FUSSI

Vol. 7. No 2. 1995

What happens to the Safety Officer when he makes an unpopular suggestion!

The Quarterly Newsletter of the

Flinders University Speleological Society Incorporated

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Editorial

I never realised that there could be so much to do just 'putting together' a newsletter! However, I feel that there is a lot of good material in this one so, comments aside, please read on....

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Meeting times:
The first Tuesday of each month

At 6.30 pm in the Kelly Morris Rm. Union Building. Flinders University.

Pre meeting drinks
Union Tavern
6pm.

In case of a caving accident call the police, then let the FUSS Safety Officer know:
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Letters to the Editor

27 April. 1995

Dear Editor,
On behalf of Kempsey Speleological Society I would like to comment on Tim Payne's report as your ASF Rep in your Newsletter for March 1995.
We instructed our representative to vote against the CEGSA Constitutional amendments at the VULCON Council Meeting.
We did this for two reasons:
Firstly because there was no explanation of the effects of the changes or how they were meant to "improve the representation of all states on the national executive". We feel that proposals to change the Constitution should be accompanied by statements giving arguments for and against the changes.

But secondly and far more importantly, we had no chance to discuss the proposal before VULCON. We received them at the end of November, after our last meeting for the year and I do not suppose that we are by any means the only member Society which does not meet around Christmas. So if CEGSA likes to put forward their proposed amendments again now, with a statement of the reasons for them, we will give them our full consideration before the next ASF Council meeting.

We agree that the acquisition by the ASF of an insurance policy is a monumental achievement. There was long debate at VULCON as to how to pay for it, and we feel that the final decision to split the cost between an ASF levy and optional extension to Clubs is eminently fair.

Yours sincerely.

Philip Holberton. Secretary.
1645 Hickey Creek Rd.
Willawarrin. Via Kempsey.
NSW 2440

MAVIS LOVES KEYS AND ERIC

F.U.S.S.I Trip 14th to 17th April 1995 (Easter)

Participants Eric. Scott, John, Sally, Kylea, Susan, Wade, Miles.

Friday 14th

We all got off to a good start. The weather was fine, Eric was caught a little off guard. Arrived at Bagalowie Homestead at about 3:30 and started to set up camp. Then it was decided we would get in boots and all, so we went into Clara StDora before dinner.

Saturday 15th

Scott, Wade and I went up to rig Mares while the others finished brecky. So in we all went. All abseiled in with great success continued on to Christmas Tree extension . I found no more damage to the extension. On the journey back we split into two groups: Scott, Kylea, Wade and myself went into the 8½ in squeeze. Wade and I stayed whilst Scott and Kylea went on through. Eric, Susan and Sally went into the catacombs We eventually resurfaced at about 4:pm to a group of ladies and kids that were with Nugget from C.E.G.S.A.

Sunday 16th

We got off to an early start around 8am a little hard work for some. So we took off to Mt. Sims and Good Friday caves The going was slow due to my worry about my new car. On arriving at Mt. Sims we were led to believe that we could go around the gate as it was in need of repair Unfortunately it had been fixed and we didn't take the keys, so all geared up and nowhere to go. So we then we went looking for Good Friday cave. We did a little cross country driving to get around a deep creek crossing, half an hour later we succeeded.

At the end of the track we encountered a farmer taking some shooters out so with Eric's nice white overalls we requested him to walk away from us in the event they may mistake him for a nice plump white bunny. So we continued on looking for Good Friday cave to no avail After walking for an hour out and an hour back we declared the day to be a MAVIS day. So on returning to camp feeling rather dejected. We were talking to Nugget from C.E.G.S.A. the previous day and he said about a new chamber in Clara St Dora we had not seen. So after tea we felt better so I lifted spirits with the mention of an easter egg hunt in the cave after we had explored the new extension. So at 4.30 we went into Clara and looked for the new extension . We found it behind a wall between two bedding planes. On entering it was a straight drop of 6 feet then a 45deg 5 m. slide into a small chamber with some active formation and some not. Around midnight we returned to camp.

Monday 17th

The return home was a little disappointing but I feel a good time was had by all. Next time I think a map and compass may be in order to find Good Friday cave, and also a couple of other caves close to Mairs.

Trip Report by
John Thorp.

ROCK GYMS IN CAVES

Tom Kline

From NSS News, Feb 1995. p. 49-51.

