**Minutes of the 37th AGM of the Australian Society of Herpetologists Inc.**

**ASH AGM 2013 – Point Wolstencroft, NSW.**

**Meeting opened at**: 16:36 on Thursday 31st January 2013.

**Apologies:** Scott Van Barnevald, Nick Clemann, Erik Wapstra

**Members present**: Memento Hudson, Ben Phillips, Eridani Mulder, Frank Lemckert, Rick Shine, Rebecca Bray, Glenn Shea, Simon Hudson, Matt Greenlees, Riona Tindal, David Newell, Dale Roberts, Ligia Pizzato, Ryan Ellis, Mark Hutchinson, Peter Harlow, Danielle Edwards, Kate Hodges, Jo Ocock, Fabien Aubret, Carla Eisemberg, Stephen Reynolds, Gordon Grigg, Kate Umbers, Jonathan Webb, Martin Whiting, Renee Catullo, David De angelis, Edward Narayan, Bret Stewart, Michael Mahony, Ikkyu Aihata, John Clulow, Rodney Watt, Ross Alfod, Lynette Plenderleith, Aimee Silla, Phil Byrne, Rebecca laver, Maggie Haines, David Chapple, Joanna Sumner, Scott Keogh, Conrad Hoskin, simon Blomberg, Stewart MacDonald, Anders Zimny, Stephen Zozaya, Mitzy Pepper, Arthur Georges, Deborah Bower, Simon Clulow, Paul Oliver, Paul Doughty, Mike Thompson, Jean-Marc Hero.

All motions moved and seconded are asked for support via show of hands for and against. If no against votes are recorded the motion is passed as all in favour.

Minutes of the 2012 Minutes were read by Eridani Mulder, and it was moved by Rick Shine that the minutes be accepted as an accurate record of the previous meeting. Seconded by Simon Hudson, all in favour, motion carried.

**Presidents report**Frank Lemckert presented the President’s report: The last AGM was held in Vancouver, during the World Congress of Herpetology and quite a lot of members attended. ASH presented a WCH Bid for 2016, the short report is that we didn’t win it, report from Marc Hero to follow. Mark Hutchinson moved that the report be accepted, moved by Memento Hudson, all in favour motion carried.

**Treasurers report**
Ben Phillips presented a short slideshow on the financial status of the society. The last few financial years have been audited and accepted by the auditors as official. He has found a new auditor who charges a quarter of previous auditor. Last year we gave out $3000 worth of grants. Bank costs have been reduced by removing an extra account that we weren’t using. Bank fees are around $12 per annum, mainly associated with Paypal credit card renewal. Glenn gave some money to Barmera conference which was bus hire, then Ben gave money to Paluma conference which went into the red, so then the money that Glenn gave was used for the Paluma conference which neatly sorted that out. In terms of liabilities, the Paluma conference ran at a loss – but the extent of this loss hasn’t been fully resolved yet, partly because JCU hasn’t asked for the money owed to them. We also have some uncashed cheques that were posted out to students but not banked.

This year we have already received $6000 in membership dues including Arthur Georges back membership. More than half the members are using their credit card to pay memberships. The society now has approximately 250 members. We need to generate interest on the money that is sitting in the bank, so then we can consider reinstating the ASH research grants. Renee Catullo asked how to find out how much a person owed, and Ben said that the easiest way is to wait for the next renewal notice, as they come out annually.

Matt Greenlees moved that the Treasurer’s report be accepted. Seconded by Deb Bower, all in favour, motion carried.

**Secretary’s report**After some issues with log on and administration the email list-server was transitioned to google-groups and is now administered through the ASH secretary Gmail account, which means that it can be easily handed on to new office bearers when positions change. Please remember to inform the secretary if your email address changes….otherwise the system will just tell me your address is bouncing.
Many thanks go to Marc Hero for maintaining the old ASH list-server through Griffith Uni for so many years.

