

CHAFC
Council of Heads of Australian Faunal Collections
General Meeting held at Queensland Museum, Brisbane, 6-7 MAY 2010

Attendees

John Hooper	JH	QM	Chair
Sarah Verschoore	SV	QM	Secretary/ Treasurer
Penny Berents	PB	AM	Vice Chair and immediate Past Chair
David Yeates	DY	ANIC	Executive Committee member and Public Officer
Leo Joseph	LJ	ANWC, CSIRO	Executive Committee member
Di Jones	DJ	WAM	
Mark Norman	MN	MV	
Cathy Young	CY	TMAG	
Chris Glasby	CG	MAGNT	
Steve Donnellan	SD	SAM	
Patrick Filmer- Sankey	PFS	QVMAG	
Pam Beesley	PBeesley	ABRS – Day 1	
Kate Gillespie	KG	ABRS (Bush Blitz Invitee) – Day 1	
John Tann	JT	ALA Invitee – Day 2	

Apologies

Peter Last	PL	ANFC	
John Jennings	JJ	CHAEC	
Andrew Rozefelds	AR	TMAG	

FCIG Members attending for Item 11

Paul Flemons	PF	AM	
Beth Mantle	BM	CSIRO – ANIC	
Margaret Cawsey	MC	CSIRO – ANWC	
Ely Wallis	EW	MV	Chair FCIG
Paul Avern	PA	QM	
Cecelia Ryan	CR	QM	
Robert Morris	RM	SAM	
Piers Higgs	PH	WAM	
John Tann	JT	ALA	
Brett Summerell	BS	HISCOM representative	

SECTION A.

FLYING MINUTES FROM EMAIL DISCUSSIONS AMONGST THE CHAFC MEMBERSHIP OUT-OF-SESSION

1 April 2010 - Curation money for Bush Blitz

Constitution progression

1. **Progress with incorporation:** We have been promised the revised contract from Leonie, the Canberra lawyer, today. Nothing yet, but hopefully by early next week at the latest. The existing CHAFC constitution as adopted at the December AGM was inadequate as it relates to the laws in ACT and therefore needed substantial revision. I hope that Leonie has done this but will check her revision closely against the Model Rules for Incorporation in ACT, and cut and paste as necessary. Adopting those Model Rules would have been a quick route to incorporation, but if we had chosen this route we could not modify any of the rules, and there were some things in them that were inappropriate for CHAFC (e.g. necessity for a 7 member committee, which for an 11 member association like CHAFC was pretty silly). So, with your agreement, as soon as I receive this revised Constitution, I will emend as necessary against the Model Rules, to ensure our application will not be rejected on these technicalities. I will then circulate this to CHAFC for final approval, but I will need a **very quick turn around time of a couple of days please.**

2. **BB curation/ database funding:** I am still awaiting a response to our queries about the Bush Blitz (BB) contract (Pam Beesley said early next week). However, I can update that ABRS are proposing an equal (not equitable) distribution of funds for curation/ databasing across CHAH and CHAFC, even though the workload is going to be 3-4 times greater for the zoologists than the botanists (according to Robert Raven at least)

According to Cam, phone conversation before he departed, these subsequent years would likely to be \$200k in 2010-11, and \$200k in 2011-12.

However, I just got advice from Kate Gillespie at ABRS that they want to change the breakdown of future funds for BB curation/ databasing as follows:

	CHAH	CHAFC
2008/09:	\$200,000	\$0
2009/10:	\$0	\$300,000
2010/11:	\$200,000	\$100,000
2011/12:	\$150,000	\$150,000
2012/13:	\$150,000	\$150,000

JH response was:

I have already had a discussion with some of CHAFC about this, and we agreed, and we strongly suggest, that the differential between the CHAH and CHAFC funding can be defended on the basis that there are presumably far greater numbers of zoological

specimens collected from these BBs than botanical ones. (e.g. Robert Raven, who will have been on 3 of the 5 BBs as of June 2010, says the magnitude of difference is between 3 to 4 times as many animals as plants collected. He suggests this assertion can be tested by checking the BB report for the Darwin Reserves in WA for comparative specimen numbers).

Since these particular BB funds are specifically for curation and databasing (i.e. not for field work participation or subsequent “real” taxonomy), it is assumed that the associated work load for museums is going to be far greater than it is for the herbaria, and therefore the division of funds should be based on presumed workload, not just an arbitrary equal split.

Can I leave this with you and talk more about it next week ?

3. Dispersing curatorial/ database funding: The current (proposed) contract with ABRS is specifically for BBs that have occurred (or will occur) up until the end of this financial year, and it specifies only four institutions being responsible for those particular BBs and hence eligible for the curation and databasing funding.

However, it is more complicated than that, considering that individuals from other institutions have participated in these museum-run expeditions and contributed substantially to identifying, curation, databasing and reporting on the material, and will likely continue doing this in future BBs.

According to David Cantrell, Head of CHAH, “CHAH resolved that we would fund [different herbaria] up to a limit based on curation costs from the AVH project. From memory it is the first 500 specimens then after that the institution has to fund the data capture”. In other words, their model is based on distribution of funds related to level of participation and activity.

Finally, the contract specifies \$190k for curation and \$100k for databasing, and another \$10k for reporting.

Consequently, after talking this through with Penny, I recommend the following model for the present and future dispersal of curation/ databasing funds from BB contracts:

- A. Each member institution that would potentially contribute to BBs (i.e. excludes ANFC [and possibly also QVMAG ???]), or would expect to receive terrestrial specimens from these BBs lodged in a state or commonwealth collection, is allocated \$10k to progress their collection databasing and to contribute to OZCAM (10 terrestrial collection institutions = \$100k)
- B. The curation funds (\$190k) be divided equally between the 4 participatory institutions (WAM, TMAG, AM, QM)
- C. It is then up to those four institutions to disperse funds to participants who might not belong to their institutions, but who have contributed significantly to their particular BB. Gerry Cassis, for example, comes to mind for the WA surveys, so it would be up to WAM to deal with this, not CHAFC.
- D. The report funds (\$10k) should go to someone in one of those four institutions to coordinate those 5 reports and provide a summary for ABRS that satisfies Milestone 2. **I am after a volunteer here.** (I will be overseas from 27 May until 2 July and will not be able to contribute to this latter report which is due 11 June).

