL FOR 2005-2006

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

During 2005-06, Council has continued in its attempts to raise the profile of the Society. Good publicity led to high attendances at the seven Ordinary General Meetings and one field excursion held during the year. The best attended meeting was the Medal Address of Professor David Groves in November, entitled "Controls on the temporal distribution of mineral deposits" held at the University of WA.

Constitution

During 2005/2006, a postal vote was conducted to amend the Constitution, creating three new official positions on Council (an Archivist, a Publicity Officer, and a Webmaster); 80.8% of the Membership voted in favour to amend the Constitution. The Council thanks the membership for considering the proposal and taking the time to vote.

Joint Royal Societies Meeting – Melbourne

In November 2005, the President attended the second Joint Meeting of Royal Societies of Australia hosted by the Royal Society of Victoria in Melbourne. At the meeting it was agreed that we should form a "Council of Royal Societies of Australia" to present a more united front federally. However, the independence and separate identity of each of the Societies remains unchanged. It is planned to hold annual meetings in different States, with the third meeting to be held in Tasmania in late 2006.

Science Week

In August 2005, to celebrate National Science Week, the Society held a joint event (Hitchiker's Guide to Astronomy) with Scitech. The evening of talks on space science drew a large audience, and the event was opened by the Minister for Environment and Science, The Hon Dr Judy Edwards MLA.

Council, in collaboration with the Centre for Forensic Science at UWA, was awarded a 2006 National Science Week grant of \$3,650 through the Department of Education, Science and Training's Science Connections Programme. Titled 'Forensic Science in Action', it will include 'Solving Crimes with Science' workshops at UWA, and a public event, 'The Mysteries of Forensic Science', to be held at Scitech during National Science Week 2006. Thanks are extended to Dr Vic Semeniuk for organising and submitting the application.

8th RSWA Postgraduate Symposium

This year's Postgraduate Symposium was held at Murdoch University in May. Twelve oral contributions on a wide range of scientific topics provided a full day programme. Thanks go to Murdoch University for hosting the Symposium, and to Colin Walker, Phil O'Brien, Graham O'Hara and Bill Scott for organising the successful event.

Meetings with the Minister for Science

Regular monthly meetings with the Minister for the Environment and Science, The Hon. Dr Judy Edwards MLA, continued during 2005. However, following the Minister's resignation in January 2006, meetings with her successor, The Hon. Francis Logan MLA, were rearranged on a bi-monthly

basis for 2006. The new Minister for Science does not have responsibility for Environment, which is now in a separate ministry.

Eureka Prize

Subject to annual review, the Society continues to support the Eureka Prize for Interdisciplinary Scientific Research. The major contribution to the Prize comes from the Royal Societies of Victoria and New South Wales.

Risk Management

Public liability insurance remains a high priority for the Society. Dr Colin Walker is preparing a case to obtain insurance under the government sponsored scheme.

Appreciation

Finally, I wish to thank the Council for their hard work during what has been a very successful year. After the AGM, I intend to remain on Council as the Immediate Past President to offer support to the incoming President, Dr Colin Walker. One member of Council not standing for re-election, Dr Graham Thompson, is thanked for his long contribution to the Society as a Councillor, President (2003-04), and Immediate Past President over the last two years. I also thank the BGPA for allowing us to use their facilities for our meetings, and the Western Australian Museum for holding our library and receiving our mail.

MEETINGS

Annual General Meeting

The 2004-2005 Annual General Meeting was held on Monday 18th July 2005 in the Jennifer Arnold Lecture Theatre, Zoology Department, University of Western Australia. The RSWA Council for 2005-2006 was announced, being accepted by default as all nominations were unopposed. Following the business meeting, our Vice Patron, the Governor of Western Australia, His Excellency, Lt. General John Sanderson presented the Society's medals. The University Science Medals for 2004 were presented to Kirsten Muir, Curtin University; Alexander Rae, Murdoch University; Megan Jordan, University of Western Australia; and Joanne Bowyer, Edith Cowan University. Royal Society Medals for 2005, awarded by the Society every 3-4 years to scientists for their outstanding contribution to science in their field, particularly in relation to Western Australia, were awarded to Professor D. I. Groves, University of Western Australia, for his work on Economic Geology and Mineralogy, and to Professor K. J. McNamara for his work in Palaeontology and Evolutionary Palaeobiology. Following the medal presentations, in the presence of the Governor, Professor McNamara presented his Medal Address, 'The Star-Crossed Stone'. Professor Groves' presentation was deferred to the November meeting of the Society.