The 2012 year has been going pretty smoothly – the electronic system is working well, and we haven’t had many hiccups from this round of renewals.

David Chapple moved that the secretary’s report be accepted, seconded by Simon Hudson. All were in favour, motion carried.

Marc Hero summarised what happened with the WCH bid. The next WCH will be held in China.

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

**HERPETOFAUNA (the journal)**

Glenn Shea presented to the meeting information on HERPETOFAUNA (The journal).
Herpetofauna is the only journal specific to the Australian region. It was started in the 1960s and was produced by the amateur Australian Herpetological Society. In the mid to late 1970’s an umbrella group of amateur societies was put together to be the subscription base.

It was set up for observational data and has now been going up to the present day. Glenn Shea has been editor for about 12 years, but unfortunately the amateur societies that constitute the majority of the members are tending to go away from observations and are moving toward keeping and husbandry. As a result many societies that used to subscribe to it no longer do so or order only very small numbers of copies.

Vol 31 subs: 1087 copies, 101 individual subscribers.

Vol 41 subs: 669 + 72

Most recently the NZ Herpetological Society ordered a lending copy for its members. And it also has fewer contributions from NZ people.

The issue is now that the journal has outgrown the herp groups that used to publish it, and if it is to persist it need a new funding base. ASH constitutes the majority of people who have submitted to Herpetofauna: It would be a shame to see the journal disappear – it holds a niche market, and no other journals publish this type of data.

Firstly we need a way of increasing the subscriptions: Societies are charged $450 per issue, then have to be mailed out by the society. Individuals fees are $7.50 per issue. The journal costs around $5000 per issue to print. Current receipts are about $3500, so there is a considerable shortfall. In the past there has been an amount of surplus in the system, but now is at the stage where that won’t last.

Would the society like to be involved in the journal? And how? Also Glenn has been editor for 12 years, and he is finding it hard to continue in this role due to other commitments – would be nice to expand this out to society members. Jo Sumner asked how many issues were published per year – answer is 2 per year. The last issue was Dec 2010, expecting next issue to come out soon.

Marc Hero asked how much it would cost if it was an electronic journal? Glenn said problem was to set up something that is permanent for the electronic record.

Dale Roberts commented that there has been multiple discussions over 40 years of ASH history about publishing, saying that it has been rejected each time, and he feels that the society should only approach the idea from within rather than having it thrust upon us from the outside, and would prefer to see the society money go towards students as there are plenty of outlets for publication.

Mark Hutchinson disagreed very strongly with Dale, as he felt that it is a valid journal and has an important role in publication of observational data in Australian herpetology.

Simon Hudson thought that these records are critical in conservation decision making so he felt that Herpetofauna is also important when compared to the viable alternatives for these kinds of observations.

Deb Bower agreed with both Mark and Dale – Herpetofauna is important, but doesn’t hold much weight with ISO ratings, and it has no impact factor. But she still thought that it has an important role and that ASH should take it on.

Ryan Ellis said the biggest problem is that it is not indexed. Glenn responded that the majority of memberships in the past have been through amateur herpetologists, and thus it hasn’t been directed towards the needs of scientific professionals.

Simon Hudson suggested that if ASH took it over we need someone to administer a website that is searchable. Stewart MacDonald reiterated an offer to assist with Herpetofauna administration.

Mark Hutchinson asked if Glenn had a proposal for the journal. Glenn said that he doesn’t due to the number of discussions that have been had in the past on this issue.

Ben Phillips thought that there were not enough members from ASH to prop up the journal fully, so perhaps would be better to lump sum fund the journal to make it an official electronic publication.

Marc Hero said that if the journal is electronic, he would agree to join, but if it is hard copy then he would not.

Gordon Grigg said that there is a big difference to the society to contributing a couple of $K per year to whether we would take it over, and suggested there might be a case for the society providing a contribution toward the journal annually.