This decision cannot wait until our meeting in May as Milestone 1 report is due 30 April, **so I need your response to this model a.s.a.p.**

Milestone	Due by
Milestone 1: Report outlining proposed distribution on funding.	30 April 2010
Milestone 2: Report analysing funding and digital data results	11 June 2010

Agenda 3 – minutes confirmed by telephone.

Section B.

General Meeting. 5-6 May 2010. Queensland Museum Brisbane

ITEM 1. Opening

The Chair (JH) opened the meeting and introduced the Agenda. To accommodate various members not attending the whole meeting it was proposed and accepted to deal with several items out of sequence on the Agenda.

ITEM 2. Apologies

Peter Last (ANFC), John Jennings (CHAEC) and Andrew Rozefelds (TMAG)

ITEM 3. Actions from AGM

Actions from the minutes of the previous CHAFC meeting in Darwin 2009 were read through by PB. (These minutes had previously been accepted during the teleconference following the AGM.)

ITEM 4 - ABRS UPDATE

Pam Beesley updated CHAFC on activities of ABRS over the past few months, noting many staff changes and some positions are still to be filled.

The ABRS Director is revolving every three weeks between Pam Beesley (PBeesley) & Helen Thompson.

KG joins ABRS as Project Manager of Bush blitz program with a Senior Project manager to come on board shortly.

ACTION: PBeesley will email SV summary of ABRS report for circulation to CHAFC members.

In brief, items mentioned were:

National collection standards: a discussion paper had been produced with the understanding that this may assist with institutions procuring future Federal funding by setting a benchmark process. This procedure was put on hold late 2009 by Cameron Slatyer.

CHAFC members were concerned this could be used against institutions but PB pointed out it could also help with Auditing processes citing, AM external auditors were currently using European standards to pose questions about estimating collections value etc. which do not apply to the institution. MN noted standards process for Scientific Diving was arduous and not beneficial.

MN nominated to take over as rep for ABRS with regard to this project from KW. All agreed.

MN proposed to contact Cameron Slatyer unofficially to ascertain what his intention was for putting together a set of Standards for biological collections. PBeesley will confirm with MN on this approach or whether she will contact Cameron directly.

ACTION: PBeesley to circulate project plan for Standards procurement to CHAFC.

Bush blitz: Issues about the ABRS contracts

(It should be noted that some of these issues were resolved subsequent to the meeting, but the situation reported here is as it stood at the time of the General Meeting in May.)

- PBeesley noted the issues concerning meeting milestones to be met.
- Not all surveys are complete, or can be completed in arbitrarily specified time frames.
- JH is going on leave and needs report details before 25 May 2010 to send to ABRS.
- Require the research plan on how to distribute funds and prior planning (permits, access to areas).

KG presented CHAFC with the presentation on Bush Blitz, what has been surveyed and draft plans for next financial year (2010/2011) series of surveys. This plan was considered probably too challenging by most of CHAFC. PB stated that for the AM to plan surveys in the indicated areas they usually needed 6 months lead time.

ACTION: SV to circulate presentation and discussion document provided by ABRS.

- ABRS indicated that they wanted to participate in all surveys as 'Team leader', covering all logistics including travel arrangements, food and accommodation.

CY and PB suggested that it was far easier for the lead institution to take on the logistics along with the planning of the field trips.

ABRS agreed that each survey could be judged on a 'case by case' basis, but ideally they would want to cover all the logistical planning. The following project planning responsibilities fall to the respective agency:

- Permits were going to be the responsibility of the lead institution, or looking at contracting individual scientists rather than an institution. Furthermore ABRS would like CHAFC to recommend best scientists for particular surveys.
- The ABRS would carry out pre-survey planning obtaining authorisation and agreement from various land holders or traditional owners; site inspections for suitability and accessibility and any OH&S issues involved.

CY noted that some of the NRS sites they went to survey were just farmland and therefore unsuitable for surveying, with no or very little return.

- SD questioned whether NRS had global requirements or was there flexibility in areas if states had priority areas. KG said NRS sites were mandatory but teams could survey adjacent areas of interest in addition to the survey requirement. PB mentioned there is no mechanism to record negative results.

Issues for current set of surveys:

- ABRS aims to break down state boundaries but will look at each survey on a case by case basis.
- CL commented that timing overlapped for some upcoming surveys, that finding personnel would be too difficult to coordinate, and that the NRS Bush Blitz schedule was unreasonable. Dialogue between groups on case by case.
- Actual survey funds = \$1k/wk for each participant.
- SD - Vertebrate issue (so far) is that there hasn't been any voucher sampling of any mammals for DNA collections. RR said of the 2nd field trip in the Charles Darwin Reserve (WA) the land owner wouldn't allow any taking of mammals.
- DY would like to see the ABRS contracts with Caring for Country and BHP Billiton to see if it's all squaring up with everyone's priorities and outcomes.
- JH questioned whether it was possible to use para-taxonomists to help with the surveys citing that 'burn out' for taxonomists involved in this current punishing field schedule was a real possibility. All agreed that they knew of para-taxonomists potentially able to assist with some of the surveys.

ACTION: ABRS will discuss with NRS whether para-taxonomists can be used.

- SD mentioned that he thought Cameron Slatyer wanted the ratio of 1 taxonomist to 2-4 Earth Watch volunteers. He also questioned if the payment for one person to attend a survey was still \$1k/ week.
- ABRS informed CHAFC that they are going to employ an Indigenous Liaison Officer to assist with obtaining landowner approval for site surveys. Noting that so far the areas surveyed were not on indigenous areas. CHAFC members strongly requested ABRS for a complete list of all planned survey sites so they could start planning for the future.

ACTION: Chair to contact Bush Blitz senior officer (KG) for a complete list of proposed reserves and proposed timeframes, as per the NRS schedule presented at the meeting.

