



## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

The objective of the Society is to advance and promote science. During 2007-08 Council has continued to raise the profile of the Society and bring to its members and the community, through Monthly Meetings, Public Forums, the monthly Proceedings and quarterly Journal, scientific insights into the major issues facing us locally and globally. We celebrate the role of scientific exchange in making the world a better place.

### ***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.

### ***The Leeuwin Current Symposium***

The Royal Society of Western Australia was the major sponsor of the "Leeuwin Current 2007" symposium held at The University of Western Australia in September 2007, to update research on the Leeuwin Current since the first symposium held in 1991. The event attracted over 100 participants on the day and was universally judged a most useful and interesting meeting. The papers (by pre-selected speakers/authors) are being published as a special issue of the RSWA Journal, planned for later this year, and most of the papers are now in the peer-review stage. Like its predecessor, the published volume should be a valuable addition to the Leeuwin Current literature.

### ***Postgraduate Symposium***

The Society's annual Postgraduate Symposia provide a forum for students to share their work and network with students from other disciplines and universities. The 9<sup>th</sup> Annual RSWA Postgraduate Symposium was held at The University of Western Australia on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> September, 2007. The event was well supported with eleven oral presentations and three posters being presented by students from The University of Western Australia, Murdoch University and Curtin University of Technology.

### ***Joint Royal Societies Meeting***

The third Joint Meeting of Royal Societies of Australia, hosted by the Royal Society of Victoria in Melbourne was held in November 2006. No representative from RSWA attended the meeting. Details of the meeting, including the emended constitution were passed onto the RSWA Council. All state Royal Societies except Tasmania have agreed to join the Royal Societies of Australia Inc. to present a more united front federally and for the exchange of ideas for the '*Promotion and Advancement of Science in Society for Society*'. The independence and separate identity of each of the State Societies remains unchanged. Annual meetings in different States will be held.

### ***Appreciation***

Finally, I wish to thank the Council for their hard work during what has been a very successful year. Our Council has been active in consolidating the past journal assets into a single collection in the museum. This has been a significant effort involving many volunteer hours and has successfully established a cleared attic of the Murdoch library in time for its recent renovations. Out thanks to those workers. After the AGM, I intend to remain on Council as the Immediate Past President to offer support to the incoming President.

## MEETINGS

### ***Annual General Meeting***

The 2006/2007 Annual General Meeting was held on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> July, 2007 in the T.L. Robertson Lecture Theatre, Science and Computing Building at Murdoch University. The RSWA Council for 2007-2008 was announced and all nominations were accepted. Following the business meeting Professor Jan Thomas, Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic), Murdoch University, presented the Society's University Science Medals for 2006. Medals were awarded to Dustin Severtson and Owen Davis, joint recipients from Curtin University of Technology. Medallists John Braid (ECU), Sarah Rich (UWA) and Robert McGregor (Murdoch) were unable to attend. Following the medal presentations Dr Colin Walker, the retiring President of RSWA, delivered the RSWA Presidential address titled '*On the issue and repair of salinised landscapes in southwest WA*', after which Professor Thomas installed the incoming President, Dr Philip O'Brien, Senior Lecturer in Biotechnology, Murdoch University.

### ***Monthly meetings***

Monthly ordinary meetings, commencing at 7:00 pm, were preceded by a full Council Meeting and included a presentation from an invited speaker. The Publicity Officer organised speakers for the Monthly Meetings, drawing on a diverse range of material from ancient DNA in Pleistocene fossil deposits, to impacts of the whale-watch industry, to the history of plant taxonomy and herbaria in Western Australia. Meetings have been well attended, with numbers in the 20s to in excess of 100, following publicity through various email, newspaper, poster and website outlets.

Highlights of the year included public-oriented events during National Science Week in August. These included "The Chemistry Magic Show" held at Murdoch University, "Leschenault Inlet Under the Microscope" held at Bunbury, and "Igneous Rocks of the Pilbara" held at Karratha. A public forum on taxonomy and classification titled "What's in a name - Australia biodiversity, and why taxonomy and classification matters" was held in October 2007. In March 2008, RSWA was honoured to have Professor Lyn Beazley, Chief Scientist of Western Australia present her "Vision of Science in Western Australia". During April, because of the school holiday break, an excursion, "Beach excursion to Mullaloo" was organised - this was popular and well attended by a range of RSWA members and community groups.

Council thanks all the invited speakers for their contributions this past year to the Monthly and special meetings. Thanks are also due Dr Vic Semeniuk for his publicity, organisation of ordinary meetings, special meetings, Science Week events and the field trip.

### ***Christmas function***

The 2007 RSWA Christmas Function, held in collaboration with staff of the Research Group of the Western Australian Fisheries Department at Hillarys, was a tour of the research centre and Discovery Centre for RSWA members and families followed by a light supper.

## OTHER REPORTS

***Membership:*** The Society currently has approximately 400 members, with new memberships slightly outstripping resignations. The membership database is currently being reviewed.

### ***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 2007/2008, 33 papers were received as manuscripts for consideration for publication. In total, 28 papers were published or are in press in the issues 90(1) to 91(2). Papers from the Leeuwin Current Symposium are being processed as a Special Issue. Currently the Journal is received by over 600 subscribers consisting of some 360 local subscribers, 32 from the Eastern States, and 10 overseas and over 230 libraries and organisations, consisting of 26 locally, 45 from the Eastern States, and 168 overseas. 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. The Journal Editor, Kathy Meney, expresses her personal thanks to Margaret Brocx for her continued assistance and contribution as sub-editor, and Council thanks both Kathy and Margaret for their time and dedication to producing the Journal.

### ***Proceedings:***

The Proceedings are published every month and posted on the Website. Aside from advertising and reporting future and past events run by the Society, the Proceedings were also used as a vehicle for notices of interest to the Membership. Some 400 Proceedings are received by members of which about 330 are sent by Australia Post within Western Australia, 13 to the Eastern States, and 4 overseas. Thirty eight Proceedings are received by email. The amount sent by Australia Post has doubled since 2007. This is possibly because of the increase in electronic file size. It is intended to canvas the Membership as to whether the web link is an option.

A Lannier colour photocopier was recently purchased by the Society. It is anticipated that there will be cost savings in printing costs, and the Proceedings will be printed in colour starting in September 2008.

### ***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 monographs in addition to many scientific journals received on exchange for its own journal. Over 800 journal titles are held. The library's holdings of all books and journals have now been placed on the national bibliographic database 'Libraries Australia', an online search service which allows users to search for locations across the combined catalogues of Australian libraries with one search.

### ***Website:***

The RSWA Webpage has been an invaluable source of information for members and the public, providing access to current and past Proceedings, news of up-coming events, and general information about the Society. During 2007-2008 the Webmaster, in conjunction with the Publicity Officer, has continued to design and update the webpage. An effort also has been made to refine some of the yet to be constructed pages and design and launch the full set of past Journals on-line.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .**

The Society thanks the Western Australian Museum for their cooperation in housing the Society's library and storing additional copies of the Journal. 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 Murdoch University for providing facilities for the 2007 Annual General Meeting, The University of Western Australia for providing the venue for the Postgraduate Symposium, and Scitech, the venue for the Public Forums. The Society acknowledges the support of the State Government in providing a subsidy (through the Library and Information Service) for publication of the Journal.