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ABRS REPORT (DECEMBER 1997)

STAFF

Mr Ian Cresswell has now been appointed permanently to the position of Director, Flora within ABRS. He comes to ABRS with a diverse botanical background. He has been working with the Department of Environment in Canberra since 1991, firstly with ERIN, before moving to the Reserves System Section of ANCA. His main research interest is in landscape ecology, and in particular vegetation mapping: with Richard Thackway he coordinated the development of the IBRA and IMCRA biogeographic regionalisation systems for Australia.

EDITING IN PROGRESS

The following volumes are almost ready to go to press, each being delayed by non-receipt of one or two contributions:

- Flora of Australia* Volume 1 Introduction (2nd edn)
Flora of Australia Volume 17 Proteaceae 2
Flora of Australia Volume 48 Ferns, Gymnosperms and their Allies

As a result another volume has been brought forward in the editing process, and is expected to go to press in late November/early December, with publication in early 1998:

- Flora of Australia* Volume 12 Mimosaceae (excl. Acacia), Caesalpiniaceae

The following volumes are well-advanced in the editing process, and should appear during 1998 (roughly in the order listed):

- Flora of Australia* Volume 39 Alismatales to Arales
Flora of Australia Volume 43 Poaceae 1
Flora of Australia Volume 44 Poaceae 2
Flora of Australia Volume 51 Mosses 1

In addition editing of the following volumes has started and they should also be published during 1998 or early 1999:

- Nature's Investigator: The Diary of Robert Brown in Australia 1801–1805
Flora of Australia Volumes 11A & 11B, Acacia 1 & 2.
Fungi of Australia Volume 2B Catalogue and Bibliography of Australian Macrofungi 2

THE ABRS GRANTS PROCESS

Appended to this report is a summary of ABRS Participatory Program Grants approved in this year's round, for payment in calendar 1998. Only those Grants for 'Flora' are listed here, *i.e.* those for vascular and non-vascular plants, algae, fungi and lichens. The full list, including those for 'Fauna', will be published in *Biologie* in January/February 1998.

This year the total amount available for 'Flora' grants was \$643,797, compared with \$585,035 in the previous year.

In discussions with various people over the last few months it has become apparent that many do not understand how ABRS is structured, and how the Grants Program, in particular, operates. What follows is a brief overview of ABRS which may help to make the process clearer. A fuller description is being prepared for the ABRS World Wide Web site (<http://www.anbg.gov.au/abrs/index.html>).

ABRS consists of 2 Sections and a Grants Unit.

ABRS Flora Section is responsible for compilation and publication of *Flora of Australia*, *Fungi of Australia*, the *Flora of Australia Supplementary Series*, and (shortly) the *Algae of Australia* series. There is a Flora Editorial Committee which meets once a year, usually in about September/October, to advise ABRS Flora and the Executive Director, ABRS (Ms Alison Russell French) on matters connected with the above series.

ABRS Fauna Section is responsible for compilation and publication of the *Zoological Catalogue of Australia* and *Fauna of Australia* series, and has also produced in recent years the Platypus software package and the Catalogue of Vertebrate Species database. There is a Fauna Editorial Committee which meets once a year in a similar manner to the Flora Editorial Committee.

The Grants Unit is responsible for administering the Participatory Grants program, issuing the necessary forms, advertising the Research Objectives each year, and organising payments.

Overall advice on ABRS is provided to the Minister for the Environment by the ABRS Advisory Committee, which usually meets twice a year, once in about August to consider Grant applications for the coming year, and again in about November, to discuss general policy matters, and to approve recommendations for the next round of Grants, for advertisement the following February.

How do particular groups get on to the Preferred Objectives? Advertisements calling for applications target two more or less distinct kinds of applications.

The first are called National Objectives, and these are generic topics which arise from Government policy statements identifying areas of taxonomic research that the government of the day wants to see progressed. In the past they have included such topics as rare and endangered taxa, tropical rainforest taxa, and aquatic taxa. It should be noted that applications on these topics are open-ended to a large extent in terms of the taxa eligible for study, but the projects must be taxonomic in character.

The second group of applications called for are those which support the publications program. One of the primary objectives in establishing the Grants program originally was to ensure that research could be encouraged, in a timely manner, in those groups which were to be written up in the main ABRS series. Thus suggestions for Research Objectives to support the publication initiatives arise initially from within the Flora Section and Fauna Section. In the case of 'Flora' projects they come from the Executive Editor, Flora (me), as a result of consideration of the likely progress of individual volumes of the *Flora of Australia*, *Algae of Australia* and *Fungi of Australia* over the next 5-6 years, and through discussions with a wide range of likely contributors on such matters as the depth and reliability of current knowledge, and the level of support that might be needed to rectify problems in poorly known taxa. This is done in the knowledge that the Grants program will probably never be large enough to fund revisions of all groups prior to writing of the *Flora of Australia* and other series, and compromises will be necessary. These initial suggestions for preferred taxa are taken to the Flora Editorial Committee each year, where they are discussed and frequently modified on the basis of the knowledge and judgement of the committee members. The Editorial Committee sends a recommended list of topics to the ABRS Advisory Committee, who review them again, and sometimes modify them, before they are accepted for publication.