- According to the ABRS presentation the 2010/11 financial year will have 6 surveys across the country starting in July. PB reiterated that this was too short a notice to organise, and for some taxa the seasonality was inappropriate (e.g. insects, reptiles), as this would compromise survey data and collection. There were also issues with the number of surveys conducted at any one time. PB requested that this information be fed back to the NRS planning group.
- PB requested that the ABRS present the next planned surveys for 2011/12 so they can start with planning, permits and ethics committees approvals. DY would like to present to his staff. KG mentioned that National Parks hadn't been contacted.
- RR noted that the map presented in this meeting wasn't the same one that was available on the website.

Other issues regarding operations for Bush Blitz Surveys:

- Taxonomy grants for vertebrate barcoding of material collected from surveys – no material collected so far

- No DNA tissue sampling, lack of understanding by collectors on priority groups etc, sampling needs to be done sampled in systematic way.
- Vertebrates / ethics / willingness / bush heritage. There needs to be a scientific explanation to the management group which may assist this. SD understood it was to be done from the start of the project and requests that ABRS send out /enforce uniformity for procedures during collections.
- Planning issues / equipment
- Permits to collect
- Observational data being taken which solves NRS requirements but does not meet many museum's taxonomic requirements (missed opportunities etc).

Summary of points for ABRS to consider and discuss with partners involved in the Bush Blitz projects:

- Use of para-taxonomists – will resources support continue to be \$1k/week per person
- Number of survey areas in each region
- Fish collection (not currently on list)
- Barcoding and collection of tissues
- Timing of surveys
 - o Are consecutive surveys possible?
 - o Logistical support / ABRS or lead institutions?
 - o Bush heritage for tissue sampling?
- Priority of the outcomes delivered for the NRS, such as new species, ecologically significant species, R&Ts, common species across all reserve systems, etc

ITEM 5 - Bush Blitz curatorial/ databasing contract – CHAFC

(It should be noted that some of these issues were resolved subsequent to the meeting, but the situation reported here is as it stood at the time of the General Meeting in May.)

Requirements for CHAFC to fulfil the contract related to curatorial/ database funding from ABRS for 2009/10 financial year involved the following:

- o Submitting firstly, an interim Draft Final Report by 25 May 2010, then the Final Report for each of the surveys conducted (or commenced) this financial year (4 BB's).

ABRS proposed that the Draft Final Report from CHAFC must contain:

- The date of when the final report is due (30 June 2010, but with automatic extension for 60 days [30 August 2010])
- Definition of the areas surveyed
- List of the scientists/ participants involved and their areas of contribution
- List the samples taken; breaking down into species names and from which area they were collected.
- An overview of the project plan detailing how funds will be distributed from CHAFC to lead agencies detailing – How, When, Why.

The members expressed the following concerns and issues involved in preparing the Draft Final Report, including:

- CHAFC does not have a list of scientists involved in each BB, nor any reports from any surveys conducted so far (i.e. lead agencies submitted these details directly to ABRS and not through CHAFC as the contracts were through each agency, not CHAFC).
- Lead agencies themselves don't always have a complete list of who was involved in surveys from their State/Territory (such as the first NSW survey near Dorrigo run by ABRS and not AM). Members expressed that there was an information void and a greater need to communicate precise expectations for reporting early on in the process.
- SD proposed that there needed to be a mechanism to inform the lead agencies of all participants for reporting purposes since ABRS appeared to be funding participating agencies individually, not only a single lead agency for particular BBs. ABRS agreed to look into this.

ACTION: ABRS to inform lead agencies of particular BBs (and CHAFC) of the proposed list of participants who received contracts for that BB in order for the lead agency to coordinate assembling data for the Draft Final Reports.

- Bush Blitz contracts stipulate that all material collected must be deposited with the lead agency of that State/Territory, which presented some difficulties for particular, significant collectors who are not attached to the museums but are otherwise entitled to build their own research collections (e.g. UNSW). Aside from WA and NT other states do not have legislation claiming sovereignty over all biological assets.
- JH proposed that "subcontractors" (i.e. participants of particular BBs other than lead agencies) offer material to the lead agency, but this material is loaned back to the subcontractor for curation and further sorting etc. PB pointed out that this scenario presented difficulties in terms of permit reporting by the lead agency, in addition to more practical problems such as providing accession numbers and retrieving specimens, etc.
- Some 09-10 BB sites were still not surveyed as participants had encountered significant delays due to severe weather conditions and access issues (e.g. Culgoa). It was noted that this was always going to be an issue as weather/ access/ personnel availability and other contingencies such as accidents, may delay completion of particular surveys within contract periods, and that a reasonable measure of flexibility needs to be provided by the NRS.

ACTION: PBeesley and KG will liaise with JH and supply the report information required and all details submitted from survey reports so far. Via a teleconference next week. - **Completed**

ACTION: PB to supply draft report for AM final (2009/10) BB survey to JH adding a table of all the scientists involved.

ACTION: JH to email requirements for Draft Final Reports to all member agencies. This report will state when the final report is due at include overviews of the site, the samples and the people involved. - **Completed**

- ABRS needs to pay out \$300k to CHAFC this financial year, but CHAFC is not obliged to pay out these funds this financial year.
- The final report is due 30 June 2010 but with extension for 60 days as per Commonwealth guidelines (due 30 August 2010)

- ABRS proposed that this report should list all digital data combined from all 2009/10 survey sites stipulated in the Bush Blitz contract. It was stated that this report needed to be more substantial than just a summary.
 - List all species found at the survey sites; list all pest species; never before recorded species; new species; and a list of species that will be worked on as a priority by the Lead agency/ scientists.
- JH proposed that this level of reporting (Draft Final Reports) was impossible in the given time period (end May 2010) and in any case it was redundant for CHAFC to provide ABRS with data they had already received directly from lead agencies/ participants. He suggested that perhaps it would be more useful, and possible, for CHAFC to provide summaries of the 'highlights' and 'issues' of each of the BBs, and that each lead agency would need to accumulate this information from all their participants to enable a Final Report to be submitted on behalf of CHAFC, and hence be eligible for this curatorial/ database funding.