The ethics of both caving and bolted rock climbing have been at the center of the continuing controversy of rock-climbing in central Oregon's caves. Since 1987, Oregon's Smith Rock State Park has been one of the few climbing areas in the country allowing unrestricted bolting. The park has also attracted some of the world's leading rock climbers. In 1991, an "explosion" of bolting activity occurred prior to the publication of "The Climber's guide to Smith Rocks" as climbers sought to have their first ascents published in the guide. Hundreds of routes had been developed using battery-powered electric hammer-drills which resulted in the use of thousands of bolts. Climber factions have argued for years over the ethics of bolting, with occasional "bolt wars" as traditional climbers removed bolted routes placed by sport climbers. While the climbing ethics at Smith Rock State Park may have not been universally accepted, the park's success as a climbing area remained undisputed. In 1991, the sport spread to nearby Skeleton Cave, which is on federal land, and climber's chalk soon replaced painted graffiti. Gymnastic rock climbing, as practiced in the lava tubes, involves the placement of protection bolts, using a battery-powered hammer-drill. The migration to local lava tube caves as exercise areas was the result of a number of reasons. The climber was able to do a route that started at the wall and continued up over the ceiling and down the other side. It is one of the most challenging routes possible (class 5). The cave itself protected the climber in much the same way as when prehistoric Indians used the cave. During summer there is protection from the heat and in winter protection from the cold and rain.

Central Oregon's high desert lava tubes are unique geological and biological resources. Often they are the only source of water for miles for plant and animal life. Some house hibernation and maternity bat colonies, including the declining Townsend's Bat. Although the paleontological and archaeological sites in these caves have seen tremendous impact from illegal pot hunting activity, prehistoric human use is well documented. Of only four Oregon lava tube caves known to contain Indian rock art, three have now been developed for use as rock climbing recreation areas.

"Gymnastic rock climbing, as practiced in the lava tubes, involves the placement of protection bolts, using a battery-powered hammer-drill." In lava tubes "the climber was able to do a route that started at the wall and continued up over the ceiling and down the other side. It is one of the most challenging routes possible (class 5). The cave itself protected the climber in much the same way as when prehistoric Indians used the cave. During summer there is protection from heat and in winter protection the from the cold and rain."

Over the next two years, bolted climbing routes were established in several other federal land caves. Pictures appeared in a July-August 1992 *Rock and Ice* article showing Amy Irvine climbing in Skeleton Cave. The September 10, 1992, *Bend Bulletin* article "Get a Grip" features Metolius (a rock climbing catalogue company based in Bend, Oregon) employee Jeff Paulson climbing in Skeleton Cave. In 1993, the Metolius catalog featured a photograph of a climber on the ceiling of Hidden Forest Cave. Another Metolius advertisement in the October-November 1993 *Climbing Magazine* uses a climber photograph in Hidden Forest Cave. In the same year, Metolius sponsored an Eric Perlman production video "Masters of Stone" featuring Jeff Paulson. The video was controversial because it was filmed without a location permit at Skeleton Cave. Later conversations with the publishers and company resulted in a voluntary curtailment of advertising such scenes and taking a more conservative viewpoint. In the fall of 1993, cavers from several Pacific Northwest NSS Grottos, induding the Oregon, Willamette Valley, and Jefferson State College chapters, initiated a letter writing campaign that was directed at federal agencies, equipment manufacturers, climbing publications, and local newspapers. The local grottos, the NSS, cave conservation organizations and the Portland, Oregon, based Mazamas, one of America's oldest climbing clubs, all expressed their official concern over the development of cave climbing routes. OPB (Oregon Public Broadcasting) gave local coverage to the controversy. The "Leave Nothing But Footprints" ethic faced a serious challenge as sport climbing spread underground.

In January 1994, the real scope of rock climbing became apparent when NSS member Larry King, surveyed, mapped, and photographed the positions of bolts in Hidden Forest, Pictograph, Charcoal #1, Derrick, and Skeleton Caves. Wind Cave was also found bolted at a later date. The Fort Rock Ranger District scheduled a meeting in March of 1994 to address the concerns of cavers, climbers, and the federal government. At the meeting it quickly became apparent to cavers that this was a meeting catered to the rock climbers.

ROCK GYMS IN CAVES

to their increased presence, may actually be good by discouraging vandalism to the caves.