Marian Anstis moved that we add an option to the ASH membership to subscribe to Herpetofauna, seconded by Memento Hudson, all in favour, motion carried.

Memento Hudson moved that Glenn Shea and Stewart MacDonald start a working group to investigate options for the journal. Seconded Arthur Georges, all in favour motion carried.

Mark Hutchinson suggested that the issue be resolved by the next ASH AGM.

Rick Shine moved that the committee liaise with Glenn Shea to progress the Herpetofauna issue, seconded by Dan Edwards, all in favour, motion carried.

**LIFE MEMBERSHIPS**

Roy Swain, and Gordon Grigg received honorary life memberships in 2012. Two paid life memberships were received from Simon and Memento Hudson.

**INTEREST ON ASH ACCOUNTS**

The issue of what to do with the money in the bank was discussed further, suggestions of moving it to a high interest account were discussed.

Ben Phillips moved that the money situation be reviewed to increase interest in order to fund the student research grants, seconded by Conrad Hoskin, all in favour, motion carried.

Ben Phillips moved that the student research grant be reinstated. Seconded by Dale Roberts, all in favour, motion carried.

Memento Hudson moved that the process of reviewing accounts and reinstating the Research Grants be resolved by the next ASH meeting. Seconded Frank Lemckert, all in favour motion carried.

**STANDARDISING NOMENCLATURAL PROCEDURES**

 The following information regarding taxonomic and nomenclatural issues was presented to the meeting, to give the society the opportunity to support the views of the following paper.

**Best Practices: In the 21st Century, Taxonomic Decisions in Herpetology are Acceptable Only When Supported by a Body of Evidence and Published via Peer-Review. IN PRESS. Herpetological Review (March 2013)**

**Authors:** Hinrich Kaiser, Brian Crother, Christopher Kelly, Luca Luiselli, Mark O’Shea, Hidetoshi Ota, Paulo Passos, Wulf Schleip, Wolfgang Wuster

**ASH has been asked to support the Point of View and be listed with the other societies: namely that persons undertaking taxonomic and nomenclatural work;**

1. Follow appropriate methods
2. Provide a list of publicly accessible specimens, including catalogue numbers
3. Appear in a regularly published outlet supported by an editorial team and publicly-listed expert scientific panel (editorial board)
4. Are peer reviewed by experts in the field
5. Are listed in the Zoological Record
6. Meet the conditions of the ICZN for publication, including electronic publication

**The paper provides a table of all names, going back to 1 January 2000, that do not meet the above criteria**

**Proposes that these names should not be used as they have not followed this approach and table lists the appropriate taxonomy for use at this time.**

The meeting was suspended at 17:34, to be reconvened at 1930 on Thursday 31st January 2013.

The meeting was reopened by Frank at 1942 Thursday 31st January 2013.

The taxonomy issue was reopened to discussion, until consensus was reached on the wording of the following decisions:

**Whereas** the Australian Society of Herpetologists recognises the importance of peer-review when proposing taxonomic decisions and the nomenclatural acts that follow from them,

**acknowledges** that works published outside of the peer-review process are damaging the integrity of herpetological science,

**does not condone** the naming of taxa for reasons that are unscientific or not based on a trail of evidence, and

**applauds** the efforts by the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature to curb the misuse of nomenclature,

and a motion was proposed by Mark Hutchinson that

“ **therefore, be it resolved** that the Australian Society of Herpetologists joins the other listed societies in endorsing the point of view presented by Kaiser *et al*. in the March 2013 issue of Herpetological Review, namely that in the 21st Century, taxonomic decisions in herpetology and their nomenclatural consequences are acceptable only when supported by a body of evidence published within the peer-review process”.

The motion was seconded by Glenn Shea. All in favour (with one abstension by Glenn Shea), motion carried.

The ASH secretary will forward this information to Marc Hero to present to the World Congress of Herpetology.