Proposed distribution of Bush Blitz Curation/ Database Funding

Discussions took place on possible models for distributing this portion of ABRS funds equitably amongst participants.

JH noted that CHAFC did not want to become a contract-providing organisation on behalf of the Commonwealth. JH proposed that CHAFC fund the lead agency for a particular BB survey, and that this agency then distribute these funds further to those who participated for curation/ databasing purposes.

- ABRS funds: Year 1 \$300k; Year 2 \$100k; Year 3 \$150k; Year 4 \$150k = \$700k
- 2009-10 ABRS contract stipulated the following breakdown of BB curatorial/ databasing funds (\$300k total): \$10k for governance; \$190k accessioning, \$100k databasing, \$10k Report.
- 2009-10 (4 lead agencies in current contract: WAM, TMAG, AM, QM). 2010-2011 (possibly 6 state BBs proposed: NSW, QLD, SA/VIC, NT, WA)
- Each year CHAFC will have a separate contract for that year's BBs
- CHAFC members decided not to follow the model adopted by CHAH (BB funds distributed to institutions for the first 500 specimens after which institutions required to absorb any other curatorial/ databasing costs). Noted that magnitudes more zoological samples would be collected from BBs than botanical samples and hence this notional funding for 500 specimens per agency participating was meaningless for the museums.
- **Issue:** Even though \$300k provided in 09-10 by ABRS only four lead agencies were involved in those contracts. In subsequent years CHAFC would receive \$100k each year until the project ends, but there would be greater numbers of BBs in those outgoing years.
- **Possible solution:** DY suggested that the total expected funds over all years could be divided by the total number of surveys for all years, and distributed proportionally in this way as each BB report was completed and accepted by ABRS.
- Estimated 18 surveys over a 5 year period, with a total pool of funds of \$700k.
- JH noted that some contingency funding should also be held back by CHAFC to cover costs of distributing funds, initial costs of incorporation and legal fees, annual auditing and BAS, coordination and reporting for each BB, etc. Also the

contingency for ongoing OZCAM governance/ maintenance. Proposal to divide pool of funds by 20 (not 18) to allow for these contingencies.

- Therefore proposed \$35k per lead institution per BB for the estimated 18 BBs over the 4 years, and \$70k withheld by CHAFC for these contingencies.
- Although lead agencies would be internally responsible for distributing the \$35k CHAFC executive committee could arbitrate if there were unresolvable disputes by participants from non-lead agencies.
- JH suggested this concept needed further consideration outside of the meeting and proposed to develop a mechanism along the lines of the discussion, and hold an out-of-session General Meeting by email to propose and vote on this issue.

Discussion on lead agencies and other participants:

- MN also noted issue of agencies sharing a lead role where reserves straddled across state/ territory borders (e.g. QM & AM for Culgoa, MV and SAM for W. Volcanic Plains reserves). SD noted: when museums cross borders in these BB surveys the distribution of funds would eventually even out over the 4 years. Also, that NT and WA legislation for all material collected in this states and territory to be returned to the respective museums.
- E.g. The example of Gerry Cassis UNSW was used to illustrate a possible scenario. Although UNSW were funded directly by ABRS to participate in BBs and acquire collections, they were not a lead agency and would therefore need to be considered by the appropriate lead agency (WAM for example, in the Charles Darwin Reserve BB) for an equitable proportion of curatorial funds. Also noted at the meeting related to non-lead agency participants the issue ownership of material and appropriate deposition based on state legislation and/or collection permit conditions, and ABRS condition of obligatory data delivery to OZCAM. PB discussed the difficulties of trying to track/ manage samples not collected by AM (for example) but required to be deposited in AM for a particular BB where this was a requirement of the permit. The meeting agreed that these issues were not resolvable here or now but should be flagged as ongoing discussion and development.

Discussion on inadequacy of funds being offered for curation/ databasing and further assistance required from ABRS:

- PF suggested taking the \$300k and then re-negotiating with ABRS that the work involved is undervalued. Bush Blitz is flawed as there are too many levels. JH agreed and has made a case to Judy. But we can re-negotiate saying its inequitable. Suggested writing a formal letter requesting more equitable split on funding.

ACTION: JH to write to ABRS with concern about inequitable distribution of curatorial/ database funding between museums and herbaria based on large discrepancies in the volumes of material collected. – **Completed**

- DY suggested that one institution needs to work out the real cost and illustrate clearly that the curation payments fall short and are unsustainable for the work required. JH stated that there was no other operational funding beyond field work funds supplied by ABRS and curatorial/ database funds being channelled through CHAFC, and that using para-taxonomists might help.
- JH noted that Helen Thompson (at the time Acting Director of ABRS) stated that ABRS will try to work in close partnership with institutions to make this process work better. DY believed there were some obvious roles ABRS could do to assist with the BBs such as organising the permits and requesting permission from land

owners for access. SD noted that potentially the most valuable surveys would be those on Aboriginal land, but these are often logistically and politically the most difficult to reach.

- PB noted the complexity of the draft CHAFC Contract and suggested some amendments to them to better define institutional responsibilities. PB also noted that Dave Britton will stand in for PB while she is overseas in May-June.

ACTION: Draft contract emended re: taking out reference to AM - Western NSW and include in QM definitions – Queensland and Northern NSW.- **Completed**

ACTION: JH and SV to develop more detailed discussion paper and proposal and circulate this to voting members out of session. – **Completed**

ITEM 6 - FCIG & CHAFC Combined meeting

FCIG had worked through a list of items and presented the summary to CHAFC.