Overall it was a win-win situation for cavers because it forced the Forest Service to work on the cave law and bolting issue.

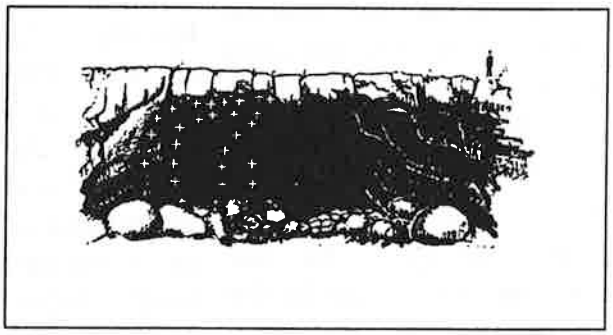
For the present, a voluntary moratorium on bolting was accepted by all parties. In the meantime, climbers will be allowed to continue climbing at the caves. If you visit the caves, please avoid any confrontations. Carry a camera to document illegal activity such as bolting or removal of rock. It is also recommended that you visit the cave with a group of people.

On October 29, 1994, area cavers met BLM representatives Dave Harmon, Scott Florence and Trish Lindaman at Derrick Cave for an afternoon of graffiti and trash removal. Climbing equipment was removed from the cave's ceiling, and bolt scars filled with a mixture of epoxy and sand. Members from the Oregon Grotto, the Willamette Valley Grotto and Corvallis Mountain Rescue tackled the logistics of bolt and trash removal while a graffiti team scrubbed spray paint from the cave walls.

All the caves concerned were nominated for inclusion in the Significant Cave Inventory as mandated by the FCRPA (Federal Cave Resource Protection Act). Both the Forest Service and the BLM have taken a very active role in establishing management policy to address these unique problems. It is critical that we have the willing co-operation of government officials and the business community.

Charcoal Cave Number One.

Located near Hidden Forest Cave, this cave has twenty-six bolted climbing anchors. The unusual archaeological history of this cave is described in Larson's *Central Oregon Caves, 1987,* and was the subject of investigation by the famous archaeologist Luther Cressman in 1938. The survey found Native American rock art in several places in the cave and two clear examples of historic graffiti dated 1941 and 1884.

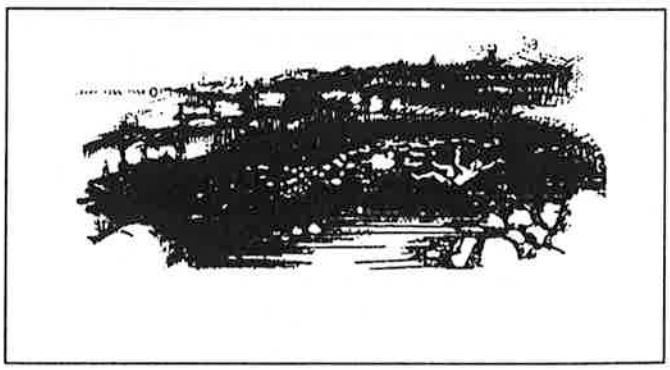


Derrick Cave

This Cave is in a Wilderness Study Area administered by the Lakeview District of the BLM. The survey found eleven bolted climbing anchors around a skylight located two hundred feet inside the cave. Derrick and other small caves in the area have been identified as habitat for bats.

Skeleton Cave

Rock climbing activity was first noticed in 1991 in Skeleton Cave. The ten foot ceiling and sandy floor made it the obvious choice for "bouldering" by local climbers. This cave is the most accessible of all the caves listed, and as such is known as a "party" cave. The survey found about fifteen hundred square feet of wall and ceiling marked with chalk.



BUNGONIA AND PANCAKES 1994

FUSS conducted a 12 day trip to Bungonia and Yarrangobilly in January/February 1994, to coincide with the ASF conference in Jindabyne. Tim, Scott, Eric, Kevin and myself managed to see 11 and a half caves in that time, AND fit in a days bushwalking as well. What and epic adventure!

We all rendezvoused at the camping ground in Bungonia National Park on Sat 29 Jan. Eric and I were greeted by a 6 foot goanna who was sizing up Tim and/or Scott through the front of their tent. They were seeping off their exhaustion (having driven all day and all night to get there) and oblivious to the fact they were about to become DINNER! Lucky we arrived when we did!

