



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.

Doug Clarke Education Advocacy Medal

In 2008 the Society initiated '*The Doug Clarke Education Advocacy Award*', with Emeritus A/Professor Doug Clarke being the inaugural recipient. Doug made an incalculable contribution to science education. He developed and performed hundreds of chemistry magic shows at schools, inspiring thousands of school children, and assisted thousands of undergraduate and postgraduate students at Murdoch University over more than 30 years. The Award will be presented quadrennially to an inspirational science educator/s.

Joint Royal Societies Meeting

The 5th Convention of The Royal Societies of Australia was hosted by the Royal Society of Western Australia at the Weld Club, Perth in November 2008. RSWA was represented by Dr A. Bevan, Cr V. Semeniuk and Dr. P. O'Brien. Details of the meeting, including the emended constitution, were passed onto the RSWA. 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.

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 10th Annual RSWA Postgraduate Symposium was held at Edith Cowan University Joondalup on the 21st September. The event was exceptionally well supported with 17 oral presentations and 10 posters being presented by students from The University of Western Australia, Murdoch University, Curtin University of Technology and Edith Cowan University.

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.

MEETINGS

Annual General Meeting

The 2007/2008 Annual General Meeting was held on Monday 21st July, 2008 in the Kim E. Beazley Lecture Theatre at Murdoch University. The RSWA Council for 2008-2009 was announced and all nominations were accepted. Following the business meeting, Professor Lyn Beazley, Chief Scientist of Western Australia, accepted the position of Vice-Patron of the Society. Professor Beazley then presented the Society's University Science Medals for 2008. Medals were awarded to Christopher Doropoulos (Edith Cowan University), Jessica Harris (the University of Western Australia), Alison Louw (Murdoch University), Amy Patricia Elkington (Curtin University of Technology) and James Campbell-Everden (The University of Notre Dame).

As the President was continuing in his position, there was no Presidential Address. Emeritus A/Professor Doug Clarke presented '*The Difference between Biology, Chemistry and Physics*'. In a surprise to Doug, he was then presented with a '*This is your inspirational life in science*' with speakers from his long and interesting career, and family, relating anecdotes and extolling his virtues – and otherwise. This was followed by the inaugural presentation to Doug of the quadrennial *Doug Clarke Education Advocacy Medal*.

Monthly meetings and forums

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 topics from Aboriginal art to toxic wastes and biodiversity. During 2009, the emphasis has been on celebrating the International Year of Astronomy, and included presentations on the origin of the universe, a photographic journey through astronomy and the landscape, and meteorites and their clues to the origin of the universe. 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 a public form – '*Our toxic wastes – plants and bacteria to the rescue*', '*The sand at Leschenault Inlet*', held in Bunbury, and *The natural history of the Dampier Archipelago*, held in Karratha. During April, because of the school holiday break, a joint RSWA and Perth Observatory event, '*A day of Astronomy*', was held at Bickley Observatory. This was a popular event and well attended by a range of RSWA members, their families, interested scientists and the public.

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 2008 RSWA Christmas function was hosted by the Botanic Gardens & Parks Authority Research Centre. It was held in the Old Tea Pavilion, Kings Park. Staff of the Research Centre provided a tour of the research facility 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 2008/2009, 21 papers were received as manuscripts for consideration for publication. In total, 17 papers were published or are in press in the issues 91(1) to 91(2). Papers from the Leeuwin Current Symposium are being processed as a Thematic Issue. Currently, the Journal is received by over 500 subscribers consisting of some 360 local subscribers, 32 from the Eastern States and 10 overseas, and over 240 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 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 Royal Society Website. Aside from advertising and reporting future and past events run by the Society, the Proceedings are also used as a vehicle for notices of interest to the Membership. Some 340 Proceedings are received by members of which about 200 are sent by Australia Post within Western Australia, 13 to the Eastern States, and 4 overseas. One hundred and thirty Proceedings are sent by email as either a pdf attachment or weblink.

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 2008-2009 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 2008 Annual General Meeting, Edith Cowan University Joondalup 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.