This included:

- EW (Ely Wallace, AM) being elected as Chair as per the guidelines that the FCIG Chair be elected 6 months following the appointment of the CHAFC Chair.
- PF (Paul Flemmings) will remain Technical Manager.
- BM (Beth Mantle) will be the content manager and the CHAFC representative for FCIG (this will not require a formal letter). Contact: beth.Mantle@csiro.au
- BM will take queries from users on dodgy data sites and feed this information back to the institution responsible with no further follow up once notified. Thereby enlisting OZCAM users to assist with data cleansing
- The contact point for CHAFC email will be SV via the email chafc@qm.qld.gov.au
- Australian National Fish Collection not present, so uncertain what they want as a standard institution code (e.g. consider the cases of CSIRO, ANIC, ANWC)
- Advise on Wiki workshop – how to turn your notifications off.
- FCIG presented the new websites for CHAFC and OZCAM. CHAFC's website is live but up as a draft run and open for comment and feedback. At present there are no images on the OZCAM website aside from those on the introduction/home page. Rather than write the web style guide and build it they have just built the site and will now prepare the site specifications document.
- Re-badging of Biomaps for OZCAM.
- FCIG reviewed the list of options for putting up OZCAM data on to the ALA and recommended that CHAFC go with the fourth - Hubs option paper. PF described the process where data would be harvested from each institution to a central cache location. This way, EW stated, CHAFC could offer data to a central cache with specific conditions ensuring that if the ALA project stopped OZCAM would continue to exist. Additionally, by choosing this route there would not be any extra burden in technical requirements for the participating organisations, FCIG would keep the current OZCAM running in parallel with the ALA.

BM will supply a response to the ALA. This needs to happen by the close of this meeting.

ACTION: BM (FCIG) to respond to the ALA on the hubs option.

- FCIG put forward their progress report on OZCAM.

ACTION: EW to email FCIG progress report to SV for circulation to CHAFC.

- Ely stated the reasons for CHAFC/OZCAM joining the ALA:
 - To acquire tools OZCAM currently do not have, ie: flagging collectors names, filtering records that are sensitive etc.
 - Names validation assistance, query options for widest range of specimens
 - Cache is free, no update or maintenance costs.
- Issues for OZCAM currently are:
 - Server currently has a 2-3 year life span and needs replacement.
 - Longevity of ALA – if it goes we don't lose as we still have our OZCAM site.
- ALA will take responses and try to incorporate them into the design, if there are issues JJ will communicate with FCIG. A certain amount of discussion to get the fit is expected. CHAH response has also been slow, other organisations yet to respond to the ALA. OBIS and the Pest Database (PaDIL) have their data behind a locked door and ask the ALA to do as much as they can for them.
- There will be a new data standard, changing the Darwin Core scheme, mapping old to new fields discussion yet to happen.
- FCIG proposed data publishing principles which will be available on the website. They wish to publish as much data as possible and to have the public or users assist with data cleansing by querying suspicious data.
- OZCAM is now requesting all Phyla for publishing.
- Potential publication of all specimens held in and outside Australia. I.e. Natural History Museum in London. The exception will be for sensitive or redundant records.

They will list mandatory fields and preferred fields (if the data isn't available it won't be submitted).

FCIG can apply principles but would prefer all published, however, but institutions hold the rights to 'publish or 'not publish'.

JH stated that this process will also be useful for finding where specimens are available.
- ALA state that they will have a register of sensitive names completed by September 2010. The ALA plans to hold a full data set to be made available to all bona fide users such as State Environment Departments, Quarantine etc., with dithering of sensitive data only at the last level. Institutions can themselves decide on level of sensitivity for their data.
- The Chair thanked FCIG for their work on the websites of both OZCAM and CHAFC.
- Both websites will run in a draft state for one month, and further comments and suggestions were requested during this time. Comments from the joint meeting included:
 1. Icons to change on logos
 2. Check organisation logos
 3. Images are insect heavy (new images must have no restrictions re: copyright, can be cached)
 4. Placement of text

5. CHAFC – 1982 establishment – Doug Hoese may know correct year.

ACTION: PB to ask Doug of correct year and inform EW & BM to emend accordingly.

6. Button replacement – search OZCAM
7. Copyright to be reviewed by CHAFC
8. BM happy to receive comments
9. CHAFC to publish names of institution representatives.

ITEM 7 – Atlas of Living Australia

JT outlined that the ALA's present focus was to get as much information as possible and was focussing on Fishes, Birds and *Acacia*.

- ALA infrastructure will be in place on schedule, but ARC server won't be ready in time. 19 servers are used currently and ALA will continue to use temporary servers on rented space from virtual machines.
- ALA cannot fund to digitise but will have a place to host.
- ALA will set up a priority list for loading data.
- ALA are creating an Australian BHL node which is currently predominantly US. This will provide faster downloads. ALA will act as a repository but data IP will still reside with the museum. Other nodes exist with Europe and two starting soon are in South America and China.
- ALA will have a sensitive data service
 1. National registration of sensitive species – ALA will check record by record against a list of declared species with a report at the conclusion. Data providers / scientists can forward recommendations to the list as well.
 2. Management of these data will be through a tribunal who will receive submissions from interest groups. PB supported the tribunal concept to assist with validation scripts.
 3. If sensitive data are supplied, the ALA will denature the data with a report on what will happen.

ACTION: FCIG wants information denatured across entire data.

- There will be Club membership and Public access registration will need to be managed rigorously.

DY stated that most users might not need accurate spatial data. JH cautioned not to dumb-down data accuracy too much noting that schools used these sorts of data for projects at quite small spatial scales, such as QM's proposed Backyard Explorer.

There was concern about data pirates using data for commercial purposes (e.g. EIS requirements etc) but this might be a miniscule proportion of all users and they would probably get caught in the reporting process or lack of acknowledgements to data providers etc.
- JT requested species profile data from institutions. However, if this isn't possible then perhaps the ALA could redirect its pointers to institutions' websites for more information. JH mentioned that he hoped the ALA could fund producing species pages to some extent.

- PFS stated that QVMAG are planning to release 1000 pages by November 2010 via an electronic feed. Consequently, they have concerns about the potential overlap of information (e.g. multiple sites with potentially conflicting information on the same species). Similarly, DY questioned which of the potentially many pages on the Echidna, for example, would ALA use, and should CHAFC take some role in these sorts of decisions?