Sunday was the first of our epic days caving. We did Acoustic Pot - a cave not for the faint-hearted with its 30m inverted conical shaft and tricky launching point at the top. We rigged it with 4 anchor points (a bit of overkill perhaps!? Truth is, we found the bolts AFTER setting it all up) and descended into a 60's style outer space movie set! Cool cave! There were a couple of tight squeezes and several handline descents, and upon exiting we discovered the terrific acoustics from the bottom, Eric's farts reverberated right to the top - loud and clear! Tim reckons it was an F#.

Monday was Powell Pot through the Fossil cave (B4) entrance. This was pretty neat; the entrance is a horizontal crack half way down the B4 pitch. There is a bugger of an uphill squeeze, then a cruel horizontal one made more difficult by the slippery clay, before an 80 foot staged pitch is reached. Tim and Scott went down and rigged multiple rebelays, but having all but reached the bottom, they discovered the cause of their panting and sweating - foul air. Bummer! We decided, instead, to investigate fossil. There was more cool movie scenery to see; heaps of debris, some crickets and many spiders. We reached Kings Cross, but the only possible passage to the lake was silted up, so we simply returned to camp and our "Young Ones" style dinner.

On Tuesday we went into Blowfly through the B16 entrance. This was definitely my favourite of all the Bungonia caves we did. After an easy climb down a rockpile there was an interesting tubular descent (with similarities to a toilet S-bend!) followed by a muddy crawl leading to a scramble through a beautiful, smooth, polished marble squeeze. At this point one is required to cross a deep ravine on one's belly. Remnants of past cavers were at the bottom and I had fears of leaving my bones amongst them!

The squeeze was followed by and even MORE highly polished steeply upwards sloping tube. It was really spectacular, but a bitch to climb. We had to set up a handline and practice climbing techniques like gripping millimetre wide ledges with the fingertips - no bull! (well maybe a little) We were lugging (dragging is the more correct term!) cumbersome cave bags filled with gear to use in "The Aditum" - the deepest underground pitch in the mainland (or some-such claim to fame) - so the whole episode took what felt like hours. We had to pass all the bags through before bodies could follow. It was a worthwhile exercise though; we reached the Dragon's Teeth (a feature exceedingly well named - flat roof above and sharp raised triangular protrusions 50cm below that and all tilted down at a 45° angle! Great stuff! All cavers should experience descending this one on their bellies! It brings new meaning to the terms "painful" and "difficult" - but what a buzz!! (Especially when you reach the 20 foot drop at the end - head first!) It was lucky we appreciated that bit really, as after an hour or two of searching we had still not found the described entrance to the "great drop" and had to do everything previously described in reverse. Thank goodness for chocolate, or we might not have made it out!

Argyle was our first choice for Wednesday, but we encountered foul air at the corkscrew, somewhat of a bummer, but the corkscrew itself was worth seeing; it was like the spiral enclosed slides at some playgrounds, but carved out of rock and worn smooth by cavers bums. Cool! (Oh - in case you were wondering, this is the cave that makes up the half in the 11 and a half!)

Luckily, we had received further info on where to find the "great drop" (and I am not talking alcohol here!) and so returned to Blowfly instead. We decided to enter through B51. From the bottom this looked like a quick and easy way into the

BUNGONIA AND PANCAKES 1994

through Restoration (Y50). We were really lucky there - only one group gets to go through per year and we were it! It was a beautiful cave - pretties everywhere (including the marked path!) but FREEZING cold! The best formations were the several metre long white straws and the two storey frozen white "waterfall". Scott and Eric have photos of the latter - pester them for a look as it is magnificent!

Monday was our day off caving. We set out to Coolamon plains to walk through grassland and spot wildflowers. It was a glorious day and a beautiful landscape; well worth a visit if you are ever in the area. Kevin, Eric and myself very nearly had to stay there for longer than planned though, as the Cortina was not impressed by the steep sloped it had to go up to get home!

Tuesday was our last day of real caving. The others did East Deep Creek, while I sat in the sun and talked to blue tongue lizards (I had Bali Belly - without the Bali bit!) The guys had a great time; one section was a crawl which was half filled with water - quite a challenge when one wants to stay reasonably dry! They must have raced through; the description made it sound like a whole days worth, but it took them only a few hours.

