

REPLY TO OPENING ADDRESS

by
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A.S.F. President

I don't think there would be many of us here who wouldn't share the experiences and concerns Dr. Barker has expressed here.

We are all aware, that caves are an extremely limited resource in Australia generally, and of the importance of developing appropriate management strategies so that we can retain these resources the destruction of which would be of considerable loss to all concerned.

It is pleasing to note that many of our objectives and those of the South Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service and our own Federation are shared in reference to the protection of our karst heritage. Not only for caves of scientific importance but right across the whole spectrum of uses that were mentioned, from the ordinary caver to the people who visit tourist caves for recreation. We are both happy to work together to share management programs that will enhance the enjoyment of all of those people whilst at the same time retaining representatives of the areas of scientific importance.

It is important to note that Dr. Barker's personal expertise in bio-geography is directly relevant, particularly pertaining to botany to the extent that if we don't look after the surface areas of caves then we will lose the interiors of the caves. We can't just focus on the interiors and forget about the whole surface vegetation pattern and the landscape and various other external effects on the cave, apart from the effects which we or other users may have on the interior, or whatever else may happen to the caves.

I believe that we should take an overall and general view of things including the surface management. I think, Dr. Barker, knowing the previous co-operation that our Federation and member societies have been able to enjoy with the South Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service, I hope that we can continue to work together in this way.

Thank you very much for opening our conference.