If the ALA is like the Encyclopedia of Life then there are partnership opportunities available (but no current funding). MN stated that snippets of information are boring and that good strong pages are needed. There was also the issue of credit for sources of information, and drawing people back to the institution's own web pages (which is part of an institution's KPIs), when the ALA might simply be mirroring what is on MV's website, for example. MN wants the audience to be drawn in and hopes to feed to the ALA but they are still struggling with the concept of ownership and institutional vs. global species data delivery sites.

- CG noted that Citizen Science was about collecting in the community. JH still struggling to understand how we are going to deal with species versus specimen data, and especially unpublished (OTU) species data whose taxonomy may never be resolved within existing expertise and taxonomic resources, yet these OTU data are still very important.
- DY noted that TRIN is developing a tool for communication between different taxonomic pages, allowing for synonyms to stabilise taxonomic information into a standard language JT suggested perhaps TRIN and the ALA should get together to sort this out. JH mentioned that for some groups of taxa the AFD already contained a lot of information beyond just a taxons systematics, and questioned whether only some (e.g. taxonomic lexicon) or all (type holdings, diagnoses, keys etc) would be drawing from AFD into ALA. In other words, where should the effort go? For example, OZCAM hasn't developed much further from delivering specimen point data.
- DJ still concerned about the cost of the significant contributions by institutions expected by ALA (i.e. not just specimen point data but participants providing species descriptions, images, biogeographical etc information), within existing institutional budgets. She suggested that institutions are missing out on recognition through the partnership, and considered that institutions were currently giving, or expected to give, but not yet receiving anything back from the ALA.
- MN noted that an online editor would be needed to give the ALA consistency with a voice and style.
- PB, a member of the ALA Collection Data Management panel, was not aware of all the other projects that people nominated for the ALA? JT noted these included: imaging; revision of Biolink; hubs to service OZCAM; providing wrappers to get data out of institutions; providing gazetteers (and other spatial data tools); hosted data (small collections/ citizen science); embedding metadata into images (ie: making them biological data, not just artistic images); field capture of metadata (experience with rapid digitisation); possibility of setting up biological identification nodes around the country, helping institutions with issues of physically sending valuable specimens. For example, in the herbaria, ALA could provide equipment to rapidly digitise the type specimens. JJ stated they were purchasing one for University of Adelaide, to test the best method of digitising.

- PB questioned whether or not other projects proposed during the initial round, but weren't already registered/ supported, would get up unless they feed into existing projects? For example, CHAFC members provided details of potential projects prior to the AGM in November 2009 but very little feedback received.
- Issue of proposed Biolink redevelopment. CB noted that only 6 institutions use it. The opinion of the Australian Plant Pest database was that it was awful. PFS noted that no institution wants to use it as it has limited capabilities and hence limited user take up. JT responded that only open source software was allowed so they decided to upgrade Biolink for \$120k. DY noted that CSIRO had already spent that much over a couple of years and yet had seen no improvement in the program. JH noted that as a species management tool it had been quite useful at QM but awful in managing specimens, which is why QM invested in Vernon CMS (which unfortunately is not a species management tool). If there was to be reinvestment in Biolink the specimen management side of the program needed substantial improvement, and also catering for non-terrestrial data sets.
- SD also questioned about opportunities for institutions to get system data management help with software. JT replied only open source database assistance perhaps.

- Issue of Images. JT stated that images aren't generally looked after well by institutions (storage, metadata etc), so ALA have recently hired an image specialist and wants a representative from CHAFC/FCIG to report back. CY is going to be this rep. They will talk further about hardware, such as ALA storing the images or use something like Morphbank, and the pros and cons of this mode of distribution. Issues yet to be considered include how images get into the storage system, their metadata, and how they are managed.

DY said ANIC curate all their own images. Morphbank is a solution for detail, for high speed importation, but cost was prohibitive (they wanted to use Morphbank for their Tree of Life project).

JH also noted current problem of links between specimen data and where images are stored within institutional databases, being broken when data exported; and lack of shadow servers outside the institutional firewalls to serve images when data are exported, and the Morphbank concept sounds like it might solve the problem.

DY noted Flickr was also a possibility. EOL uses Flickr and offers the public to input into image IDs (with quality control of the reliability of these IDs indicated by a yellow border etc).

- Issue of Wrappers. This was seen to be the highest priority by member agencies, to assist getting data out of institutions into OZCAM. ALA have a Biocase specialist from Germany whose contract has been extended for another 2 months. He ran a workshop to showcase Biocase as a wrapper that enables others to talk to each other. JT wanted to run similar workshops with the museums since there was not a great deal of data yet coming out of them. They were planning a compressed 2 month training road show, perhaps in October, also to include FCIG. He requested the cooperation of CHAFC to get this happening.
- Issue of Data conversion to Darwin Core (wrapped up) and sent to OZCAM. Probably still big issues with database compatibility with TAPIR & Darwin Core in museums' databases. ALA will assist institutions to feed out data, such as sending experts to train institutional IMIT staff. Timeframe possibly October and

to run for 2 months, but detail needs further preliminary work by JT. In the interim a CSV dump of databases can be done.

- JT noted the current big thing was to agree on the Options paper (choice of hubs options for OZCAM to deliver to ALA etc). December 2009 technical people met to discuss the complications of hubs choices. These discussions included:
 1. Treating OZCAM separately (from e.g. AVH) and proceed as is
 2. Build an engine to aggregate data with each face.
 3. One engine with 5 faces
 4. Using ALA cache with 5 front ends
- JT led discussions on the issues getting data into a cache; Validation before delivering data by FCIG or the ALA; Advantages of options (e.g. closer to ALA the more services could be provided by ALA).
- JT noted that in its parallel meeting FCIG chose Option 4 of using the ALA cache with one of the 5 front ends having an OZCAM badge. All museum data will feed through via the OZCAM hub.
- CHAFC noted the issue of OZCAM potentially diminishing as a CHAFC product with the rise of ALA.