Our final day, Wednesday, was spent looking through one or the tourist caves - Jersey (Y23). It was chock-a-block with pretties, big and small, but had been carved up to put in walk ways, stairs and lights. We were in there with only our head lamps, so the damage was probably more obvious than it would have been with main lights glaring. The day was complete after a swim in the Thermal Pool - a pool with a difference. It has naturally warm water (well, tepid anyway) with a reed and gravel bottom, and contains a bizarre selection of wild life - I found a frog swimming about down there. Swimming was a lovely way to nurse those caving bruises, and a relaxing end to our trip.

And so ended out epic adventure. All that remained was to pack up, squeeze everything into cars and trailers, clean up and drive and drive and drive! I thoroughly recommend the trip to anyone who has the chance, and definitely ask to stay at Cottorils Cottage at Yagby - the place is rustic, haunted (so the story goes) and downright magic!

By Belinda Skuja

A NOTE ON STATIC ROPES

Static ropes, used mostly by cavers and in some rescue situations, are designed to minimise stretch and dirt penetration into the core of the rope. In caving the ability of a rope to limit the dirt penetration is, as you will appreciate very important. The lack of stretch means that static ropes, when in use, must be kept as tight as possible as a their ability to absorb shock is marginal, particularly along short lengths of rope.

This means that virtually all the shock load of a fall is transmitted to the safety system (anchors, carabiners, harnesses, etc) and the human body.

In a climbing situation, a very short fall can develop enough force to be critical. Slings and runners are just like static rope. So a fall of less than four feet on a static rope or sling can create enough shock force to cause serious injury or death. Bearing in mind that the human body can only handle for a brief instant a shock force of 1 2kN without risking serious injury, you don't want to go around absorbing 18kN.

Also 1 8kN is close to, or over, the minimum limits set by the UIAA on all the gear in your safety system Anchors (bolts): 25kN, Carabiners: 2OkN, Slings: 22kN, Harnessess: 15kN. The diagram below shows the difference between a static and dynamic rope for the same fall situation

Taken from the Petzl Catalogue 1995. p. 48-49

FOR SALE

The AUSTRALIAN KARST INDEX.

This is the place to look when you are planning a trip or to find the specimen you collected on the way to Woy Woy Cave and had no collection bottle.

The Australian Speleological Federation maintains a listing of all AustralIan caves and karst features found by speleo's.

This Karst Index is the publIshed listing of all caves up till 1985.

It contains such useful Info as: the length of pitches, whether the cave is a walk In type or a pot hole type.

it describes what features are In the cave: fossils, bats, extensive decoration, If It has been used as a tourist cave, or old mine, or as a safe deposit box!

You can buy this weighty tome for $10.00.

(It used to be 35.00.)

See Clare Buswell.

'Oldest fossils' cave theory

By Environment Writer
LEANNE WEIR

Sellicks Hill cave, south of Adelaide, could contain some of the State's oldest fossils, according to experts from the South Australian Museum.

They say the presence of silt and clay on the cave floor suggests there was, at some time, an entrance to the cave which could have been used by ancient fauna.

A cave and bat expert from the museum, Dr Terry Reardon, said the Sellicks Hill cave was of "great scientific interest" and should be reopened for further investigation.

Dr Reardon and three other museum staff yesterday gave evidence to a parliamentary committee which is investigating the blasting of part of a large cavern by Southern Quarries in December 10, 1993.

"It is fair to say Sellicks Hill cave is one of the most significant caves of Cambrian limestone in the State," he said.

The rock in which the 1km-long cave system had formed was 550 million years old, making the system much older than well-known caves at Kangaroo Island, Naracoorte and the Nullarbor.

"The chances are if there are fossils there, they could be extremely old, far older than those discovered in the South East," Dr Reardon said.

He said half the museum's vertebrate fossil collection had come from caves, providing an "immeasurable" contribution to the understanding of fauna history.

Dr Reardon said little was known about the early fauna of the Fleurieu Peninsula due to a lack of fossil evidence.

He said the stalactites and stalagmites in the cave would hold information on the region's physical and climatic history.

Museum staff, who were not alerted to the cave's existence until after the blast, gave evidence on its scientific values after viewing videos taken in the cave by caving buffs.

Dr Reardon said museum staff would be "extremely excited" about the prospect of inspecting the cave and were optimistic of finding fossils.