**POINT OF ORDER**

Dan Edwards moved that Dale Roberts be ejected from the meeting, seconded by Paul Doughty. All in favour, Dale was duly ejected, his replying remarks being unprintable.

**OTHER BUSINESS**:

It was brought to the attention of the meeting that Ric Longmore received an Order of Australia in the Australia Day Honours list.

Simon Hudson moved that a letter of congratulations be sent on behalf of the ASH , seconded by Jo Sumner, all were in favour, motion carried. The secretary will follow this up.

Rick Shine spoke about the journal Asian Herpetological Research.

Rick Shine also made the point that it would be useful to put standard operating procedures for toe clipping and other ethics requirement on the ASH website.

Simon Hudson moved that that we have support to put ethical SOP’s on the society website. Seconded by Gordon Grigg, all in favour, motion carried.

Frank Lemckert opened the discussion on whether the society should nominate to have an annual meeting rather than an 18 month turnaround. He suggested it be brought up for discussion at the next AGM. There was support from the membership through a show of hands. Frank will discuss the issue with the next president.

Scott Keogh brought it to the attention of the meeting that Dick Barwick passed away. Dick was a foundation member of ASH, and also Rick Shine’s honours supervisor.

**NEXT CONFERENCE**Nomination received for the next conference from Scott Keogh (ACT) – so disappointed after the WCH. Scott said that they were aiming to hold the next conference in 12 months’ time.

**ELECTION OF NEW OFFICE BEARERS**

The committee was stood down.

Nominations were received by the President 21 days before the AGM as listed below.

President: Scott Keogh

Vice President: Frank Lemckert

Treasurer: Conrad Hoskin

Public Officer: Mitzy Pepper

Ordinary Member: Kate Umbers

As there were no other nominations, the nominees were elected unopposed, with the full executive listed below.

President: Scott Keogh

VP: Frank Lemckert

Treasurer: Conrad Hoskin

Secretary: Eridani Mulder

Ordinary Members: Kate Umbers

Ordinary Members: Matt Greenlees

Newsletter Editor: Deb Bower

Public Officer: Mitzy Pepper

Scott Keogh accepted the presidency, however Frank Lemckert continued to run the meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS: None further business was brought forward.

The meeting was closed at 2023.

**ADDENDUM:**

Prize winners at the 2013 conference were as follows:

The **Peter Rawlinson Prize for PhD** presentation was awarded to Kate Hodges for her talk entitled:

“The biogeography of introgressive hybridisation in east Australian long necked turtles”
(Hodges, Kate, Georges, A & Donnellan, S.C.)

There were two honourable mentions for this category:
Melissa Bruton – “Space, time and temperature: ecology and thermal biology of free-ranging woma pythons in a recovering landscape” (Bruton, Melissa J., McAlpine, C.E., Maron, M., & Franklin, C.E.)

Claire McLean – “ Geographic Variation in Colour Morphs and Genetic Divergence among Populations of the Tawny Dragon Lizard, *Ctenophorus decresii*”
(McLean, Claire A., Moussalli, A. & Stuart-Fox, D.)

The **Murray Littlejohn Prize** for best Honours presentation was awarded to Grant Webster for his talk:

“Dynamic colour change as a sexually selected signal in the Whirring Tree Frog (*Litoria revelata*)
(Webster, Grant & Whiting, M.J.)

An honourable mention in this category went to Matt McCurry for his talk on:

“The cranial mechanics of varanoid lizards” (McCurry, Matthew R., Mahony, M.J., Clausen, P., Wroe, S., Wlamsley, C.W., Quayle, M.R., & McHenry, C.R.)

**The Ric Longmore Prize for best Poster** was awarded to Claire Treilibs for her poster:

“Conservation management of the endangered Slater’s skink, *Liopholis slateri*, in Central Australia”
(Treilibs, Claire, Bull, M., Pavey, C. & Hutchinson, M.)