Applications are called for by formal advertisement in February each year, with applications closing on 10 April. All applications received are sent for review to at least two referees, chosen for their knowledge of the subject matter, and all applications are additionally reviewed by members of the Advisory Committee. As a result of the refereeing process, and taking into account advertised Research Objectives and the amount of funding available, the ABRS Advisory Committee recommends a list of grantees and amounts to the Minister for the Environment. It should be stressed that the Advisory Committee acts as an autonomous body in recommending grants, and that ABRS staff are not part of the selection process (other than in supplying advice on request).

Recommendations are finally reviewed by the Minister's office. Letters of offer are distributed as soon as Ministerial approval is received, in this year's case, in early November. 'Flora' Grants offered in recent years have usually contained a condition that the grantee will prepare an account of their group for *Flora of Australia* or other appropriate series.

There are a couple of points that should be made for those who wish to have input to the process outlined above:

1. Topics listed on the Research Objectives for publications in previous years, but not funded, remain 'live' and can compete with current Research Objectives on an equal footing. Sometimes these older subjects are readvertised to provide additional incentive to potential applicants, but this is not necessary for applications to be made. Successful grantees are listed in the ASBS Newsletter in December or March each year, and in *Biologue* in about February, so topics which were not funded can be identified. Alternatively, this information can be obtained through discussion with me, or with the Director, Flora.

2. Input to the 'Flora' planning process (for Grants or any other matter) is welcome from any of our stakeholders. Input can be made through three main channels: directly via ABRs staff (particularly through the Director, Flora and the Executive Editor), through the members of the Flora Editorial Committee or through the members of the ABRs Advisory Committee. The committee members, in particular, are intended to be a conduit for opinions and suggestions. The names of the current committee members are listed below, and are updated each year in *Biologue*.

Flora Editorial Committee

Dr Michael Crisp (Chair), Division of Botany & Zoology, Australian National University, Canberra
 Mrs Robyn Barker, c/o State Herbarium of South Australia, Adelaide
 Dr John Huisman, Murdoch University, Perth
 Dr Gintaras Kantvilas, Tasmanian Herbarium, Hobart
 Mr Ian Pascoe, Institute of Horticultural Development, Melbourne
 Dr Jim Ross, National Herbarium of Victoria, Melbourne
 Mrs Karen Wilson, National Herbarium of New South Wales, Sydney
 Mr Ian Cresswell, Director, Flora, ABRs (ex officio)
 Dr Tony Orchard, Executive Editor, Flora, ABRs (Secretary)

ABRS Advisory Committee

Dr Hal Cogger (Chair), Retired, formerly Australian Museum, Sydney
 Dr Gordon Guymner, Queensland Herbarium, Brisbane
 Prof. Pauline Ladiges, School of Botany, University of Melbourne, Melbourne
 Prof. David Patterson, School of Biological Sciences, University of Sydney, Sydney
 Dr Carden Wallace, Museum of Tropical Queensland, Townsville
 Dr Judy West, Centre for Plant Biodiversity Research, CSIRO, Canberra
 Dr Max Whitten, c/o Food & Agriculture Organisation, The Phillipines
 Ms Alison Russell French, Executive Director, ABRs (ex officio)
 Ms Liz Visher, ABRs Grants Unit (Secretary)

ABRS RESEARCH PROJECTS FOR 1998 ('Flora' only)

Note * = new projects for 1998

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Australian National University

Name: Michael D Crisp*

Located: Division of Botany and Zoology

Project Title: Flora of Australia treatment of Pittosporaceae

Amount: \$19,000

Name: Michael D Crisp*

Located: Division of Botany and Zoology

Project Title: Revision of *Gastrolobium* (Fabaceae)

Amount: \$6,250

Name: Professor Jack Elix*
Located: School of Chemistry
Project Title: A Revision of Lichen Genus *Buellia* in Australia
Amount: \$50,000

CSIRO, Division of Plant Industry, Centre for Plant Biodiversity Research

Name: Judith G West
Project Title: Revision and Flora of Australia Treatment of eastern Australian species of *Pultenaea* (Fabaceae)
Amount: \$30,000

Unattached

Name: Christopher F Puttock*
Project Title: Revision of *Helichrysum s.l.* (remaining taxa and *Chrysocephalum*)
Amount: \$28,000

NEW SOUTH WALES

NSW Herbarium, Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney

Name: Peter H Weston
Project Title: Taxonomic Revision of *Dillwynia* (Fabaceae: Faboideae: Mirbelieae)
Amount: \$25,200

University of New England

Name: Jeremy J Bruhl
Located: Department of Botany
Project Title: Systematic Studies in *Abildgaardieae* (Cyperaceae)
Amount: \$14,020

University of New South Wales

Name: Bettye J Rees*
Located: School of Biological Sciences
Project Title: A Taxonomic Study of the Genus *Gymnopilus* in Australia
Amount: \$16,000