"It's an extremely important cave and therefore, from a scientific view, it would be extremely sad not to have it opened to investigate its potential," he said.

Sellicks caves 'could be major tourist attraction'

The blasting of caves at Sellicks Hill, south of Adelaide, has sealed up one of Australia's most significant cave formations, according to a leading geologist.

Dr Armstrong Osborne, a science education lecturer at Sydney University, said yesterday the caves also had the potential to be a major tourist attraction like the famous Jenolan and Cathedral caves in New South Wales.

Dr Osborne, who is on several government committees dealing with caves, yesterday gave evidence to a parliamentary committee investigating the blasting of part of a large cavern near a quarry on December 10, 1993.

The actions, by Southern Quarries, sparked outrage among cavers.

Dr Osborne said the main cave area measured 1km long and 40m deep and was the largest known limestone cave of its type in SA.

He said it also had extensive calcite formations, stalactites,-stalagmites and deposits of cave coral which were in "excellent, pristine condition"

"It has to be viewed as being of very high show-cave value... the (deposits) are of a very high quality similar to the Jenolan caves," Dr Osborne said.

He said the Cathedral Caves, much smaller than the Sellicks Cave, attracted between 30,000 and 40,000 visitors a year.

Aside from its tourism value, the cave was also extremely significant in historical and environmental terms.

Despite the blasting, Dr Osborne said it was possible many of the cave's features had not been destroyed.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources chief executive officer, Mr Dennis Mutton, said the cost of establishing the cave as. a tourism facility would be about $500,000.

· The committee is still to hear evidence from the Department of Mines and Energy.

- Carol Altmann

also valid to draw a comparison with some belt mounted battery lights: a spare battery for Headlite costs £23.50 bringing the total for a combination giving ten hours light to £92.50, which compares very favourably against the FX2 and charger at £104.00. Some caving shops are putting a few Headlites into their lamp hire pool, so if you're really concerned to try before you buy it might be worth borrowing one for a day.

There are two very obvious competitors to the Headlite and it seems to make sense to note that the Petzl Zoom weigh 335g incl. battery and costs £19.75 while the Petzl Mega weights 450g with a full load of 'C' cells and comes in at £31.45. In either case a bewildering array of different battery and bulb options makes any further comparison a bit of a nightmare. Anyway this article is supposed to be a review of the Headlite, and as such I decided to steer clear of doing a major comparison between all the different lamps on the market - an idea for a feature, perhaps. To summarise, therefore, the Headlite represents an important step forward for producers of caving lights and cavers can now buy a reliable, rechargeable head torch from a British manufacturer which easily matches any of the foreign competition. Recommended.

POSITIONS VACANT

MAVIS ABATEMENT OFFICER
ASO4

Due to several unfortunate accidents and coincidences the position of Mavis Abatement Officer (MAO) has become vacant within the Mavis Control Commission (MCC).

Duties: Under the supervision of the Acting Head, MCC, to carry out such duties as specified in the directive MAP0195a. Additionally, the MAO is responsible for the day to day running of the Mavis Control Office currently comprising 23 technical and administrative staff.

Responsibility: The MAO is directly responsible to the Acting Head, MCC. (The Head of the MCC is currently on workers compensation due to stress caused by never being able to find the car keys so as to be able to come to work.)

The applicant is expected to be computer literate, have good written and verbal communication skills, and be committed to OH&S and EEO principles. Not that it will help.

Experience with cars in isolated conditions, is desirable, although possession of a current drivers licience is not required. Applicants must not have any interests in garden gnomes. Previous experience in dealing with Mavis, weather changes, cleptomainia, or experience in a theatre of war will be well regarded. Extensive travel both around the South Australia and interstate is required.

Renumeration: A generous renumeration package including free health care, 6 weeks annual leave, generous sick leave provisions and a salary in the ASO4 range of $34,560 - $42,915 will be negotiated with the successful applicant.

Applicants should request a position statement from the President, FUSS, address the selection criteria including the requirements of MAP0195a, and supply the names of three referees who may be contacted for further information.

Closing date for applications Is 30/6/95.

Please quote reference Number XXX and attention FUSS President.

FUSS is an equal opportunity employer and maintains a smoke free work environment.

FUSS,
C/- Clubs & Societies
Flinders University,
GPO Box 5001