Monthly meetings

Monthly ordinary meetings, commencing at the earlier time of 7:00 pm, were preceded by a full Council Meeting and included a presentation from an invited speaker. The one exception was a field excursion arranged in lieu of the April meeting which fell on a public holiday. A diverse range of material from hydrology to wetland science to maple syrup making was presented by speakers. Meetings have been well attended following publicity through various email, newspaper, poster, and website outlets. Council thanks all the invited speakers for their contributions this past year. Thanks are also due Dr Vic Semeniuk for his publicity, organisation and leadership of the field excursion to the wetlands near Mandurah.

Christmas function

The 2005 Christmas function was held in December jointly with the Gould League (WA) at their Wildlife Centre on the edge of Herdsman Lake. Thanks go to Vic Semeniuk and Margaret Brocx for their organisation, to Kevin Kenneally (President of the Gould League) for sharing the event, and to Roger Harris (Centre Manager) for making the Centre available for the function.

LIBRARY

The Society's Library is incorporated within the Library of the Western Australian Museum, now located at Welshpool. It contains a small, but valuable collection of 680 monographs, in addition to many scientific journals received on exchange for its own journal. 220 journal titles are currently received on exchange and approximately 700 journal issues were added to the collection during the past 12 months. Use of the collection by other Australian libraries, via the inter-library loan system, and by researchers outside the Museum, has increased since the combined Museum and Royal Society library catalogue became available on the Internet. In addition most journal holdings have now been listed on Libraries Australia, the Australian Bibliographic Database.

JOURNAL

The quality of papers in the Journal of the Royal Society of Western Australia remains at an international standard, reflecting the high quality of articles that are submitted for publication. During the year 2005/2006, 26 papers were received as manuscripts for consideration, and 27 papers were published or are in press in the issues 88(2) to 89(2). Also, a Special Issue dealing with Fire and Wetlands was published in late 2005 as Volume 88(3). A new initiative is the call for Abstracts from MSc and PhD Theses. The Journal's circulation continues to grow, both through expanding membership of individuals and institutional exchanges and subscriptions. Currently, the Journal is received by over 600 subscribers, consisting of 337 local subscribers, 32 from the Eastern States, and 10 overseas. The Journal is received by over 230 libraries and organisations, consisting of 26 locally, 45 from the Eastern States, and 167 overseas. The Editor, Council and Society would like to thank the reviewers for the time and effort which they have generously devoted to reviewing submitted manuscripts. The Journal continues to be typeset and printed by the Western Australian Museum. The Society thanks the staff of the Publications Section for their help with publishing the Journal.

PROCEEDINGS

The Proceedings are published every month and posted on to the Website. A total of 384 Proceedings are received by members. Some 164 are sent by Australia Post within Western Australia, 13 to the Eastern States, and 4 overseas. Over 200 Proceedings are sent by email. The Proceedings were also used as a vehicle for notices of interest to the members.

INTERNET

The RSWA web-site <http://www.ecu.edu.au/pa/rswa.htm> continues to be developed. A new look web-site was opened during the year. A long term plan is to place the entire of the JRSWA in .pdf files on the site, vols 79-85 are already available.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Society thanks the Western Australian Museum for their cooperation in housing the Society's library. It is also indebted to Murdoch University Library for housing its Journal stocks. The Board of the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority is thanked for allowing the Society to hold meetings on the Kings Park premises under their jurisdiction and for providing support for Society activities. Council acknowledges the support of the Zoology Department, University of Western Australia, for providing facilities for the 2005 Annual General Meeting and Murdoch University for hosting this years Postgraduate Symposium. The Society acknowledges the support of the State Government in providing a subsidy (through the Library and Information Service) for publication of the Journal.