University of Sydney

Name: Professor David J Patterson*
Located: School of Biological Sciences
Project Title: An Uninterpreted Catalogue and Review of the Autotrophic Euglenids (Protista) of Australian Inland Waters
Amount: \$25,000

VICTORIA

Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne

Name: Timothy J Entwistle*
Project Title: Taxonomic Revision of *Zygnemataceae* (Chlorophyta) in Australia
Amount: \$31,000

Institute for Horticultural Development

Name: Vyrna C Beilharz
Project Title: Cercosporoid Fungi on Australian Native Plants
Amount: \$27,120

University of Melbourne

Name: Gerald T Kraft
Located: School of Botany
Project Title: Generic Monographs of Australian Siphonous Green Algae
Amount: \$17,650

QUEENSLAND

Department of Environment, Queensland Herbarium

Name: Gordon Guymer

Project Title: Revision of 11 Genera of Myrtoideae (Myrtaceae)

Amount: \$45,420

University of Queensland

Name: Julie A Phillips

Project Title: Taxonomic Studies on the Dictyotales (Phaeophyta)

Amount: \$35,000

Unattached

Name: Anthony M Young*

Project Title: Revision of the Hygrophoraceae of Eastern Australia

Amount: \$30,200

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

State Herbarium of South Australia

Name: Robyn M Barker*

Project Title: Acanthaceae for *Flora of Australia*

Amount: \$12,000

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

University of Western Australia

Name: Jennifer A Chappill*

Located: Department of Botany

Project Title: Taxonomic Revision of *Gompholobium* Smith and *Sphaerolobium* Smith (Leguminosae)

Amount: \$17,300

Western Australian Herbarium

Name: Paul G Wilson*

Project Title: Some Genera in the Angianthinae Inuleae-Asteraceae

Amount: \$24,600

Unattached

Name: Kristina L Lemson*

Project Title: *Flora of Australia* Treatments of *Andersonia*, *Sprengelia*, *Cosmelia* and *Sphenotoma* (Epacridaceae)

Amount: \$31,000

TASMANIA

Tasmanian Herbarium

Name: Dennis I Morris/ Winifred Curtis

Project Title: A Flora of Tasmania (Dicotyledons)

Amount: \$5,600

Name: Andrew C Rozefelds*

Project Title: Systematic Studies in Australian Cunoniaceae

Amount: \$23,800

OVERSEAS

NEW ZEALAND

Landcare Research, New Zealand

Name: Peter R Johnston

Project Title: Rhytismatales of Australia Part 1

Amount: \$11,000

Victoria University of Wellington

Name: Ann E Bell*

Located: School of Biological Sciences

Project Title: Coprophilous Ascomycetes of Australia

Amount: \$3,000

HONG KONG

University of Hong Kong

Name: Kevin D Hyde

Located: Department of Ecology and Biodiversity

Project Title: Flora Accounts of the Family Phyllachoraceae

Amount: \$17,637

MISCELLANEOUS CONTRACTS AND PAYMENTS

ABRS contributions towards costs of 1998/99 ABLO

Amount: \$35,000.

Support of *Flora of Australia*-related loans from major Australian herbaria

Amount: \$30,000.

Completion of database of marine macro-algal names

Names: John Huisman & Roberta Cowan

Amount: \$20,000.

Completion of version 1.0 of interactive key to Australian Vascular Plant Families

Names: Laurie Adams & Kevin Thiele

Amount: \$13,000

Tony Orchard

Executive Editor, ABRS Flora

IMC8—AUSTRALASIA 2006?

In 1971 The first International Mycological Congress (IMC) was held in Exeter, England. Since then a further four have been held in Tampa, Florida (1977), Tokyo (1983), Regensburg (1990) and Vancouver (1994). IMC6 is to be held in Jerusalem next August and I believe that IMC7 will be held in Scandinavia.

Following the formation of an active Australasian Mycological Society, the success of the first Australasian Mycological Conference in Melbourne in 1996, the enthusiasm of mycologists in this part of the world, and discussions with several people, I have agreed to chair an IMC subcommittee of AMS, with the goal of proposing a successful bid for IMC8 to be held in Australasia. This would be the first southern hemisphere International Mycological Congress.

The first decision to be made is which city and venue can best host such a Congress. The last Congress (IMC5) attracted about 1600 participants, so catering for this number or possibly more, limits our choice. Brisbane, Melbourne or Sydney would seem to be prime candidate cities, as I doubt there is any New Zealand venue that could cope with such large numbers. It is essential that the chosen host city is appealing to participants ('Somewhere I always wanted to go'), that there is enough interest to attract partners, and that the city administration will give support. Institutional and corporate support will also be needed.

It is envisaged that the Australasian Mycological Society will be the lead organisation for IMC8. However, it is necessary to obtain support from other societies with mycological interests. This would include the Australasian Plant Pathology Society, Australian and New Zealand Microbiological Societies, and the New Zealand Plant Protection Society.

Timing of the Congress may be important. Traditionally they have been held in August–September which is late summer, and main holiday time, in the northern hemisphere. We may prefer another time of the year with better weather or, perhaps, the macrofungal fruiting season.