

Foreword

If the reaction of many of those who attended the Eleventh Biennial Conference of the Australian Speleological Federation, (Cavconact) is any guide, the conference was a marked success. The editors hope that the proceedings of the conference will be as happily received by the caving fraternity. We apologise, especially to authors, for the long delay between conference and publication. Whilst this was at least partly the result of slothfulness on the part of the editors, we would like to point out that we did not receive the last papers until June. The comments made by Albert Goede and Andrew Graham as editors of the proceedings of the Eighth and Tenth Conferences respectively still apply. Many of the papers arrived so untidily handwritten or typed that editorial reading was impossible, references were missing or inaccurate and, perhaps most aggravating of all, well over half of the figures had to be redrawn. Inconsistencies still remain but we hope that those that are left do not detract too badly from the whole publication.

Editors of future proceedings would be well advised firstly, not to do so and secondly, to lay down firm guidelines and deadlines and to stick to them. Standards for presentation, citation, and so on should be circulated before the conference, perhaps by recommending one of the widely circulated style manuals. Consideration should be carefully given to the prospect of rejecting papers which do not come up to scratch as regards quality of content, style and presentation. As those of you who read this volume in its entirety will realise the standard of the papers varies, in our opinion, from excellent to extremely poor; this is, of course, a rather unsatisfactory situation for an official ASF publication; improvement will only come through harsh editorial policy.

In our opinion, serious consideration should be given by ASF to abandoning the production of conference proceedings. Bibliographical difficulties, non-appearance, variety of standards, and the sheer hard work of coercing cavers to provide the goods at both ends of the production process, among other problems, perhaps negate the value of such publications.

The views expressed in this volume are those of the respective authors and are not necessarily those of the Australian Speleological Federation or of its member societies.

We would like to take this opportunity to extend our thanks, on behalf of the Australian Speleological Federation, to Judith Wright McKinney for opening the conference. Her entertaining and thought provoking speech provided a fine background for the conservation-oriented papers which followed and which, to a large extent, set the pace for the marked success of the conference.

Finally, we would like to thank all those who made the conference a success and those who contributed to the proceedings. Production of this publication was assisted by Adrian Davey, who also designed the cover. Special thanks are also due to the ANU Central Printing staff; Bruce George, Ian Cottrell and, especially, Cynthia MacDonald who expertly interpreted and executed the editorial policy in the typesetting process.

*John Brush
Marjorie Coggan
Andy Spate*