Cons: ALA will clearly overshadow OZCAM and thus diminish it as the “peak museums data showcase”, the only vehicle we have that demonstrates an integrated museums’ approach to data sharing; giving data away for only \$3m for a \$30m project; should retain the physical infrastructure as independent until a proof of concept is delivered; no current govt. indication for the continued support of ALA beyond the current NCRIS project.

Pros. ALA will unify Australian zoological collections; ABRS has \$3M to fund assistance (AFD updates); although success of ALA hinges on OZCAM (and AVH etc), OZCAM will remain an independent hub and badged as the museums’ consortium, hence no diminishment of the consortium; most museums don’t have the capacity in IT to individually get collection data information delivered and thus require significant technical assistance offered by ALA.

FCIG opinion. Choice of Option 4 (ALA cache with 5 front ends, one badged as OZCAM) alleviates concerns about losing independence if the ALA fell over in 2012. EW noted that if the ALA cache fell over there would be nothing to stop OZCAM from picking it up and building another. FCIG will run 2 parallel systems (without licensing issues) as the ALA’s policy is to use only open sources. With the current model of a single cache, providers can still deliver to the same cache which just points to a different system. EW also noted that each institution still holds the IP to their own content. Moreover, FCIG provided a list of conditions to the ALA that accompany the choice of this Option 4. It was noted that this was an Options paper for something that was not yet built. JH assumed these conditions would be acceptable by the ALA, as follows:

- Data serving (Darwin Core) will change slightly
- OzCam front end via a portal for our data to be retained indefinitely (ability to)
- Use own OzCam standards – data schema
- Control access to data

- Club access – manage who can see what
- Frequency of data harvest – control (currently monthly) no additional technical burden on institutions

In return for providing data to ALA, OZCAM receives:

- tools for data cleansing which also track back to data providers to emend institutional databases
 - verification of data
 - lexicon for nomenclature that has ongoing support and development through AFD, obviating individual agencies from this ongoing task
 - Sensitive data tool, with individual agencies and OZCAM still able to control access to some data (e.g. collectors' names under the Privacy Act)
 - Information held in a central hub model, and services remain free to OZCAM provided that ALA continues to exist.
 - If ALA is not supported further beyond the NCRIS project the tools designed during the project would still be available as they are built in open source.
- Members did not see any further risks to CHAFC or OZCAM with this Option 4 since essentially two parallel systems were to be maintained.

CHAFC therefore agreed unanimously to accepting Option 4 with the ALA

- PFS also recommended that there should be follow up with the Commonwealth after the completion of the ALA project in 2012, urging the government to provide the data providers some real support for digitising collections.

ITEM 8 Taxonomy Australia (TaxA) update

- Only a few members attended the TaxA meeting in Brisbane on 5 May (JH, DY, JJ, Peter Western, Brett Summerall and Penny Mills)
- TaxA arose out of the National Taxonomy forum. The primary focus of this TaxA meeting was to develop a strategy for the way forward for TaxA and to define what the role of TaxA would be in the long term.
- Primary focus is to become a peak body for taxonomy allowing the collection peak bodies (CHAFC, CHAH, CHAEC etc) to interact with representation from universities, professional bodies representing taxonomists in Australia (e.g. SASB), and other associated organisations with a role in taxonomy (i.e. ABRIS, CSIRO etc).
- TaxA will develop a website, perhaps within TRIN. DY noted that TRIN was due to expire, and that its externally funding won't be refunded. The TaxA website will link to member organisation website.
- DY outlined some of the discussions at the TaxA meeting:
1. Coordinate taxonomic publications, potential merges for online publications for flora and fauna. Biological Heritage Library.
 2. Coordinating research expertise; identifying gaps in expertise, and providing directories of expertise and capabilities of Australian taxonomists. The latter was last undertaken in 2006 but data was never released.

Contact was going to be made with ABRS to find out what came of those data. This survey information could be very useful to govt for workforce planning etc.

3. TaxA suggested it might be able to take on the role to identify areas to focus on gaps in current tertiary education courses (obviously taxonomy and systematics, but also more general aspects of “whole animal biology”), and other vehicles such as online entomology courses; accreditation of parataxonomists, etc.
4. Issue of National Collection Standards in limbo but is on ABRS agenda.

ITEM 9 - Representation of the university sector ('Cinderella collections') to have representation on CHAFC

- Discussion of membership of CHAFC to include other countries (e.g. PNG, NZ), other collections (e.g. AIMS, DPI) and the major university collections (e.g. UQ Ento, UNSW Ento,).
- JJ and Gerry Cassis (UNSW) (pers. comm.. to JH prior to the meeting) had raised concerns about inadequate representation of the so-called 'Cindarella collections' on the peak bodies, such as CHAFC, and the possibility of extending the scope of CHAFC to include them.
- DY noted that the university entomology collections already have an opportunity to be represented by a peak body through CHAEC.
- JH noted that the more significant factor was the difference between an agency that has collections, and the state, territory and commonwealth collection agencies, whereby the protection of the latter in perpetuity is guaranteed under the state and commonwealth legislation (e.g. the Queensland Museum Act 1970 in the case of the QM), independent of the vagaries of university priorities over time in their attitudes and responsibilities to their collections. JH gave examples of the recent divestment of the Earth Sciences Museum collections (by UQ) and Geological Survey of Queensland collection (by NRM) to the QM that arose with short notice simply from a policy decision within those agencies, without recourse through an independent decision by parliament. A similar situation was imminent with the UQ Entomology collection being told to move from UQ premises by the end of 2010.
- JH proposed that membership of CHAFC should remain as currently stipulated in the (pending) Constitution and Rules of Incorporation whereby core membership is allocated to collections protected under an Act, but other categories of membership are available as follows:
 1. Core membership – (currently 11 state, territory and commonwealth collections)
 2. General membership – (university, DPI and other collection of biological significance, with membership in a non voting capacity)
 3. Commonwealth Representative(s) – (e.g. ABRS, but could also include others such as AIMS)
- The membership agreed that there are some significant collections at potential risk through simple policy changes within institutions, but that these usually end up in the adjacent state or territory collections and consequently General membership is all that should be offered to these institutions.
- The case of the UQ Entomology collection was discussed further.

SD suggested requesting if UQ would fund QM (or another agency) to take the collection off their hands. JH mentioned there weren't any types in the collection, and that it was likely destined for the new Ecosciences Precinct at Boggo Road, along with the DPI Entomological collections eventually..

DJ questioned whether there was anything CHAFC could do to stop collections being abandoned in the future. JH said that QM has the issue of not being able to properly house additional collections due to the current shortage of space, but that it was the intention of the QM in its re-evaluation of a new facility in Brisbane to incorporate all three collections in a single facility and under the protection of the QLD ACT. This is a longer term view however. DY believed each collection will have its own set of issues and these will need to be addressed on a case by case basis.

ACTION: JH letter from QM via CHAFC to UQ Entomology (and DPI) expressing concern and support for their integrity and continued access. – **completed**

ACTION: JH/SV to make sure this issue remains an ongoing Agenda item for future meetings – 'Cinderella Collections'

ITEM 10 - Deposition of type specimens

At the request of LJ and PL, the meeting revisited the discussion and motion passed at the CHAFC General Meeting at QVMAG on 1 May (motion on *Agenda item 10* QVMAG) concerning deposition of type specimens.

Minutes from QVMAG - agreement that types and a voucher of each OTU be deposited in the state/ territory jurisdiction, but duplicates retained by collectors from other jurisdictions by arrangement with the state/ territory.

QVMAG MINUTES ACTION: CHAFC endorsed the principle of depositing primary type material in the appropriate institution within the state/ territory jurisdiction.

The area of concern related to collections from marine expeditions in Commonwealth waters, involving both state/ territory museum(s) & CSIRO, which under this motion would be required to be deposited in the adjacent state/ territory museum, rather than collections appropriately/ amicably split.

JH noted that this was not the intention of the motion but could see the wording of the motion was imprecise. The meeting agreed to emend this as follows:

ACTION: CHAFC endorsed the principle of depositing primary type material in the appropriate institution within the state/ territory/ Commonwealth jurisdiction. - **Completed**

ITEM 11 - CHAFC Inc. (in brief)

JH talked through the process of becoming incorporated: Issues with the model rules sent through from the lawyer (e.g. concerns of there only being three elected members.)

ACTION: JH to email the completed constitution after discussion. - **Completed**

Processes still ongoing include:

- CHAFC Financing (ie ABN, TFN and the bank account).
- Public liability \$10M because we're handling public funds and required by ACT Incorporations Act.
- OZCAM development and maintenance costs for CHAFC to consider, independent of member agencies current support, through member fees.

- PB stated that membership fees (proposed at the AGM in 2009) were initially set as minimal because there were funds still held for OZCAM by AM and MV. (EW believed there was about \$40k in MV funds on behalf of OZCAM, less \$2,000 for Diego's design work. PB thought a similar amount of \$40k was still held by the AM).
- JH noted that under the proposed new constitution, in accordance with the Rules of Incorporation in the ACT, CHAFC did not have to meet physically to progress/ vote on issues, but could hold General Meetings via email or teleconferencing etc, but needed only to physically meet for AGM or where changes to the constitution were proposed. JH recommended members to read the constitution to be circulated after the meeting.
- The constitution should go up on the website.

ACTION: JH to circulate constitution to go up on website, and SV to subsequently inform EW/ PF/ BM when notifications of Incorporation number and ABN are received.

The OZCAM MOU of 2002 had expired so there is currently no formal commitment to OZCAM by member institutions.

- Might want to refer to data provision guidelines
- Continuing maintenance of biomaps/ workpress registration fee for domain names which will have to be paid by CHAFC.
- Institutions will want to know what they're up for with an MOU for OzCam.

ITEM 12 – OZCAM MOU

Some members were also uncertain of any improvements in the current relationship between the CAMD Natural Science Alliance and CHAFC as the minutes of the most recent (second) meeting of the Alliance not yet circulated. One mechanism for improving communication between the two groups is to exchange minutes. PFS also proposed that CHAFC might need to be officially recognised by CAMD, although not a subcommittee of it since our membership is broader than the state/ territory museums.

ACTION 23: PFS proposed to chase up and circulate the CAMD NSA minutes to CHAFC members.

ACTION 24: SV to circulate CHAFC minutes to Meredith Foley at CAMD once approved by members.

As the current OZCAM MOU has now lapsed the institutions, or Boards of institutions (or City Council in the case of QVMAG), are required to sign a new MOU (rather than CHAFC members), reaffirming ongoing institutional support for OZCAM as the museums' portal for collection data delivery. This is especially important as OZCAMs more prominent future role as gateway to ALA, GBIF etc.

ACTION 25: PB to email out revised MOU to each core member institution for signing.

ITEM 13 - Other business

AQIS – Quarantine permit. SD stated that SAM had just acquired an AQIS permit which allows collection of any animal or DNA extract over the next 3 years. He highly recommended that each institution apply for a similar permit and agreed to circulate SAM permit application as a guideline.

ACTION: SD to email AQIS Quarantine permit to CHAFC members.

SciColl initiative update – OECD Global Science Foundation. For information. Meeting held in Brussels. John Lesalle and Susan Miller attended.

The SciColl summary paper recommended that Australian membership be given serious consideration as there are significant funding possibilities, and the forum was strongly supported by the EU Parliament. It recommended that Australia take out a national government membership for 2 years (commonwealth funded, perhaps ALA) but with opportunities to change to institutional memberships in the future (JH noted that there were some hefty membership fees involved). The SciColl summary paper suggested that the next meeting be hosted in Australia, either Melbourne or Sydney in November 2010.

ITEM 14 - NEXT MEETING: Hobart, 25th - 26th November, with FCIG starting on the Wednesday. All to confirm, noting however that the meeting must commence by the 30 November as per the rules of the CHAFC constitution.

ACTION: Telephone meeting in the third week of July to confirm the minutes from this meeting. **Completed**

ACTION: (PFS) AGM in Hobart will need to supply Champagne.

CLOSE OF CHAFC MEETING